

CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO MR. J. C. FIRTH, AUCKLAND.

No. 1.

Mr. FIRTH to the Hon. J. VOGEL.

SIR,—

Auckland, 10th October, 1870.

I have the honor to forward herewith a letter addressed by me to the Right Hon. Earl Kimberley, Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, which, together with the accompanying documents referred to therein, I have the honor to request you will advise His Excellency the Governor to transmit in the usual manner to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I may observe that these documents refer to certain charges made or published against me by the Hon. Mr. McLean, Native and Defence Minister. I have the honor to inform you that I have not forwarded the whole of the correspondence, for the reasons that some of it reflects upon Mr. McLean, and I am not desirous of transmitting charges against Mr. McLean to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Should Mr. McLean desire that portion of the correspondence to be sent to Lord Kimberley, it can, of course, go forward by a subsequent mail.

The Hon. Julius Vogel, Resident Minister Auckland.

I have, &c.,
J. C. FIRTH.

No. 2.

Mr. FIRTH to Lord KIMBERLEY.

MY LORD,—

Auckland, 30th September, 1870.

I have the honor to direct your Lordship's attention to certain grave charges made or published against me by the Hon. Mr. McLean, C.M.G., Native and Defence Minister for the Colony of New Zealand, in various official documents which have been laid before the New Zealand Parliament during the Session just closed.

2. The first charge occurs in "Further Papers relative to Military Operations against the Rebel Natives," and presented to both Houses of the General Assembly, by command of His Excellency.—A. No. SA., at page 70, and entitled, "Statement made by Te Huare to Lieut. Mair, dated 31st January, 1870," and runs as follows:—"Forty of us went with him (Te Kooti) on horse-back past Peria, in the direction of Matamata, when we met Hohaia (Mr. Firth) and another European. Te Kooti had a long talk with Hohaia, who was so frightened that he made him a present of fifty caps, some Enfield ammunition, and a revolver. Te Kooti then let him go, for his knees were shaking together through fear. Te Kooti had two or three men with him at this meeting, and they told us about it. Hohaia sent Te Kooti a lot of rum." A statement to the same purport, made by the same Native to Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell, appears in "Further Papers," &c., A. No. SA, at page 59, dated 3rd February, 1870, and running as follows:—"The Native alluded to in Lieut. Mair's report (Te Huare) informs me (Lieut.-Colonel McDonnell) that he knows Te Kooti had two interviews with Mr. Firth, that he was present himself at both, and the second time Mr. Firth had given Te Kooti a box of percussion caps." This statement being made by the same Native, and being substantially the same as the preceding statement, does not require separate notice.

3. A further charge against me is made by the Hon. Mr. McLean himself, which appears in "Further Despatches from His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies," also presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency. At page 79, A. No. 1, of these Despatches, the Hon. Mr. McLean, in a Memorandum to His Excellency Sir G. F. Bowen, dated 14th February, 1870, says:—"It (Lord Granville's Despatch) has even worked mischief with that section of the Colonists who have habitually felt themselves at liberty to interfere without authority, and lend their countenance to rebellion. Thus an attempt, already referred to, was made by Mr. Firth, the lessee of a large quantity of Native land, to procure for Te Kooti, who had promised not to interfere with his land, something like a free pardon."

4. It is proper to explain to your Lordship that I was not made acquainted with either of these charges, nor was any opportunity afforded me of denying them, though an interval of five months elapsed between the date when they were made and that on which they were presented to the Assembly. On seeing for the first time, early in August last, these very serious charges made against me, I lost no time in directing the Hon. Mr. McLean's attention to them. In a letter to him, dated 4th August, I denied them in the fullest manner, supporting my denial by copies of such documents as I then had in my possession, and requesting him to give my denial a like publicity to that which he had given to the charges which he had thought proper to publish against me.

5. Mr. McLean did not comply with my request; and inasmuch as his Memorandum will be recorded against me at the Colonial Office in Downing Street, and, as I understand, that the New Zealand Parliamentary Papers are also regularly transmitted to the Colonial Office, I am under the necessity of appealing to your Lordship.