

supplies of ammunition from Wellington, and were sending in horses for more. I at once sent Natana to Wellington with a copy of Dr. Hewson's letter, for the information of the police authorities. (I paid Natana £3, *vide* receipt.)

Mr. Mantell says that this "aided in no degree the detection of the offender, and only facilitated his escape by putting him prematurely on his guard." I held a different opinion; and His Honor the Superintendent (to whom Mr. Mantell referred the letter) informed me, soon afterwards, that the express had done good by putting the police on the alert.

When I sent in my claim on account of disbursements (Doc. I), Mr. Mantell struck out the item (express Natana, £3), with the note, "This charge must be omitted before I can approve the account." I at once withdrew this item, reserving it for the Native Minister, and sent the account back for approval.

Mr. Mantell says:—"Mr. Buller did not accompany the amended account with any protest or remark of any kind. He knew himself unable to justify that express to me, on the ground of utility."

I had already told Mr. Mantell officially that I believed I had done what was right, and I therefore concluded that to refer the claim to the head of my department was preferable to disputing it with Mr. Mantell (as I should otherwise have done). I simply sent him such as he was ready to approve, to expedite payment, reserving the disputed item for reference, but never contemplating the withdrawal of a legitimate claim.

Mr. Mantell did not by his note "disallow" the claim, or "make it as one he could not approve." He simply declined to approve it.

In some cases he has referred the whole of my account to the Native Minister, in others he has approved. I understood that in this instance he was willing to approve all but this particular item.

If, in thus referring my claim to head-quarters, I did not adopt a proper course, I can only plead the conflicting nature of my instructions, and the uncertainty as to my true position in relation to the Hon. Mr. Mantell.

In the early part of this year, the Native Minister, in approving my account for contingencies, "requested that Mr. Buller would not again incur the expense of special messengering."

As the expenses which provoked this minute had been incurred by command (when His Excellency was in this district), I felt that Mr. Bell's minute left me no latitude or discretion.

Accordingly when, some months afterwards, Mr. White, R.M., sent me a letter with a verbal request to forward it by express to Wellington, I declined to engage a messenger and sent it (after some delay) by private hand.

I justified myself to Mr. Mantell by quoting Mr. Bell's minute, but received a reprimand in what Mr. Mantell himself styled a "grim" Memorandum. (The Memorandum and my reply were forwarded to the Native Office.)

Mr. Mantell nevertheless admitted to me in conversation that this letter was not of sufficient importance to warrant an express.

I at that time asked Mr. Mantell for written authority to engage special messengers. He declined to give any general authority, but requested me to use my discretion in such matters. I did so in sending my first express (Natana.)

When I was appointed to this district I was ordered to correspond with the Native Minister (*vide* letter 17th February, 1862.)

In December, 1862, I received instructions to send through the Hon. Mr. Mantell such of my reports only as "should relate to matters of importance, and to consider as coming from the Native Minister any instructions I might receive from Mr. Mantell in cases of emergency, and to act upon them accordingly." Mr. Mantell however appears to have assumed the entire control and direction of my department, and his instructions have been in every instance obeyed.

Mr. Mantell says that my Memorandum leads you to believe that "this most useless express achieved that which it only tended to frustrate."

Whether the express was useless or not, is, I submit, quite a matter of opinion. I have already quoted Dr. Featherston's opinion; and for my own part, I can only say that under similar circumstances again (if left to my own discretion) my judgment would dictate the same course.

I refer the Government to the letter itself (Enclosure to No. 2, p. 1.) The announcement that the Natives had not only received large supplies of powder, &c., from Wellington, but were sending in horses for more, seemed to me of sufficient importance to be at once communicated to the police. With all deference to Mr. Mantell, I am still firmly of opinion that "the inquiry thus set on foot led to the apprehension of George Waters," and I expressed this opinion in my letter to Dr. Hewson (of July last) thanking him for his information.

I could not have pretended that this express had led directly to the apprehension and conviction of Waters, because the whole of my correspondence, detailing the subsequent steps, was already before the Native Minister.

My Memorandum (Enclosure 1) was intended to convey my opinion, not Mr. Mantell's. His view of the matter was already before the Native Minister (*i. e.*, his strong minute on my letter of 22nd June).

If I had charged the Government with a sum which I had not expended I should have been open to the censure and the punishment to which Mr. Mantell considers me liable; but I beg the Government to observe that the payment I sought to recover back had been actually made by me out of my own private pocket in the *bona fide* belief that I was acting for the good of the Public Service in a matter on which I had an official discretion allowed me by Mr. Mantell himself. I do not complain of the loss of the paltry amount involved, but I do complain of the attempt which is made to convert my personal loss into the basis of an attack on my personal character.

If I have unwittingly offended the Hon. Mr. Mantell I am extremely sorry for it; but I respectfully submit that in this matter he has done me a grievous wrong and injustice by condemning me unheard, and I do trust that the Government will not hesitate to vindicate the character of an officer whose