

The Native Minister, however, differing in opinion as to the advisability of immediately calling out the Militia, on the grounds stated in his Minute following the next, and the other Ministers being in Auckland, it was impossible to convey to His Excellency at that moment any expression of the opinion of Ministers as a body.

A. DOMETT.

No. 5.

MEMORANDUM FOR MINISTERS.

As it appears incumbent on Ministers, whatever the decision upon the theoretical question of responsibility, to offer advice to the Governor as to the measures to be taken in the present crisis, and as the Governor in his Minute of the 20th instant, expresses a desire for it, the Colonial Secretary submits to Ministers the following sketch of the measures which in his opinion should be adopted.

The first consideration is whether it is necessary to provide against a general insurrection of the Natives.

So much diversity of feeling exists among the various tribes, and members of every tribe, that it is scarcely possible that a combination including all of them could be found capable of united, vigorous, and simultaneous action. It is more probable that some will either remain neutral or give but a lukewarm support to the movement. Some few will even oppose it. But the very natural sympathy with their own countrymen which these Natives will probably feel in any conflict between them and the Europeans; the contagious excitement to which they will be exposed wherever war is raging; in some the desire of revenge when their own people are unsuccessful; in others, the fear of it should their own people triumph; all these feelings expose the Natives most favourable to us to the risk of being drawn into the ranks of those who are opposed to us. It appears then to be the wisest course to be prepared for a general insurrection. If the worst contingency is calculated on and provided for, every other contingency will be clear gain to us. And in circumstances such as the present, preparation is undoubtedly the best prevention. Wherever the Natives see us well prepared for them, there we may believe they will feel least inclination or temptation to attack us. The different settlements then should at once be placed in the best state of defence possible.

There are three sources to which we may look for defence, viz.: Her Majesty's Troops, the friendly Natives, and the Colonial Militia and Volunteers.

1. With respect to the disposal and distribution of the Troops, this is a purely Military question, the decision of which rests exclusively with the Governor and the Officer commanding them as the Duke of Newcastle especially points out in his Despatch of 26th February. Ministers will therefore no doubt hesitate to volunteer any very positive opinion on the subject. Perhaps, however, they may concur in a general remark to the effect that the paramount object to be kept immediately in view, should be, the defence of the different settlements, rather than any offensive operations against the enemy; that, accordingly, the troops should be so placed as to afford the greatest security attainable to each settlement; and if any surplus power then remain available, it might be employed in dealing the foe as heavy a blow as could be given. But this is not likely to happen at present.

If this be a proper principle to act upon, it must soon become a question, whether it is desirable to retain our present hold on the Tataraimaka block, at the expense of the number of troops required to hold it, and the different posts necessary to keep up our communication with it. And this, while the land itself to be held at such a cost, is altogether unavailable for the settlers, as none of them can venture upon it. The moral effect of withdrawing the troops at this moment would no doubt be very bad, as it would be a great encouragement to the Natives in other parts of the Island. But if the preservation of the other settlements require it even this last consideration must be set aside. This contingency may arise whenever an insurrection breaks out in Waikato, which would probably be followed by similar outbreaks in the Southern settlements and Hawke's Bay. It would then become necessary to set as many troops as possible free from all other duties than the defence of the settlements until reinforcements arrive. The Tataraimaka block might easily be resumed at any time, and so much of the enemy's territory confiscated as would enable us to plant settlements that would be a guarantee for the future peace and security of that part of the country.

2. The best mode of dealing with the "friendly Natives" is a question upon which the Native Minister is best qualified to give an opinion. The Colonial Secretary, for his part, believes that many of them may be safely relied on, especially those who have proved their fidelity to us, or which is nearly as satisfactory, their hostility to our foes, in past wars. Natives who have been generally considered as our friends, and who have a blood-feud or a land-feud of long standing with our enemies, may probably be relied on with much security, especially if they happen also to be the weaker of the two parties. Such is the case with the people of Mahau and Te Teira at Taranaki, of William Nero at Raglan, Hapuku at Hawke's Bay, and probably others in different parts of the country, whom the Native Minister can point out. Natives affected by motives like these might be safely entrusted with arms. It is perfectly true that persons acquainted with some even of these Natives may be found who entertain suspicions of them, and can cite circumstances enough