

Sec. II.

their intention in every way to aid the British Government; others of them, however, shewed a quiet determination resolutely to adhere to the position they had taken, and to strive to live in their own territory under officers of their own, and free from our rule. They said that they would in no way attack us, or interfere with us, but that they would not again return under the Government of the country. That they thought that their interests had been neglected, that lands had been wrongly taken from them, and that many promises had not been fulfilled. That they had freed themselves from our rule, and that we should find it as difficult to draw them back under it as the fowler did to catch the bird which had escaped from a snare. In many conversations which I had with various Chiefs, they urged the same arguments; when I told them that the acts complained of occurred from oversight, and would not be repeated. They replied, that there were cases in which lands had been disposed of to the Government as long since as 1853, upon the express condition that Crown titles should be given to the Native owners for small portions of these lands, which they were to retain, and that such promises had not up to the present date been fulfilled. Indeed, they shewed an entire distrust and want of confidence in the Government.

4. It was impossible to extract from such Chiefs of the Upper Waikato, and there were those most friendly to us, any guarantee for the continuance of the present state of tranquillity: although they promised not to attack us, they had no means of forcing other Natives to observe this promise. Their object evidently was to prevent us from making any movement whatever, and to leave matters exactly in their present state, which is an extremely advantageous one for the Natives. The local Government had some time since informed the Native Chiefs, that it had no intention of advancing Troops to the south of Otahuhu, a village where they were quartered, about 9 miles from Auckland, and about 27 miles from the River Waikato. The country intervening between Otahuhu and the Waikato was only open by an available road for about 12 miles, leaving nearly 15 miles of the entire distance impassable for Troops in rainy weather. The Waikato bounds, on its southern side, what may be called the Settlement of Auckland, for about 25 or 30 miles. The Natives, consequently, had the power of descending the Waikato River in large bodies at any moment, and of choosing any point of these 25 or 30 miles as that from which they would make an attack on this important and flourishing Settlement: whilst we had no line of communication by which we could push Troops on to the Waikato River for the purpose either of attack or defence.

5. The Natives, therefore, completely held the game in their own hand. We had not moved Troops to the front, or attempted to make roads, for fear our doing so would lead to an attack: whilst, on the other hand, we could not move Troops from hence to protect other parts of the New Zealand Islands, lest the country near Auckland should be instantly attacked in force by the line of the Waikato River, which drains an immense extent of interior country, and down which large bodies of Natives can at any time be brought at a few hours' notice. In fact, we were almost checkmated. The settlers, feeling this, were afraid to continue their operations, and many of them were abandoning their farms, so that the progress of the country was almost at a stand still. The Natives were also aware of it, and hence ventured to assume a demeanour which, I think, they otherwise would not have done.

6. It appeared impossible to allow such a state of things longer to continue: and as the country between Auckland and the Waikato had been purchased from the Natives, there was little difficulty in assuming to ourselves exactly those advantages now held by the Natives, and of placing them in a position of decided inferiority. I, therefore, wrote the enclosed letter to Lieut.-General Cameron, requesting that he would move the Troops from Otahuhu to the line of the Waikato, and employ them in completing the road from Auckland to that river, and in putting it in such a state that Troops could move rapidly along it at all seasons of the year. Your Grace will find from the enclosed answer from General Cameron, that the Troops were moved accordingly, and that the road is now in process of construction. Care will also be taken to select a good site for a Military Post on the banks of the Waikato River, in such a position as to command the river, and prevent, if necessary, the passage of canoes along that part of the river which lies between its mouth and the western boundary of our purchased land.

7. We shall thus hold a position equally adapted for the purpose of attack or defence. The Natives will not venture to pass such a Post in their canoes for the purpose of attacking the Settlement of Auckland in its rear; and as the Post will be only about 40 miles from the residence of their so-called King, and the Waikato River will lie quite open to our attacks at any moment, I do not think they would venture to move any large force from the Waikato River to commence operations in any other part of the Colony, when we have completed the road, and occupy the position I propose. I need hardly point out how much this Settlement will be benefited by the construction of such a road, and how much easier it will hereafter be to rescue and defend the out-settlers if any necessity for so doing should arise.

8. The measure I have above detailed has, I think, had a very good effect upon the Natives: and I cannot believe that they will attempt to prevent by force the construction of a road upon our own land, and the establishment also upon our own land of a Post for the protection of our own settlers. If they really do so, it would shew that they were determined to renew a contest with us, which would be brought on at their own time, and at such place as they might select when they might deem us most unprepared for it. Such a show of weakness on our part as our not daring to provide for our own safety must have led them ultimately to assail us. Whilst, on the other hand, I think they will respect us for taking the decided line of conduct which has now been pursued.

I have, &c.,

G. GREY.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, K. G.,
&c. &c., &c.

Enclosure No. 2.—Letter from Tamati Ngapora, 3rd Oct., 1860, with reply (same date) from the Governor.

Enclosure No. 3.—Sir G. Grey to General Cameron, 19th Dec., 1861.

General Cameron to Sir G. Grey, 24th Dec., 1861.