

Although the campaign in the Waikato had virtually ended with the battle of Orakau four months earlier, many of the troops were still in camp and significant skirmishing was continuing on the southern and eastern limits of British power. The *Herald's* Te Awamutu correspondent reported their arrival at the camp on 28 July with an A.D.C. to be greeted by General Carey. A garbled placename suggests that Kihikihi might have been their furthest night stop but the journalist gloating in revolting prose at the territorial spoils of the campaign could only say that '... they must have been impressed with the resources of this vast and inexhaustible tract of country'.<sup>20</sup>

He would have been disappointed at Docker's impressions in his first surviving letter:

What we have seen of the interior has uniformly consisted of bare undulating plains covered with fern instead of grass and without a tree or shrub for fifty miles at a stretch interspersed with swamps on which the flax grows... occasionally these swamps collect into small lakes which when they have a few trees near them are picturesque enough but then you cannot get near them as these margins are all swampy...

Docker's description might have been a reflection of his pictorial disappointment for he had little opportunity to try out his new equipment which was heavy and bulky. Each shot apparently required an exposure of ten minutes:

... I took the camera with me to the front and saw several nice points of view... [but] we were always too early in the morning in starting or too late in arriving to do anything... The plates Mr Hitzer prepared were good for nothing; they came out all spots and streaky so that those I did get... were worthless...<sup>21</sup>

The *Lord Ashley* on which they travelled to Wellington made an overnight stop at Napier permitting Gunn to visit Colenso in his eyrie by Milton Road, probably their first meeting which Colenso later mentioned to Hooker. The coastal voyage was in company with Dr I.E. Featherston, Provincial Superintendent of eleven years standing. On arrival in Wellington on 7 August Murphy and Docker accompanied Featherston to Government House 'which had been prepared for their reception'. Gunn had to be rescued from Queen's Hotel on the Quay—a slight hint that at this point of time he was, very briefly, the odd man out.<sup>22</sup>

Although there was no suggestion that the journey south had been taken up with political discussion, Featherston would have been his most urbane and ingratiating self in discreetly dispelling much of the Auckland-induced anti-Wellington mythology. Gisborne has pointed out that his influence over men 'was almost magnetic'.<sup>23</sup> As a strong provincialist his views on several matters would have been in tune with those of representatives of three separate states. Docker, writing cautiously to a son in distant