

Enclosure 1 to No. 5.

The SUB-COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, Russell, to the COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, Auckland.

SIR,—

Custom House, Russell, 13th April, 1857.

I regret to inform you that the Natives are obtaining large supplies of arms and ammunition from the whalers visiting this port.

The plan they adopt is this: They follow the vessels to sea, and when outside "The Ninepin" obtain all they have money to pay for in the shape of powder and muskets, and I am informed they have paid the exorbitant rate of £7 for 56 lb. weight of gunpowder.

The only means of checking these nefarious and most injurious practices would be, in my opinion, to have the vessels followed to sea by a moderate sized sailing boat under the Revenue pendant. The appearance of the pendant would in my opinion be sufficient to deter the masters of vessels from these malpractices, and would only be required about four months in the year.

In former years, when visited by our "flag" during the shipping season, the Natives seldom attempted to purchase arms or ammunition from the ships.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS BATEMAN,
Sub-Collector.

The Collector of Customs, Auckland.

Enclosure 2 to No. 5.

The SUB-COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, Russell, to the COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, Auckland.

SIR,—

Custom House, Russell, 27th April, 1857.

I have the honor to report the following circumstances which were brought under my notice on the 25th and 26th instant, viz.:—On the 25th, a.m., sailed the "Winslow," Captain Watson, in charge of the harbour master and pilot. Observing three whale-boats manned by Natives leave the beach, I requested Byron and Poole to take the Customs' boat and reconnoitre. Accordingly they proceeded below Papeka, and an inhabitant of this place being on the look-out station, observed, immediately after the harbour master and pilot left the vessel, the three whale-boats pull alongside and take on board some article or articles, which I have reason to believe were three casks of powder and a quantity of tobacco.

This was from the ship "Winslow." About two p.m., the "America" sailed, in charge of the harbour master and pilot, and on his leaving the ship below the Black Rocks, the three whale-boats pulled successively under the stern of the ship, each receiving articles in return, which I believe to be arms, ammunition, and tobacco. One of the boats pulled towards the Rawiti, a second to one of the islands in Paroa Bay, and the third came up to Kororarika, after depositing the articles obtained, I have reason to believe, on one of the Black Rocks. The Native Waka could afford much information on the matter if he chose, and I have reason to believe his party are mixed up with it. A Native in charge of one of the boats pulled up to Byron and insolently inquired if he was looking out for him, and said that if he (Byron) attempted to board the ship after Captain Bolger left the vessel he might look out for himself. I am also most credibly informed that a deposit of £100 was paid by the Natives to a master of a ship at a public house on this beach, and a receipt given on Friday night last between the hours of eight and ten p.m. The party purposes proceeding to Auckland shortly and affording you personally further information on this head, and I have pledged myself at present not to mention the name.

Yesterday (Sunday) our last ship sailed, the "Othello," Captain Bickerman, and the same scene transpired with the boats, excepting that they are said to have boarded when the harbour master was in charge. The ship maneuvered a long time in the mouth of the harbour, and I have no doubt, from information received, that articles were both landed and delivered to the Natives in the whale boats, and that the funds were supplied by Europeans. I would respectfully suggest the necessity of every officer and clerk serving under Government being placed under bonds, and compelled, as far as in their power, to prevent the illicit landing of goods. The Natives are now under the impression that the Customs' boat has no right to board a vessel after departure from this harbour; neither am I in a position with two men to act against a lawless gang of Natives armed and maddened with drink, which they appear to get from one public house here *ad libitum*.

I am fearful the quantity of arms and powder sold to the Natives this year will endanger the public safety in this quarter.

I am convinced the illicit landing of tobacco will militate against the receipt of revenue. Indeed nothing short of an armed vessel will prevent these malpractices.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS BATEMAN,
Sub-Collector.

The Collector of Her Majesty's Customs, Auckland.

Enclosure 3 to No. 5.

The SUB-COLLECTOR, Russell, to the COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, Auckland.

SIR,—

Custom House, Russell, 10th May, 1857.

I have the honor to transmit the following report for your information viz.: Monday, 18th May, 1857, at 2.30 p.m. sailed the "Corning," Captain Rotch—observing a whale-boat put off from the beach sent Brown and Poole, to the look-out station to reconnoitre; one whale-boat went alongside the ship prior to reaching Tarpuka, and when the harbour master and pilot was on board, two other whale-boats boarded the ship after the pilot left below the Black Rocks; all three boats were manned by Natives, and are the same parties to which I alluded in my letter dated 27th April, No. 96. I have no doubt they obtained all the powder and arms the vessel could spare, the quantity reported was eight kegs and 25 muskets.