

unjust aspersions on my proceedings which have at various times been made by members of the Auckland Provincial Government in their place in the House of Representatives and elsewhere, and also by the public press, beg permission to make a few remarks in defence of my conduct with respect to the Auckland Gold Fields.

In the first place, in July, 1867, when gold was discovered at Kauaeranga, I was holding an appointment as Civil Commissioner for the Colony, and was in charge of Native Affairs at Auckland, subject of course to the control of the responsible head of my department. I was also supposed in all cases of difficulty to lay the same before the Agent for the General Government, and act according to his advice.

At that time it was the opinion of the Hon. Dr. Pollen, Agent for the General Government, and then acting as Deputy Superintendent of the Province in the absence of Mr. Williamson, that a grave political crisis might arise from the fact of that discovery, and I coincided in that opinion. We also thought that by judicious management, good might be made to result to the Province and Colony by the acquisition of a new source of wealth. Under these circumstances we made the first agreement with the Natives; and I was instructed to take charge of the gold field, because my previous connection with Native matters, and also a slight knowledge I had of gold fields questions, acquired when Warden of the Collingwood Gold Field at Nelson, was thought likely to be useful. The Hon. Dr. Pollen did all he could to assist me then, and at all other times subsequently. I accordingly entered on these duties, and performed them to the best of my ability. Mr. Baillie, the Warden of the field, was overworked, badly paid, and only had a short previous experience of the duties of his office at the Coromandel Gold Fields. He was always diligent in his business, and never required any assistance from me in gold fields matters, except when absolutely necessary. There was however a large amount of responsibility thrown upon me; and although every man on my staff was good, they were numerically and physically incapable of performing the enormous amount of work required from them. It was in vain I pointed out to His Honor the Superintendent that more clerical assistance was needed, together with additional police force and some proper office accommodation. The invariable answer was, "There are no funds available." The Hon. Mr. Richmond came to Auckland, and I frequently spoke to him about the necessity of making some alterations at the Gold Fields. He admitted these were necessary, but could not well interfere with the action of the Superintendent, who held the delegated powers. On referring to His Honor the Superintendent he again would answer me to the effect, "That the gold field was Native property, and more a General Government matter than Provincial." At any rate both seemed to concur that I was to continue to manage all affairs there. Next came a financial difficulty—there was no money to pay the small staff employed on the field. A consultation, at which I was present, took place between the Hon. Mr. Richmond and His Honor the Superintendent, as to how to meet this. It was then agreed that my salary should be paid by the General Government as before, but that my travelling allowance should be equally divided between the two Governments; expenses of negotiations, hire of vessel, salaries of boatmen and Native police, were also to be apportioned in similar manner. It was also arranged to advance a sum of £500 for the erection of public buildings at Shortland, out of the sum of £2,000 placed on the general estimates for expenses at the Thames Gold Fields, which advance was to be repaid from the first available revenue. As there was a large sum received for miners' rights fees, which was not immediately required, I was told this might be employed temporarily for paying the departmental expenses, together with any other available revenue arising from other fees. Mr. Richmond ascertained the amount of gold duty received at the Custom House here, and said it should be forwarded as soon as he arrived at Wellington, so as to recoup the payments made from miners' rights fees, that no difficulty might arise in paying the Natives' rents when due.

I also pointed out on other occasions, to both the Hon. Mr. Richmond and His Honor the Superintendent, that "I had doubts as to my holding any valid commission empowering me to act as a Warden of the gold fields, and had such an authority for Native affairs only; and that if I was expected to perform the duties, some proper appointment should be given to me." Mr. Richmond told me "to do less of gold fields business and attend more to Native affairs." The Superintendent naturally did not like to take any steps, as I was a servant of the General Government, although he apparently saw the disadvantageous position in which I was placed.

Subsequently I assisted in hearing and adjudicating in a very important case in the Warden's Court between Messrs. Rowe and Butt. The decision was displeasing to some members of the legal profession who were interested in the case, and proceedings were commenced against me in the Supreme Court, which ended in my acts being declared illegal. The Government afterwards gazetted me as a Warden of Gold Fields. Mr. Richmond subsequently, in his place in the House of Representatives, spoke as if I had almost begged for the appointment of Commissioner of the Gold Field, whereas I had only applied to be placed in a proper position to enable me to fulfil the duties I was required to perform.

Time at length came round when it was necessary to pay the Natives their miners' rights fees or rents, and no money was remitted to me, because the gold duty had been impounded by the General Government as against Provincial liabilities. My health was bad. I felt no spirit to perform the enormous amount of work which was imposed upon me; and although believing myself that the Thames Gold Field would prove the salvation of the Province of Auckland, and help more than anything to solve the Native difficulty, it seemed as if its importance was altogether neglected and overlooked; and above all, I was conscious of not being properly supported in my very difficult position. It is therefore not to be wondered at that on the 4th August, 1868, I tendered my resignation of my appointments. This was not agreed to, and money was at once transmitted to me to meet immediate requirements. His Honor the Superintendent recommended that the resignation of the office of Warden should be accepted, and I was accordingly relieved of those duties. I was then offered fresh terms by Mr. Richmond as follows:—"We will allow you an improved salary, say £800, and not interfere with you in any private business which you may find compatible with the public duty I am going to ask of you. We will give you contingent advantages also in the shape of mining claims in case of success." The duty expected was to endeavour to extend the gold field farther south to the extremity of the