

representations of the Commissioners, will be willing to reconsider the subject, and to accede to the prayer of the Colony.

At the same time, Ministers desire respectfully to place on record some circumstances materially bearing on this important question, which do not appear to have been brought under the notice of Earl Granville when his Despatch was written.

The grounds on which the decision to remove the 18th Regiment is based are to some extent new. They may be broadly stated to be,—the possibility of British Troops being actively implicated in New Zealand warfare, and the encouragement, by the presence of British soldiers, of the Colony in a policy which the Imperial Government “have always regarded as pregnant with danger.” The objectionable features in that policy, so far as can be gathered from the Despatch, seem to be the confiscation of Native land and the non-recognition of Maori authority.

The novel character of these reasons will be admitted when it is remembered that, in 1866 and 1867, two successive Secretaries of State (Mr. Cardwell and Lord Carnarvon), who had before them all the circumstances out of which these reasons arise, and who had moreover before them the direct request of the Colonial Government that all the Imperial Troops might be removed, decided to leave one Imperial Regiment in New Zealand substantially on the sole condition that a certain sum was contributed by the Colony, not to the support of that regiment, but to Native purposes. The Imperial Government have now before them a united expression of opinion on the part of the Governor of the Colony, the local Representative of Imperial interests, and on the part of both Houses of the Legislature, that one regiment should be left in the Colony, and the pledge of the Colony to contribute towards the support of that regiment for five years. And yet the retention of the regiment on any terms is refused upon political considerations which, if they have any force, had exactly the same force three years ago, when the Imperial Government were willing, without payment and unsolicited, to leave one regiment in New Zealand. And during the course of these three years, in all the voluminous correspondence which has passed respecting the retention of this regiment, the Imperial Government never indicated their intention to reject all terms; but, on the contrary, they have repeatedly implied that the absence of any proposal on the part of the Colony to pay for the regiment, was the reason why it was to be removed, and have in effect invited the Colony to make such proposal.

The best reply to the argument that the presence of one regiment in New Zealand would implicate it, and therefore the Imperial Government, in the war, is the practical experience of the last three years, during which, notwithstanding that active hostilities have almost incessantly prevailed,—some of our flourishing settlements have been devastated, the Town of Wanganui, while garrisoned by Imperial soldiers, threatened, and massacres of women and children frequently committed,—not one Imperial soldier has been called on to fire a shot or to leave his garrison. And yet the presence of the regiment has been a great moral support to the Colony struggling in that contest, and its removal would in all probability have extended the area of insurrection and aggravated its horrors.

Nor does there appear to present itself to Earl Granville's mind, with that force which those feel whose lives and fortunes are immediately involved, the wide distinction between the despatch of an Imperial Regiment to the aid of a Colony in which no Imperial Troops are stationed, and the removal of the only remaining one from this Colony, in which a formidable rebellion has so long existed, and atrocious outrages so recently have been perpetrated. In the latter case, while the Native mind is in a ferment, while the restoration of peace on the one hand, and a general rising on the other, are almost evenly balanced, the effect of an act like the withdrawal of the sole symbol of Imperial interest in the Colony is calculated to extend and intensify insurrection, and to enfeeble those who are strenuously engaged in its suppression. The temporary detention, by General Chute, of the 18th Regiment has hitherto had the most beneficial effect. It saved at the time, as there is good reason to believe, the Colony from great disaster, and it has materially strengthened the hands of the Government in the restoration of tranquillity.

Ministers are now engaged in the most delicate negotiations with the (so-called) King party, with a view to the isolation of Te Kooti and other rebels in arms, and to the re-union of that party to ourselves, and to securing their active co-operation in the re-establishment of peace. These negotiations were gradually assuming a favourable aspect, but it is necessary that the greatest care and caution should be exercised; and it is especially important that at this critical juncture Imperial sympathy should not be withheld, or the Natives be unmistakably shown that Her Majesty's Government view the Colonists with disfavour, and withdraw from them every symbol of support. It is therefore scarcely necessary to add that the receipt and previous publication of Earl Granville's Despatch seriously imperil the prospect of success, and justify an apprehension of calamitous results.

Before proceeding to the other reason advanced for the removal of the regiment, Ministers are reluctantly compelled to advert to what appears to them a prevailing spirit of estrangement from the Colony throughout the line of argument adopted against supplying it “even with the prestige of British Troops.” It seems to be argued that British Troops should not remain in the Colony, lest the strange and inadmissible alternative should arise of their being used when disasters occur. It has been shown that during the last three years, when if at any time this alternative would have arisen, such has not been the case; but Ministers, with the utmost deference, would point out that New Zealand is not an alien country; that it is peopled by two races, both of which—one by natural allegiance and the other by treaty—are British subjects; that the present Prime Minister, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1864, stated that “he did not see how England could with justice throw the whole responsibility of the war on the Colony;” that “the policy which had led to the war had not been exclusively that of the Colony;” that the Home Government had approved it, and were so far responsible “for it.” That war to which Mr. Gladstone referred has not yet ceased. Ministers would further respectfully point out that the Imperial Government have some obligations towards the natural and adopted subjects of Her Majesty; that no Imperial Ministry can absolve itself from such obligations more than it can absolve Her Majesty's subjects from allegiance to Her Majesty; that the Queen assumed the sovereignty of the Northern Island of New Zealand under cession by treaty with the Native chiefs and tribes, in order, as stated therein, “to protect their just rights and property, and to