

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Should I hear any more upon this subject, I shall lose no time in reporting it for the information of the Government. In the meantime I should wish to be favoured with his Excellency's instructions as to the course I should pursue if the Natives again advert to the subject, and particularly as to what his Excellency would wish to be done in the event of their proceeding to any overt act.

I have, &c.,

G. S. COOPER.

No. 66.

THE ASSISTANT NATIVE SECRETARY TO MR. COMMISSIONER COOPER.

Native Land Purchase Department,
Auckland, March 10th, 1860.

No. 41.

Transmitting extract from
letter of Superintendent
of Hawke's Bay.

SIR,—

I have the honor to transmit herewith an extract from a letter addressed to the Hon. the Colonial Secretary by His Honor the Superintendent of Hawke's Bay, relating to an alleged disposition on the part of the Natives, to repudiate sales of land made by them to the Government and to request that you will report for the information of His Excellency the Governor whether the statement referred to is correct and particularly with respect to the two cases cited by His Honor.

I have, &c.,

G. S. Cooper, Esq., J.P.,
District Commissioner, Napier.

T. H. SMITH,
Assistant Native Secretary.

Enclosure in No. 66.

EXTRACT FROM SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTER.

Napier, March 3rd, 1860.

SIR,—

* * * Time will not allow me at present to cite numerous cases that could be adduced of the growing disposition of the Natives to refuse to obey the laws, as well as to repudiate many of the sales of land made by them and ratified formerly in the fullest possible way; but they are so well known here that the select Committee had no difficulty in at once stating that officially which was previously known to every person in the Province. I have no doubt, however, that the two last cases that have arisen, in one of which the Natives drove off some land at Raitaniwha that had been regularly purchased from them, and another where they now wish to repudiate the sale of a large portion of the Ahuriri Block purchased some seven years ago from them, because, they say, "they did not then receive sufficient payment for it," will be duly reported by the Resident Commissioner for the purchase of Native Lands.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
Auckland.

T. H. FITZGERALD,
Superintendent.

No. 67.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TO CHIEF COMMISSIONER.

Napier, 12th March, 1860.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 21, of the 7th February, directing me, on reference to my letter of the 9th May, 1859, to report further on the state of the Natives in this district; particularly as to the action of the Runangas, and as to whether it has in any degree rendered the Natives more orderly.

Ever since the visit of the Waikato deputation, referred to in my former letter, the Runangas have been in constant and active operation, and I am bound to say, not without a good deal of beneficial result. As Petty Courts they are really useful; for although the fines and punishments they inflict are generally excessive, and, according to our ideas, quite disproportioned to the offences committed, they are always rigidly enforced; and the result has been that drunkenness, which had lately been increasing to a fearful extent amongst the Natives, has now almost disappeared; and acts of violence, such as seizing horses, &c., amongst themselves, rarely now occur.

The action of the Runangas will, however, I am sorry to say, effectually put a stop to sales of land to the Government in those parts of the district to which their influence extends. On this point they will listen to no argument, hear no reason. But the evil is not altogether unmixed; for they have, also, removed the chance of further bloodshed, by preventing lands from being sold by claimants with doubtful titles; or, what was still more dangerous, by rightful and acknowledged claimants, against the wishes of a majority of those interested.

On the whole, the condition of the Natives is certainly improving, though I am inclined to trace the improvement less to causes existing amongst themselves, than to the rapid increase of the European population. Their demeanour in mixed assemblies, such as on a race-course, is subdued