

Grace the enclosed Memorandum upon the subject of an alleged delay in the withdrawal of the Imperial Troops from the Colony of New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

G. GREY.

His Grace the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.

Enclosure in No. 16.

MEMORANDUM by Mr. STAFFORD.

Wellington, 21st November, 1867.

DURING the last two years, both in Despatches from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and in a recent debate in the House of Lords, the present Governor of New Zealand, Sir George Grey, has been severely censured for the continued detention of the Imperial troops after he had received orders for their removal. Ministers have hitherto refrained from expressing their views generally on this subject. The position which the Colony had assumed in December, 1864, in relation to the employment of Imperial troops, and the nature of the question at issue, which was altogether treated by the Imperial Government as one of Imperial concern, precluded such an expression of opinion. The withdrawal of the troops having now been effected, that expression is no longer liable to misapprehension or to a charge of inconsistency, and the close of Sir George Grey's administration affords a convenient opportunity for a calm view of circumstances which, in the opinion of Ministers, form the justification of his conduct.

It will tend to the clearer consideration of this subject, if the biennial periods immediately preceding and following July, 1865, are separately reviewed.

From June, 1863, to July, 1865, a civil war continuously prevailed in the Northern Island of New Zealand. At Taranaki, in the whole Waikato District, at Tauranga, at Wanganui, at Patea, the Queen's Imperial and Colonial forces came into conflict with rebel Natives, and the loss of life and property was very great. For at least half that time a force of over 15,000 men was jointly maintained by the Imperial and Colonial Governments. In no place during that time had rebellion been crushed, or complete tranquillity secured. In the course of that time Hauhau fanaticism, inculcating revolting murder and the practice of horrible atrocities, with a view to the extermination of the Europeans, had sprung up and increased to an alarming extent. In the commencement of 1865 insurrection had broken out at Opotiki; the murder of the Rev. Mr. Volkner took place, and the lives and property of every European on the East Coast from Tauranga to Poverty Bay, were in imminent danger. The angry passions of both races were roused to the utmost, and inter-tribal enmities were aggravated by the active co-operation of loyal Natives on the Queen's side. The rebels, however, were by no means conquered. Defeats had only added fuel to fierce resentment, and occasional success had increased their eagerness to seize the first favorable opportunity of retaliation and vengeance. In May, 1865, the first order from the Imperial Government for the removal of five regiments was received. About that time General Cameron occupied part of the West Coast in the neighbourhood of Wanganui and Patea, with 4,400 men, in addition to 2,400 men in the Taranaki District; but he declined to attack Weraroa Pa, which was held by rebel Hauhau natives in the close vicinity of the Town of Wanganui, and was a standing menace to the safety of the whole district. He desired an additional reinforcement of 2,000 men, and a still larger reinforcement, if, in addition to the occupation of the country between Wanganui and Patea, the road between Taranaki and Wanganui was to be opened, and more land occupied north of the Waitara. The Colony throughout this time had unreservedly contributed every possible aid, and almost unconditionally placed its resources at the disposal of the General for the purpose of securing peace. This was the posture of affairs in July, 1865.

Since July, 1865, the object of the Colonial authorities has been to suppress insurrection, and by reliance on their own resources to facilitate the removal of the Imperial troops. Active measures, undertaken at the sole cost of the Colony, for the pacification of the East and West Coasts, have been successfully given effect to by the Colonial forces. The small permanent force which the means of the Colony could maintain has been distributed, and every precaution taken with a view to the defence of threatened or unprotected districts. A system had to be organized for the purposes of transport and supply which had hitherto been necessarily in the hands of the Imperial Government, the Colony contributing its proportion of the cost. These efforts had to be made under unexampled difficulties and great financial pressure. And yet in the course of twelve months all the five regiments first ordered home left New Zealand, and in the course of the next twelvemonth the remaining four regiments required to return also embarked. Even the one regiment, intended by the Imperial Government to remain in the Colony on certain terms, which have been declined by the Colonial Government, might, by this time, have also gone, if the Imperial Government had decided on its destination.

When these two periods are impartially reviewed, and when it is considered that any precipitate or imprudent step might have plunged the whole country into internecine conflict, probably one of extermination, Ministers cannot understand on what grounds the Governor, who is responsible for the security of life and property, can be justly censured for the exercise of care and caution in the removal of the troops. The problem for his solution was extremely difficult: it was to reconcile the departure of Imperial garrisons from a Colony recently, and at the time, the scene of civil war, with the safety, nay, even the existence, of the inhabitants of a country in which there was not as in other places merely a frontier line to be defended, but over which scattered settlements of Colonists, interspersed with Native tribes, are exposed to danger on every side, both from within and without; and not only settlements of Colonists, but of loyal Natives, who, in reliance on our protection, had fought with us against their own countrymen. This difficulty was enhanced by the fact that the Imperial garrisons were not stationed at the principal towns, whence their removal would have been comparatively easy,