

Hon. Mr. RUSSELL to Hon. Colonel HAULTAIN.

Napier, 6th April, 1869.

THANKS for your telegram, which has encouraged me a good deal. I assure you I am no alarmist, and in for utmost economy consistent with all due precautions against surprises. I am also jealous of the credit of the Government and anxious they should be free from unjust censure. No word yet from Wairoa or Mohaka. It is strange, but Richmond's silence can have no possible connection with interruption of intercourse between Napier, and Mohaka, and Wairoa, by the coast, for a whole week.

RUSSELL.

Major HERRICK to Hon. Colonel HAULTAIN.

Wairoa, 9th May, 1869.

MAJOR ROPATA now refuses to join my expedition to Waikare-Moana. Excuse, near approach of winter. Men would suffer much, in that high altitude, from exposure to cold, snow, and rain. Proposes to remain and garrison the town, but if Government urge him to proceed to front, he will return home with his men. Local Natives adopt similar argument, but will be guided by Ngatiporou movements. Altogether most annoying now, after wasting so much time, that at last moment they refuse to go. I will, meantime, endeavour to get practicable sledge-road from termination of canoe transport to lake, and send up material for raft and canoes. I will accompany with whatever men I can muster, and gain, if possible, Onepoto on this side lake. This, I think, I can accomplish with the small European force I now have at disposal, unless Te Kooti is in large force at this side of lake, which, from Colonel Whitmore's report, I don't think likely. If I can establish a post at Onepoto, it will be a great point gained. Quite evident that the sooner we are independent of Natives the better. No fixed plan of operations can be organized when they form the larger portion of one's force, particularly when they imagine one is dependent on them. Just possible that when Ropata and the Natives here actually see us start without them, they might feel ashamed of themselves and follow.

HERRICK.

Hon. Mr. RUSSELL to the Hon. Colonel HAULTAIN.

Napier, 12th May, 1869.

HERRICK writes me, had my extracts Whitmore's despatches of 4th, from Fort Galatea. Wishes he had a hundred more whites to be independent of Natives, would push on to Onepoto, to give assistance to Whitmore. Force would be under 200 men; but as no more expected, would make attempt and attack Te Waru, whose fighting men he did not think exceeded forty. Richmond, Lambert, and I, are holding a council of war. You shall have result later.

RUSSELL.

Hon. Mr. RUSSELL to Hon. Colonel HAULTAIN.

Napier, 15th May, 1869.

DESPATCHES just come in from Wairoa and Mohaka. Been three days on road. Miserable work. Herrick writes from Wairoa on 12th. No mention of the attack on Richardson reported by "Sturt." Herrick says Ropata still obstinate, refusing to go with expedition, so only small force of Europeans available. Was in hopes Richmond would have been back, as his influence might induce them to start. He had just returned from the camp, which is now within eight miles of the lake. He is employing the men making roads, but last few days so unfavourable have not done much. Whatever happens he means to have a look at lake, and if possible to establish a post there; if he had 100 more men he might easily do it, but with present force, 135 available men, doesn't see very clearly. Could not leave less than 100 at lake to hold post, and should have only thirty-five left for escort: not enough. It should be sufficiently strong to fight its way to post, otherwise it might be left isolated, and starved out.

RUSSELL.

Hon. Colonel HAULTAIN to Hon. Mr. RICHMOND.

Wellington, 15th May, 1869.

SORRY to hear that Ropata still refuses to move on. Hope you will be able to persuade him, as very important to meet Whitmore if he reaches the lake. Cannot help you from this, and must leave all to your energy and judgment.

HAULTAIN.

Hon. J. C. RICHMOND to Hon. Colonel HAULTAIN.

Napier, 17th May, 1869.

I START by "Lord Ashley," at noon. Weather still and suitable for roadstead, Wairoa. "Sturt" left with sheep for Bay of Plenty at 1 a.m. yesterday, calling at Wairoa to deliver bullocks. "St. Kilda" for Mohaka, perhaps to take Natives and Armed Constabulary thence. Nothing now wanted except the few remaining Armed Constabulary from Petane and Wellington, and the pontoons tubes to deliver supplies for eight or ten weeks for 500 men. Heavy rain for several hours from 10 o'clock, now clearing off.

J. C. RICHMOND.