

Captain GALTON to the UNDER SECRETARY of STATE, Colonial Office.

SIR,—

War Office, 25th November, 1865.

I am directed by Earl de Grey and Ripon to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant, transmitting copies of two despatches from the Governor of New Zealand: the first forwarding a letter from Major Heaphy praying that his claims for the Victoria Cross may be again considered, and the second enclosing a memorandum by his Ministers relative to Major Heaphy's application, and suggesting that the distinction of the Victoria Cross should be extended to New Zealand and other colonies; and in reply, I am desired by his Lordship to request that you will inform Mr. Secretary Cardwell that, as the existing regulations of the Victoria Cross do not admit of the grant of that distinction to Major Heaphy, and as the alteration of those regulations could not be undertaken without full and careful consideration, Lord de Grey is unable, before the departure of the next mail to New Zealand, to give a definite reply to Mr. Cardwell upon that point. His Lordship will however give his immediate attention to this subject, which concerns the whole of Her Majesty's colonial possessions, as well as New Zealand, and a further communication will be made to you on the subject.

But Lord de Grey cannot permit any time to be lost in expressing his sincere regret that the letter from this department, dated the 26th of April last, should have been understood by the Colonial Ministers in the sense implied by their memorandum of the 11th of August last.

The allusion to a grant of land made in Sir Edward Lugard's letter was intended to suggest to Mr. Cardwell a mode in which it might be possible for the Governor of New Zealand to mark his sense of Major Heaphy's services, although the regulations laid down in the Royal Warrant instituting the Victoria Cross precluded Lord de Grey from submitting the name of that officer to Her Majesty for the grant of this high distinction; but nothing could have been further from his Lordship's intention than to have even the appearance of speaking in disparaging terms of the gallantry displayed by Major Heaphy at the skirmish on the banks of the Mangapiko, or of the valuable services rendered on many occasions by Her Majesty's Colonial Forces both in New Zealand and in other colonies.

I have, &c.,

DOUGLAS GALTON.

The Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

No. 10.

DESPATCH No. 139.—Wellington, 29th November, 1867.—Recommending Major W. R. Gray, Military Train, A.D.C., for some special mark of Her Majesty's approbation.

Copy of a Despatch from Governor Sir G. GREY, K.C.B., to His Grace the Duke of BUCKINGHAM and CHANDOS.

(No. 139.)

MY LORD DUKE,—

Government House, Wellington, 29th November, 1867.

I have the honor to request that your Grace would bring under the notice of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief the services of my Aide-de-Camp, Major W. R. Gray, of the Military Train.

2. In my Despatch No. 94, of 22nd July, 1865, I called attention to the services Major Gray had rendered on a very important occasion, for which services he received no reward.

3. I beg further to state that, considering the large force in the country, the composition of that force, sometimes consisting in part of as many as six or eight thousand men raised by the colony, besides large bodies of enrolled Natives, the duties of the Governor and his staff have during the continuance of a long war been very different from those which ordinarily devolve on the civil Governor of a colony.

4. Major W. R. Gray entered the service in April, 1843.

5. He went to China for the second time with the 1st battalion Military Train in November, 1859.

6. His commanding officer having been placed on half-pay and sent Home, Major Gray, then a captain, was appointed captain commandant of the Horse Transport Service; it at that time consisted of twenty-seven officers and about 2,500 men of different races, including a complete battalion of the Military Train, and there were attached to it some 3,000 horses, mules, bullocks, &c.

7. I believe that the present Quartermaster General, Sir Hope Grant, will state that from its composition and other causes the Military Train was in a bad state when Captain Gray assumed the command of it; whilst from that date the efficiency of the corps so improved that at the end of the march from the Taku Forts to Tien Tsin, Sir Robert Napier (now commanding in Abyssinia) sent his Adjutant-General to express his thanks for the manner in which the march had been conducted.

8. On returning from Pekin the Military Train remained with the Army of Occupation at Tien Tsin until October, 1861, when it embarked for England, still under the orders of Captain Gray, and landed at Woolwich on the 30th March, 1862.

9. The Military Train received two distinctions, Taku Forts and Pekin. Captain Gray was in command while the distinctions were earned, and he received the brevet rank of major, but was the only commanding officer who was not made a C.B.

10. I hope that when these services of Major Gray are brought before the notice of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, together with the services he has now rendered upon my staff in New Zealand during times of such serious and critical disturbances, His Royal Highness will be of opinion that Major Gray's long and arduous services entitle him to some such mark of approbation as has been given to the other military officers who have rendered good and distinguished services in New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

G. GREY.

His Grace the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.