

desirable that I should quit my command and come to Wellington at the present time," and beg to acquaint you, for the information of the Honorable Defence Minister, with the following facts.

On the 26th of June, I received a letter from the Officer commanding at Matata, informing me that twelve men of the Armed Constabulary had deserted from Fort Clarke, and requesting me to take steps for their apprehension if they attempted to escape by Tauranga. Three of these men were apprehended on board the vessel sailing that night for Auckland, and were placed in the guardroom.

On being brought before me I asked them why they had deserted at a time when the country was in want of men, when they replied that they were thoroughly tired of serving in the force, and preferred the risk of a very severe punishment to remaining. They complained that they were most insufficiently fed; that they did not receive their pay in accordance with the terms under which they enlisted; that they therefore were not in a position to buy clothes and extra food, and especially, that they were not well cared for when sick. They also informed me that there was a general impression amongst the men that they were badly treated, and that the result of it would be desertion in very large numbers. Having lately returned from Fort Galatea, to which post I went on receipt of the news of the Opepe murders, I knew from personal observation that there was a great deal of truth in their statement. This opinion was confirmed in my mind by what the sergeant of the escort told me, as he was an old soldier, and had served in the 43rd Regiment at Tauranga, when I was in command of the 1st Waikato Regiment at that post four years ago.

The deserters told me most distinctly, that if some measures were not speedily adopted for the amelioration of the condition of the Force, that the men would mutiny and desert in large numbers.

I consulted with Mr. Clarke, Native Commissioner, on the subject, and decided that as communication was so very infrequent owing to the total absence of any steamers calling at Tauranga, I ought at once to proceed to Wellington and tell the Government candidly the actual state of the Force, and the probable result if some alteration was not made.

I went to Auckland and informed the Hon. Dr. Pollen, who thought it advisable that I should act as I had suggested.

G. S. Cooper, Esq., Acting Under Secretary,
Defence Office.

I have, &c.,

PHILIP HARRINGTON, Lieut.-Colonel,
Commanding Tauranga District.

EXTRACT from a Letter from Lieut.-Colonel HARRINGTON to the Hon. the DEFENCE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Wellington. 17th July, 1869.

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 "I deem it my duty to recommend that the posts at Forts Galatea, Clarke, and Alfred should be abandoned, as the retention of them entails considerable expense in transport, &c., without any positive advantage to us." * * * * *

PHILIP HARRINGTON, Lieut.-Colonel,
Commanding Tauranga District.

EXTRACT from a Telegram from Lieut.-Colonel ST. JOHN to J. D. ORMOND, Esq.

Haroto, 16th July, 1869.

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 "If Galatea is given up, Fort Clarke must go too. Then Fort Alfred is of little use, the provisioning of it by boats being exposed to attack. If Galatea and Clarke are given up, Fort Alfred ought to have 200 garrison; Matata not less than 60. Kokohinau Natives are not to be trusted. For defence, line is useless. Intended for operations on Taupo with Matata as a base. For other purposes it is weakness." * * * * *

H. ST. JOHN, Lieut.-Colonel.

EXTRACT from a Letter from Lieut.-Colonel HARRINGTON to the Hon. the DEFENCE MINISTER, being the latest intelligence from the Tauranga District.

Tauranga, August 6, 1869.

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 "It is absolutely necessary that the Constabulary should be kept together for some little time, as they are quite ignorant of their duties and require a thorough re-organization. All their arms, accoutrements, &c., require a thoroughly careful inspection, many of them being entirely unfit for service, and the men are in many instances without clothing." * * * * *

PHILIP HARRINGTON, Lieut.-Colonel,
Commanding Field Force, Bay of Plenty District.