

The defence of the out-settlers in the various Provinces is also a very difficult matter. To make this defence absolutely complete seems impossible with the present military resources of the Colony. Isolated sheep stations, many miles apart, or agricultural farms scattered over narrow and secluded valleys, with ranges of mountains and tracts of forest land intervening, spreading over millions of acres in the aggregate, cannot possibly be brought within continuous lines of defence. Every preparation should be in readiness to bring in the women and children from these districts to the capital towns at a moment's notice; and it would be advisable to have the means of removing them, or some of them, from the towns themselves to the other Island should it appear that the towns had become unduly crowded and liable to attack. The most defensible houses ought then to be taken in the different districts as centres, in which the male inhabitants might congregate at night. These houses might be rendered shot-proof and loop-holed, as above suggested with regard to town houses, and supplied with sufficient quantities of ammunition. If the Natives of the district were only in small numbers, or moved about in small parties of marauders, such houses would perhaps be sufficient for the protection of the inhabitants. But wherever they could gather in large masses, the settlers would have to be concentrated in fewer centres near the principal towns, and in regularly built blockhouses capable of standing a siege. If this could not be done, they would have to abandon their dwellings and their districts and assemble in the towns, and take part in the defence of the latter.

In any of the three cases supposed the Colonial Secretary believes that it is most desirable that the settlers of the out districts should be formed into Mounted Corps, which could easily be done, as most of them have or could readily provide themselves with horses. They should be armed with rifled carbines or common rifles and revolvers if possible. Detachments of these Mounted Corps might sally out daily, visit the different farms and stations and patrol the whole country, and make the incursions of marauding Natives and the destruction of houses and property a much more difficult and dangerous task for these roving banditti.

There are rifles enough in the Colony for the above purpose: rifle carbines and revolvers have lately been sent for from England.

The selection of the houses to be used as above suggested, and the sites for blockhouses, must of course be left to the persons best acquainted with the respective localities concerned. The officers commanding the troops, and those commanding Militia and Volunteers, might in each Province form a Board for this purpose, in conjunction with the respective Superintendents.

All the above suggestions are obvious enough. But as his Excellency considers it is incumbent on Ministers to give him advice on the general question of defences, it is proposed that they should now be formally made.

But these merely defensive measures would do very little if anything towards putting an end to the war, or bringing the Natives to a conviction that their interest lies in remaining at peace. It would require active aggressive operations by the military for this. But all authorities have hitherto declared that a much larger number of troops than are in the Colony at present would be required to secure for such operations much chance of success.

A most important matter remains for consideration,—the providing funds to defray the cost of these measures.

The Militia at Taranaki, in number 500, cost at present about £36,500 a year. If the number above recommended were called out in the other Provinces, and similarly paid, the expense (of 4,000 men, including those at Taranaki,) would be about £290,000 a year. With the other measures recommended, £350,000 at least would be required, if the supposed state of things were to last a year.

If it be said that the pay of the Militia at Taranaki is too high (2s. 6d. per day, and rations), it need only be answered, that the ordinary wages of labour of the simplest kind, such as working on roads, is eight shillings a day at the present moment at Nelson and Canterbury. At Otago, there are the richest goldfields in the world in full operation, and at Nelson prospects of other fields as rich. With all these inducements to the most numerous class of the population to cross a strait of 20 miles, and get quit of the onerous duties of militiamen, there is much more fear that the pay will have to be increased, in order to keep any sufficient number of men in the Militia at all, than hope that it will be found possible to reduce it.

The House of Representatives have not voted one penny to meet the expenses attending a state of war. £9,000, to keep up the head-quarters and staff of the different Militia and Volunteer Battalions, on peace establishment throughout the Colony, is the only sum strictly applicable to the maintenance of these forces.

But, of the proposed loan of £500,000, £200,000 is appropriated by the Loan Act to the reinstatement of the settlement and inhabitants of Taranaki. By an arrangement lately made, in conjunction with the Legislature of that Province, £80,000 of the whole £200,000 is to be devoted purely to purposes of reinstatement. As the mere preservation of the settlement is a necessary preliminary to its reinstatement, it appears reasonable in the present emergency to employ this sum on the former object.

The portion of the loan (£100,000) appropriated by the Act to the "formation of roads and other public works connected therewith," was avowedly so appropriated with the view of rendering the country more available for military operations, the ulterior object being, of course, either directly to quell insurrection within the limits of the country so to be rendered accessible, or indirectly to prevent it by letting the Natives see the Government had power so to quell it. It may admit of question then, whether it would not be carrying into effect the spirit, although not the letter of the Act, to employ the sum in question in quelling or preventing insurrection by the