

Lieutenant-Colonel M. Lepper, Commanding Taranaki Military Settlers

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Letter dated 16 Dec 1865 Lieut-Col. Lepper, TMS Office, New Plymouth to Major Parris, Civil Commissioner, New Plymouth
Sir, With reference to the Copy of a letter from Col. Haultain, dated 9th December 1865 which I sent you, regarding the raising of thirty five Natives for active service, I have to request you will be pleased to nominate a European to take charge of them and who will be under the immediate orders of Captain Corbett, who commands the party, he will receive the pay and allowance of a Lieutenant in the Taranaki Military Settlers from the 18th instant while serving. The pay of the Natives will be two & sixpence a day with rations.

Letter dated 12 Feb 1866 J. G. Corbett, Commanding Bushrangers, New Plymouth to the Adjutant, TMS, New Plymouth
Sir, I have the honor to request you will lay before the Lieut-Colonel Commanding TMS my recommendation that the services of Mr Wilkinson attached to the Bushrangers under my command be dispensed with and another subaltern attached to replace him. I am sorry to have to report that Mr Wilkinson has no control over the Natives, who speak of him with Contempt and will not work in the Field for him. I have been compelled to take the advance with the Natives myself and give the command of the Military settlers to Ensign Messenger, whose services have been most valuable and of whom it is my intention to report for the Consideration of the Government.
P.S. From my experience of the Natives under my Command I do not consider an Interpreter necessary.

Letter dated 12 Feb 1866 Lieut-Col. M. Lepper, TMS Office, New Plymouth to R. Parris, Esq., Civil Commissioner, New Plymouth
Sir, I have the honor to forward you a copy of a letter received from Captain Corbett for your information and to state that I have complied with his request and have sent an order to Mr Wilkinson to come into Town for the purpose of his services being placed at your disposal, he being no longer required with Captain Corbett's Force.

Letter dated 13 Feb 1866 R. Parris, Civil Commissioner, New Plymouth to Lieut-Col. Lepper

Sir, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, enclosing one from Captain Corbett respecting the dismissal of Mr Wilkinson. On the 16th December last I received a letter from you requesting me to nominate an European to take charge of Natives employed for active service, under Captain Corbett. Mr Wilkinson was the only person available for that purpose at the time, and was then employed as Interpreter at Opunaki, which he gave up at my request, to join Captain Corbett and was relieved by another person proceeding to Opunaki to act as Interpreter in his place. I was not aware that it was customary to dismiss summarily, Officers of Militia upon an ex parte statement without formal inquiry into the justness of the charge preferred. The charge of Captain Corbett against Mr Wilkinson is to the effect that the natives "speak of him with contempt" in which case I respectfully submit (had such been the case, which Mr Wilkinson denies) whether it was not the duty of Captain Corbett, as the Officer in charge, to punish the natives for contempt of their own immediate officer. I have no employment for Mr Wilkinson, but will refer his case to the Government.

Letter dated 14 Feb 1866 Lieut-Col. Lepper, TMS Office, New Plymouth to Captain Holt, Under Secretary, Colonial Defence Office, Wellington

Sir, I have the honor to forward the enclosed correspondence for the information of the Government and to state that Mr Wilkinson is not an Officer in the Militia and had he been, I consider it would have been to blame had I not complied with the request of Captain Corbett, whose force was on the eve of attacking a strong pah, in possession of William King & a strong force of rebel Natives.

Note by T. M. Haultain 31 Mar 1866: For the Honble. The Native Minister. As Mr Wilkinson was ... temporarily employed with the party of Natives attached to Captain Corbett's Company and as his Services are no longer required I think he should return to his former post as Interpreter at Opunake.

Note by T. M. Haultain 04 Apr 1866: Mr Parris should be directed to send Mr Wilkinson back to Opunake as Interpreter unless there is some objection which does not appear in this correspondence.

Letter dated 28 Mar 1866 John Wilkinson, New Plymouth to Major Parris, Civil Commissioner, New Plymouth

Sir, Having learnt that the Mounted men under Captain Mace are to have Grants of Land for their Services and having originally belonged to that Corps but left to accommodate the Government by acting as Interpreter to the Field Force and having resigned that appointment on being requested to take charge of the Natives in the Company of Bush Rangers lately disbanded under Captain Corbett, I beg to apply for a Grant of Land to which I respectfully submit I am entitled and trust you will forward my application to the Government.

Letter dated 04 Apr 1866 R. Parris, Civil Commissioner, New Plymouth to the Hon. Defence Minister, Wellington

Sir, At the request of Mr John Wilkinson I have the honor to forward the enclosed application from him for a Grant of land. On receipt of his letter I recommended him to forward it through Lt. Col. Lepper as the proper channel, but on his waiting upon that Gentleman he was recommended to send it through me, because he was for some time acting as Interpreter. To oblige the Government and the Commanding Officer he left the Mounted Corps to go to Opunaki in the capacity of Interpreter for that Post, and in December last a person being wanted to join the Company of Bushrangers under Captain Corbett to take charge of the Natives enrolled with the Company, he again gave up his employment and joined the Bushrangers to accommodate the public service, and he now states (not unfairly I think) that but for his agreeing to be removed from one service to another, he should have continued in the Mounted Corps, and have been entitled to land the same as they. He is a well conducted young man, active, and plucky and speaks Maori, and I can confidently recommend him should you feel disposed to entertain his application.

Note by T. M. Haultain 12 Apr 1866: Enquire how long Mr Wilkinson served with the Mounted and whether he received any increase of pay on being appointed Interpreter.

Letter dated 26 Apr 1866 Lieut-Col. Lepper, TMS Office, New Plymouth to Captain Holt, Under Secretary, Colonial Defence Office, Wellington
Sir, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter as per margin, and to inform you for the information of the Hon. the Minister for Colonial Defence that Mr Wilkinson served in the Taranaki Mounted Force for only thirty five days as a Private viz from 1st May 1865 until the 4th June 1865. When he was employed as Interpreter he received a salary of £220 a year. During the short time he was attached to Captain Corbett's Company as Interpreter he received the pay of a Lieutenant in the Taranaki Military Settlers.

Note by T. M. Haultain 03 May 1866: Mr Wilkinson's application for land cannot be entertained.
