

“ did not really believe that the barbarities were being committed, then it was equally wrong of him to make such statements as he has done in a private letter. In either case, myself and Her Majesty’s subjects in this country have strong grounds of complaint against Colonel Weare. They, because he did not take those means which his duty required him to take to save them from becoming victims of such cruel atrocities as he believed were being committed; I, on my part, because he not only deprived me of my legitimate right of protecting Her Majesty’s subjects, but made me appear to those at a distance to at least silently but willingly acquiesce in the commission of cruelties of so revolting a kind.”

6. I think that Colonel Weare, in attributing to me such wicked motives and a connivance in shocking crimes brought about at my instigation, and in then passing me by without calling my attention to them, and in allowing such crimes to continue unchecked until people in England could be appealed to, when it would be too late to stop that which should have been instantly repressed, virtually reaffirmed the wickedness of my motives, and made it apparent that it would, in his belief, have been useless to appeal to me. I also think that Her Majesty’s Government, in leaving this point unnoticed, and taking his charges up, did not do me justice.

7. The imputations made against me were that, entertaining the most wicked hatred of the Native race, I had concealed my real feelings whilst there was anyone in the Colony to keep me in check, but that after General Cameron had left the Colony, my own true sentiments, and those of my Government, towards the Maoris, had come out, in our urging General Chute on to atrocities; that most shocking atrocities were being committed under pressure from the Colonial Government; and that Her Majesty’s Troops were allowed to be demoralized by the Colonists for their sole selfishness.

8. Three specific acts of the most revolting cruelty were stated to have been committed, and, in the plainest terms, it was alleged that an attempt was made to force officers to murder prisoners who had surrendered and given up their arms, Colonel Weare himself having been made to feel that he was under the General’s serious displeasure for not having committed a crime of this nature.

9. Upon the imputations I have above named, I understood Mr. Cardwell to say (as well as upon the other points):—“ I cannot for a moment suppose that such imputations, either upon General Chute or upon your Government, can be made without meeting with such a complete reply as will show Colonel Weare’s statement to have been altogether founded in error. But, on the other hand, I am not warranted in considering that they are made in bad faith, and must regard them therefore as calling for immediate and most serious inquiry.”

10. If the conclusion is correct that Mr. Cardwell called for and expected a complete reply to be given to these imputations (and it was upon that belief I acted), I think the course I pursued was the correct one. But, in truth, a still graver question arises out of this matter: I was an officer on distant service, acting as Mr. Cardwell’s representative, and I think the imputations I have quoted are of such a character, that I was entitled to his instant protection against them; they were mere surmises of such wicked motives of actions on my part, and on that of other public servants. I think he might instantly and indignantly have stated that he did not credit, and would not entertain, such suggestions of evil motives.

Had our places been reversed, I would to the last have supported him against accusations of the kind, and in stern but becoming language have expressed my opinion of the conduct of the officer who made them.

11. On this part of the subject I would make one other remark. I do not think, if such accusations and imputations had been entertained at all, that they should have been confidentially entertained, and have been made the subject of a confidential Despatch.

This fact was more painful to myself and my Responsible Advisers than any other. I feel sure your Lordship will, on full consideration, admit that, knowing that such accusations against myself and my Government, were on record in the Colonial Office, where hereafter they will be certain to be found by some historian, who must naturally conclude that there must have been some ground for believing