

Enclosure.

MAJOR ATKINSON presents his compliments to the Governor; and desires respectfully to call His Excellency's attention to the 23rd paragraph of the despatch, numbered 81, and addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the 28th December last.

2. In that paragraph, His Excellency, replying to a memorandum by the late Premier, states—"I have nowhere said of the settlers generally, that they urged the adoption of measures imperilling the peace of the country. What I have said, and what I repeat, is that such measures were, doubtless with the best intentions, pressed on the Government in certain quarters. I refer to such suggestions as are more than once rebuked in Colonel Whitmore's telegrams; to the desired expulsion of all Natives, loyal and disloyal, from the County of Patea; to the Hon. Major Atkinson's speech at Hawera; to the mode in which it was recommended that the Government should meet a present of food made by Te Whiti to Colonel Roberts; and other like suggestions."

The appended note is as follows:—"In which he is reported (*Taranaki Herald*, June 7, 1879) to have expressed a hope that the Maoris would be 'exterminated.'"

3. This despatch was written nearly six months ago; but Major Atkinson did not see it until the 3rd instant.

4. Major Atkinson denies, emphatically and unequivocally, that he ever used the expression attributed to him, or any similar expression, or any expression conveying the same or a like meaning; and he declares that he never harboured the thought which any such language would be suited to convey.

5. The account published by the *Herald* appears to have been telegraphed from Hawera to New Plymouth. It is of the briefest kind, not purporting to be a report of what was said. The paragraph from which the quotation was made by His Excellency reads thus:—

"Major Atkinson was present and addressed the meeting. He said he did not know of the meeting until his arrival at Stratford. He informed the meeting of the result of the interview with the Ministers. He thought all settlers willing to take arms should have Snider rifles. Settlers should only protect their own settlements. He had telegraphed for Sniders to be given to the Okato and Normanby Volunteers. The Government would send some to Okato, but he could not say whether they would have enough for Normanby. He recommended, as the settlers were persons who suffered, they should keep an eye upon the Government. He hoped, if war did come, the Natives would be exterminated, and throw the responsibility upon the Government, and bring matters to a speedy conclusion."

6. Major Atkinson deeply regrets that an account of such a kind should have been accepted by His Excellency as sufficient authority for making, against one who at the time was a Minister of the Crown, and in almost daily intercourse with His Excellency, the very grave charge of hoping that the Maoris would be "exterminated." A single question, not involving an hour's delay, would have obtained for His Excellency the assurance that the account was certainly erroneous in all that related to the statement in question.

7. The meeting at Hawera was one of a series. Major Atkinson spoke at Inglewood on the 5th June, at Hawera on the 6th, and at Patea on the 7th. A brief account of the first meeting was published in the number of the *Taranaki Herald* quoted by His Excellency; of the last, there was an account in the *Patea Mail* of the 11th. Major Atkinson's objects in attending the meetings were, as the accounts mentioned sufficiently show, to prevent, as far as possible, alarm or excitement on the part of the settlers; and to ensure that whatever they might do, because of attack or aggression by Maoris, should be done by direction and under the control of the constituted authorities.

8. The resolutions adopted by the Hawera meeting evidence the spirit in which the business of that meeting was conducted. They were included in the *Herald's* account, as follows:—

"(1.) That this meeting is of opinion that the attention of the Government be drawn to the unprotected condition of the settlement and the towns of Hawera and Normanby, and to the absence of organization enabling settlers to act together for the defence of their homes, in the case of disturbance.

"(2.) That the meeting is aware that the Natives are prepared, should impulse lead them, to make a raid upon the settlements, and fear that, although the first acts of trespass were committed at New Plymouth, they may only be a ruse to avert the protection from centres of population nearest the Native settlements, from which attack might be made on this district.

"(3.) This meeting is of opinion that, if the unlawful act committed at Tapuae and Opunake are not dealt with by the Government with promptitude and determination, it will be so repeated as to result in actual collision between the races.

"(4.) This meeting desires to assure the Government that the question is not regarded as one of party, but of colonial concern, and is willing to co-operate and render the Government all the assistance in its power.

"(5.) That this meeting is of opinion that immediate steps should be taken, without doing anything to provoke collision, to arm and organize the settlers, in order to resist any attack made upon them.

"(6.) This meeting is of opinion that a force of men should immediately be sent to the district, sufficient to prevent aggression.

"(7.) That a Committee be appointed to communicate with the Government in any matter arising in the towns or neighbourhood requiring attention in connection with the defence of the district.

"(8.) That the Government be urged to issue Snider rifles instead of Enfield rifles."

9. Major Atkinson requests that His Excellency will be pleased to send to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, at the earliest opportunity, a copy of this memorandum.

Wellington, 10th June, 1882.

H. A. ATKINSON.