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WAR-OFFICE, August 22, 1863.

THE Secretary of State for War has received a Despatch and its Enclosures, addressed to him by Lieutenant-General Cameron, C.B., commanding the Troops in New Zealand, of which the following are copies :—

Head-Quarters, New Plymouth,  
Sir, June 9, 1863.

I HAVE the honour to report that the rebel natives having collected in considerable numbers \* about 15 miles from New Plymouth, on the left bank of the Katikara River, which forms the boundary of the European land in that direction, and runs within a few hundred yards of St George's Redoubt on the Sataraimaka block, I decided upon crossing the river and attacking their position, as it appeared likely from the care with which they had fortified it that they intended to make a stand, and that a favourable opportunity would thus be afforded of striking a decisive blow.

I accordingly marched out of New Plymouth at nine o'clock on the night of the 3d instant, with nearly the whole of the regular troops forming the garrison of the town, and proceeded towards the Katikara river. In order that the march might not be impeded, the guns, mortars, and reserve ammunition, had been sent on a few hours before under a strong escort, and no tents or baggage of any kind were allowed to accompany the column. The officers and men carried each a blanket and a day's provisions cooked. The column having been joined on the line of march by detachments of the 57th Regiment, from the outposts, arrived at St George's Redoubt a little before four o'clock on the morning of the 4th instant. The strength and composition of the force thus assembled, including the garrison of the redoubt, are shown in the margin.†

Before leaving New Plymouth I had arranged with Captain Mayne, R.N., that Her Majesty's

ship "Eclipse" should be at the mouth of the Katikara River before day-break, ready to co-operate in the attack.

I had found it very difficult to obtain accurate information regarding the points where the river could be most easily crossed; and it was also impossible, by observation from St George's Redoubt, to ascertain the exact nature of the enemy's defences. The left bank of the river was about 60 or 70 feet high, everywhere very steep, and in some places covered with high fern. The main road leading from St George's Redoubt across the mouth of the river to the left of the enemy's position was known to be strongly defended by a line of rifle pits half-way up the left bank of the river, and as this road passed through a large patch of flax bushes when it reached the table land, it appeared difficult to force the position at that point.

I was informed by Mr Bayley, a New Plymouth settler, that about 600 yards above the ford at the mouth of the river there was another ford, and a track by which the left bank could be easily ascended. Higher up the river, on a commanding point about 600 yards to our left of this ford and 400 yards from the bank of the river, the enemy had enclosed some wharres with a kind of redoubt, consisting of a parapet and rifle-pits, which appeared to be his principal work; and between this and the main road, the position was defended at various points by lines of rifle-pits. A prisoner captured a few days before had reported that a Kainga, or village, about a mile down the coast, was also entrenched.

The plan of attack which I considered best adapted to this state of things, was to pass the 57th Regiment across the river under cover of the guns at the last-mentioned ford, to detach the two leading parties of the "advance," as soon as they reached the top of the bank, to turn the rifle-pits and flax bushes at the road, the third party of the "advance" to extend to its front to protect this movement, and the main body of the regiment to show a front to the left, towards the redoubt, so as to keep the enemy in check. The remainder

\* Reported to be six hundred.

† DISTRIBUTION.

General Staff—Field Officers, 5; Serjeants, 1.  
Medical Staff—Staff, 2.  
Commissariat Staff—Staff, 1.  
Royal Artillery—Captains, 1; Subalterns, 3; Serjeants, 6; Drummers, 2; Rank and File, 113.  
Royal Engineers—Subalterns, 2; Rank and File, 13.  
40th Regiment—Rank and File, 1.  
57th Regiment—Field Officers, 2; Captains, 3; Subalterns, 8; Staff, 3; Serjeants, 18; Drummers, 9; Rank and File, 353.  
65th Regiment—Captains, 1; Subalterns, 2; Serjeants, 4; Drummers, 1; Rank and File, 77.

70th Regiment—Field Officers, 1; Captains, 3; Subalterns, 6; Staff, 1; Serjeants, 12; Drummers, 3; Rank and File, 209.

Transport Corps—Captains, 1; Serjeants, 1; Rank and File, 5.

Total—Field Officers, 8; Captains, 9; Subalterns, 2; Staff, 7; Serjeants, 42; Drummers, 15; Rank and File, 771.

