



NEW ZEALAND
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE
EXTRAORDINARY.

PROVINCE OF NEW ULSTER.

Published by Authority.

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By His Excellency's Command,
ANDREW SINCLAIR, Colonial Secretary.

VOL. I. AUCKLAND, MONDAY, NOV. 13, 1848. No. 27

*Civil Secretary's Office,
Auckland, 13th November, 1848.*

HIS Excellency the Governor-in-Chief has been pleased to direct the publication of the following despatches, from Lieutenant-Governor EYRE, relative to the late calamitous visitation at Wellington, for general information.

By His Excellency's command,
C. A. DILLON,
Civil Secretary.

*Government House,
Wellington, 19th October, 1848.*

SIR,

It is my most painful duty to inform your Excellency that a terrible calamity has overtaken this Province: an earthquake has occurred, and the town of Wellington is in ruins.

On the morning of Monday, the 16th October, about twenty minutes to two A.M., the first shock occurred, and was sufficiently strong to throw down or injure most of the chimnies in the town, and to crack the walls of very many of the brick buildings.

Considerable loss of property was sustained by breakages in the houses, and a good deal of alarm excited in the minds of the inhabitants. During the whole of Monday shocks and tremblings of the earth were from time to time experienced, but of a slighter character than the first.

On Tuesday, the 17th October, about four o'clock, A.M., another rather smart shock was felt, and again at eight, A.M. Lighter ones continued at intervals during the day, until, at twenty minutes to four o'clock in the afternoon, when a sudden and much more violent shock took place—by this chimnies previously remaining up were for the most part east down. The Native Hospital, the Gaol, many of the large brick stores, and the higher brick walls, were either very much rent or wholly thrown down; immense destruction of property took place, and, I regret to add, a melancholy loss of life.

Barrack-Serjeant Lovell and two of his children were thrown down and buried by falling ruins. Upon being extricated one of the children was found dead, and the other so seriously injured, that it died a few hours afterwards. The Serjeant himself was much hurt, and now lies in a precarious state.*

During the remainder of Tuesday and the succeeding night slight shocks only were felt; but about five, A.M. on Wednesday morning, a stronger one occurred, and another about eight, A.M. Minor shocks continued at intervals during the remainder of the day and evening, until the morning of Thursday, the 19th, at ten minutes past five, A.M., when a most violent and awful shock took place; every building was rocked to and fro in a fearful manner; and, with the exception of the wooden dwellings, most of the houses and stores were seriously shattered or fell in. The whole population

* Since dead.

Government House,
Wellington, October 21, 1848.

SIR,

were in the utmost consternation and alarm; and the destruction of property was immense; but most providentially, up to the present time, no further loss of life has ensued.

Numbers of persons are, however, ruined; many left houseless and homeless, except such temporary shelter as can be afforded by the New Church, Te Aro, by Government House (where the Hospital patients and some others are taken in), and by the wooden buildings of their friends.

Many persons are afraid of remaining in any of the houses at nights, and retire to the bush among the hills in the hope of being more secure, notwithstanding the wild and inclement weather by which the earthquake has been accompanied.

A blow has been struck at the prosperity, almost at the very existence of the settlement, from which it will not readily recover. Terror and dismay reign every where; for the last four days no business of any kind has been transacted. The energies of all seemed paralysed, and during that period no one has been able to feel for a moment that even life itself is secure.

As I now write, too, (11 p.m. 19th October), incessant and alarming tremblings of the earth are experienced—what may be the eventual result, or when this dreadful state of suspense and anxiety may be terminated, God alone can tell, but every one seems to feel a presentiment that it will end in some still more fearful catastrophe than any which has yet taken place.

The sad ravages which have already occurred, and the terror which so frightful a visitation naturally produces in most men's minds, will, I apprehend, drive from the colony all who can find the means of getting away. The few ships now in port, waiting for moderate weather to sail, are crowded to excess with colonists abandoning the country, and numbers are unable to obtain passages.

Under this awful visitation, I deemed it my duty at once to summon my Executive Council, and with their approval, to proclaim a day of public and solemn fast, prayer and humiliation, in order that supplication might be offered up to Almighty God, to avert the recurrence of any similar visitation, and Friday, the 20th of October, was appointed for this purpose.

I will not fail to communicate to your Excellency, such further information and reports, as it may be in my power from time to time to render.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient
humble servant,

E. EYRE.

His Excellency
the Governor-in-Chief.

In continuation of my Despatch of the 19th instant. I have the honor to inform your Excellency that between half past eleven, P.M., on the 19th, and one, A.M., on the 20th, frequent and rather strong shocks succeeded each other in rapid succession, during which time, the earth appeared to be in a continual state of agitation under foot. The shocks and the pulsation of the ground then ceased until about five, A.M., when slight shocks again occurred, and were repeated at intervals during the whole of Friday, but no further damage was done by them. And, although shocks have been experienced occasionally up to the present time. (11 A.M., Saturday, 21st October), I would hope that the worst is over, and that the convulsions of nature may gradually subside. We are not, however, yet aware of any eruption having taken place, or any vent being opened in any direction, though strong lurid lights, seen in the sky in the evenings in the North and South, seem to be reflections from the light of some volcano.

Yesterday (Friday, the 20th October) was, in accordance with the intimation given your Excellency in my last despatch, observed as a solemn Fast day, and I am happy to say that it was most reverently observed—persons of all classes and all denominations responding in right feeling and conduct befitting such an occasion, and shewing by the immense assemblages at the various religious observances of the day, that they acknowledged the hand of the Almighty and looked to him only for safety and protection.

In consequence of the long continuance of the earthquake, and the uncertainty as to what may be its eventual results, I have deemed it right, under the advice of my Executive Council to order the detention for a few days of any vessels in harbour, which might attempt to leave it, the alarm and apprehension being so great, that if the few ships now here were to sail away, the people would consider themselves as altogether deserted, and without any means of security left them, should future shocks occur, and produce greater devastation than already exists. This order I find has already exercised a most beneficial influence in keeping up the spirits and confidence of the population.

I have also taken the precaution of shipping, on board H. M. Ship *Fly*, the greater part of the Specie in the Colonial Chest, until such time as the elements appear more settled. The Commissariat Department have, I believe, also done the same under the instructions of the Senior Military Officer.

Persons arriving by a vessel leaving Otakou, on Wednesday the 18th, state that no shock had been experienced there up to the time of her sailing. I have no accounts from Wanganui or Nelson, but fear the earthquakes must have been felt severely at both. From Queen Charlotte's sound, an open boat came over in very stormy weather for the purpose of bringing away a party of European Women who were living there, and were alarmed at the convulsion going on. At Porirua the Military Barracks are destroyed, and the troops are living in Warres.

The Natives have no recollection of any earthquakes at all corresponding in either degree or continuance to the one which is now visiting us.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient,
humble servant,

E. EYRE.

His Excellency,
the Governor-in-Chief.

The following is the Proclamation referred to in Lieutenant-Governor EYRE's despatch.

PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS it has pleased Almighty God to visit this settlement with a great and grievous calamity, and it is fitting that a public acknowledgment be made of the Divine Power, on whom all the operations of nature and the security of his creatures depend, and that prayers and supplications be offered up to Almighty God to avert the recurrence of any similar visitation :

Now therefore I, Edward John Eyre, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of New Munster, by and with the advice of my Executive Council, do hereby proclaim and declare that to-morrow, the 20th of October, shall be held as a day of public fast, prayer, and humiliation.

Given under my hand and seal, at Government House, Wellington, this 19th day of October, 1848.

E. EYRE.

By His Excellency's command,

ALFRED DOMETT,

Colonial Secretary.

