

It is from this point that I propose to discuss the subject of the defence of New Zealand.

New Zealand in different position from Australian Colonies as regards attack.

New Zealand stands, as regards attack, somewhat in a different position from the Australian Colonies. In Australia there are few harbors of importance, which are not the centres of large populations; and consequently the resources in men and appliances for defence are to be found where they are most wanted. In New Zealand, on the contrary, the population (414,412) is scattered over a wide area, and there are several large harbors, possessing equal claims to be especially protected. There are also many settlements on the coast which are exposed to attack, but which it is not possible—without throwing too heavy a burden on the resources of the colony—to include in a general scheme of defence.

Defence of New Zealand by naval means alone not practicable.

The fact that New Zealand possesses a seaboard of over 2,200 miles, and that the principal harbors are situated at great distances apart, effectually disposes of the idea of attempting to defend the colony by naval means alone. Even the possession of a ship in one or more of the harbors, or a small squadron for general defence, could not be relied upon as a sufficient protection for individual ports scattered over a length of coast from North to South of over 1,000 miles.

For instance, supposing an attack were made upon Auckland, when the ship or squadron was at Lyttelton, two or three days must inevitably elapse before the protecting ship could reach Auckland, during which time much mischief might have been done. If the squadron had happened to be at sea, instead of in a port, an extra day or even more might elapse.

Or again, a feint by a single ship on one port might be made, to draw the squadron away from the real point of attack.

For these reasons it is obvious that the principle, upon which the defence of New Zealand at the present time should be based, is to place each of the principal harbors in a position to repel attack from one or two hostile cruisers; and at the same time to afford points of support, and—in case of disaster, of refuge—to such of Her Majesty's ships as would, in time of war, be detached to co-operate in the general defence of Australia and New Zealand.

Description of seaboard.

The colony of New Zealand comprises two principal islands of considerable extent, and Stewart's Island to the south, which is very small and unimportant. In both the large islands numerous bays and inlets of the sea are found, which constitute fine natural harbors; but as yet the population is small and the trade inconsiderable, except at certain principal points.

In the North Island, which embraces an extent of coast amounting to nearly 1,250 miles, the only ports of importance are Auckland, in the north, and Wellington (Port Nicholson), in the south, 600 miles apart. The harbors on the west coast, such as Hokianga, Kaipara, and