

P A P E R S

RELATIVE TO

THE SUPPLY OF AMMUNITION TO REBEL NATIVES.

[*Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 11th August, 1865.*]

That there be laid upon the Table of this House—"Copies of all Papers and Correspondence that passed between the Hon. the Postmaster-General and the Editor of the *Hawke's Bay Times*, connected with an article that appeared in that journal, headed "How the Maoris are supplied with Ammunition." Also, all Correspondence between the Government and the Collector of Customs at Auckland relative to the same subject.

(*Mr. Burns.*)

WELLINGTON.

—  
1865.



## PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE SUPPLY OF AMMUNITION TO REBEL NATIVES.

## No. 1.

EXTRACT from the *Wellington Independent* of the 27th June, 1865.

HOW THE MAORIS WERE SUPPLIED WITH AMMUNITION.—The following curious story of smuggling war materials to the Maoris, we clip from the *Hawke's Bay Times*:—"In reading the debate of March 14, in the British House of Commons, the manly speech of Mr. Roebuck deserves the praise of all true Colonists; and when he traces one of the principal causes of the war to the sordid few in supplying the Maoris with the means of war, he states a great fact, and it only requires looking through the Customs' entries from 1855 to 1859, to see the immense quantities of war material imported into the Colony by the Auckland merchants. The writer of this was in the employ of a noted trading firm engaged in the Native trade, owning a small schooner running from Auckland to the Bay of Plenty, trading with the Natives with gunpowder, lead, and rum; arms of all sorts, from a George II. musket to a Minie rifle; tomahawks, and cartouch boxes; in fact, all the implements of war coveted by their dusky customers. One of their common tricks to cheat the Customs was, to enter the vessel with pork in casks, and to clear out with empty casks and salt, the said casks containing six or ten kegs of sporting powder; and bags of salt containing each about 100 lbs. of old lead, boxes of caps, &c. All these, shipped in the open day, rolled through Auckland streets, left standing on the wharf, and sold in the Bay of Plenty. The old files of Auckland papers need only to be consulted to tell tales of cargoes of empty casks, and tons of sash weights (lead of course) for building purposes, in places where the only buildings going up were raupo whares. The writer of this knew of one whare containing at one time seventy-two kegs of powder, headed up in the way mentioned; and close alongside an old potato hole, with about a ton of leaden sash weights in it. And all this carried on by a firm whose principal held office next to the Superintendent; and he went home and—with other Auckland merchants who had made their pile by Tower muskets and other honest merchandise—went in deputation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and hoped that the war would be carried on with vigour, and cruisers stationed to prevent the extensive smuggling by the Yankees."

## No. 2.

The COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS, Wellington, to the EDITOR of the *Hawke's Bay Times*.

SIR,—

Office of Commissioner of Customs, Wellington, 28th June, 1865.

In the absence of the Inspector, I am instructed by the Commissioner of Customs to state that his attention has been drawn to an extract from the *Hawke's Bay Times*, which appeared in the *Wellington Independent*, of the 27th instant, in which the writer indicates the existence from 1855 to 1859, of a system of gross fraud on the revenue of the Colony, by certain inhabitants of Auckland.

The prevalence of such a system would reflect very severely upon the Customs Department, and I am directed to urge you to give or obtain such information as you may consistently be enabled to do, in order to lead to the exposure of the fraud and the punishment of all concerned either actively or by negligence.

The Commissioner would be obliged by your submitting this letter for the perusal of the writer of the extract referred to, in order that an opportunity may be afforded him of aiding the Government in the matter.

I have, &amp;c.,

WM. FRANCE,

Chief Clerk.

The Editor of the *Hawke's Bay Times*, Napier.

## No. 3.

The EDITOR of the *Hawke's Bay Times*, to the COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS, Wellington.

SIR,—

*Hawke's Bay Times* Office, Napier, 7th July, 1865.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of yours (No. 241) of the 28th ultimo. In accordance with your wish, I have laid the same before the writer of the article alluded to in the *Hawke's Bay Times* of the 5th June, and I am enabled to give you further particulars:

The name of the writer is R. G. Hawes. He was engaged by the Auckland firm of Combes and Daldy, in or about the year 1855, for service as a carpenter, to be employed by Thos. Black and Co., to build and manage a store for the latter firm at Tauranga, Bay of Plenty, and also to serve them in other ways as might be required; Messrs. Combes and Daldy cashing orders indorsed by Black and Co., but not being responsible for Mr. Hawes' wages (£8 per month). During the period of his service, the schooner "Hope," owned by Black and Co., made frequent trips from Auckland to Tauranga, landing the contraband articles alluded to in the article in the *Times*. The Natives coming from Mangatapu carrying them away, and in return bringing bags of wheat, &c. These Mangatapu Natives were at this time fighting with the Ngaturangas, and the "Hope," as he believes, supplied both parties with the material of war. About this time Mr. Turton came along the coast, and then a body of Thames Natives came seaward, and, with Mr. Turton, sought to make peace. For some reason, suspicion was aroused with regard to the schooner "Hope," and a half-caste named Faulkner, came on board her with a warrant for her detention, and a summons for the Messrs. Black (Robert

and Thomas) to appear at Otumaitai, before Mr. Turton, upon information laid against them by Wiremu Mahe and Wiremu Patene, Ngatirangis, for having sold two kegs of powder and two double-barrelled guns. They were convicted and fined £100, the ammunition forfeited to the Crown. All this is easily verified, being matter of history; but before this, and when (as I understand) Mr. Turton was expected, the schooner was lying off the coast, her business being well understood by the Natives, she entered at night, her boat coming up the river to Matipohi, where the Store was, and landing a great many large casks. Mr. Hawes saw several (say twelve) of them opened, and the small kegs of powder taken out by the Natives. Mr. Hawes was well aware it was powder, from the precautions taken with regard to lights. The sash weights, of lead, were sometimes supplied to the Natives on board the schooner; they would bring them on shore attached to a girdle round their waists. All this was often repeated after the infliction of the fine by Mr. Turton. The powder alluded to above as removed on account of Mr. Turton's expected visit, was all safely removed by the Natives to their pa.

Mr. Hawes supplies the above information from memory, and, as the time is now distant, is not prepared with dates, &c., but believes and knows that the above is substantially correct. Mr. Hawes likewise appends the names of Natives following, as able and no doubt quite willing to substantiate the above, and to give such information as may be required. Messrs. Combes and Daldy were the parties in Auckland who supplied the arms, ammunition, &c., to the Messrs. Black. The following are the names of the Natives fully acquainted with the circumstance at Tauranga,—Hamaraitui, Wiremu Matui (perhaps Mahe, *Ed.*), Tamiti Parore, Wirimu Patene, with many others.

Should you think proper to investigate this matter further, the writer of the article in question has authorized me to give his address, viz.,—R. G. Hawes, Shakspeare Road, Napier.

I am, &c.,

T. B. HARDING.

P.S.—Mr. Hawes's writing being indistinct, I am not certain as to the autography of the Native names, but if the above be slightly incorrect, Mr. Hawes himself will supply them.

T. B. HARDING.

His Honor the Commissioner of Customs, Wellington.

#### No. 4.

The COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, Auckland, to the INSPECTOR OF CUSTOMS, Wellington.

SIR,—

Customs, Auckland, 4th July, 1865.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter (No. 243, June 28th, 1865,) calling my attention to an extract from the "Hawke's Bay Times," which appeared in the "Wellington Independent" of the 27th instant, but as you have omitted to forward either of the papers referred to, I am unable to reply to the letter and give you the information you desire.

I have, &c.,

W. YOUNG,

Collector.

The Secretary and Inspector H.M. Customs, Wellington.

#### No. 5.

The COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, Auckland, to the INSPECTOR OF CUSTOMS, Wellington.

SIR,—

Customs, Auckland, 22nd July, 1865.

In reply to your letter, (No. 265, 14th July, 1865,) I have the honor to report that subsequently to the date of my letter (No. 110, 4th July, 1865) a copy of the extract referred to appeared in the "Daily Southern Cross" newspaper of the 5th July, since which date I have lost no time in searching the records of the office and making every inquiry, with a view to obtaining full and particular information on the subject. I regret, however, to find the Commissioner is under the impression that every possible exertion has not been used by me to explain this matter; or that your letter of the 28th ultimo, No. 243, has not led to the most respectful examination of the subject on my part. No coastwise clearances about the period referred to can be found in this office, but I will admit that empty packages and casks were frequently shipped by coasting vessels to the East Cape and the North for the purposes of trade, and being filled with salted provisions, fish, oil, lard, and other produce, which practice still prevails at this port; but from the high character and efficiency of the officers employed at that time, amongst whom I find the names of—Mr. David Rough, Collector, Nelson, then Tide Surveyor; Mr. Thos. H. Ely, deceased, Landing Surveyor; Mr. Shirley Hill, resigned, Chief Clerk; Mr. Tabuteau, Landing Waiter, Auckland, Landing Waiter; Mr. Thos. Hill, Landing Surveyor, Wellington, Landing Waiter; Mr. J. P. Brown, Collector, Mongonui, Boarding Officer and Searcher;—I do not believe it possible for transactions of this nature to have escaped their vigilance and observation. And further, I am bound to say, as regards these charges, I cannot admit that any case has been made out to justify such a statement. It appears to me to be rather a cowardly and slanderous attack by some discharged clerk of one of the firms in this place. I believe it is an admitted fact that, for several years past, the natives on the East Coast have been abundantly supplied with warlike stores by unprincipled and unscrupulous traders in American whaling ships; and I would refer you to the annexed copies of correspondence from this office to the Government at that time, showing that during the relaxation of the provisions of "The Arms Importation Ordinance," by Governor Gore Browne, every precaution was taken by the officers of this department to prevent illicit trade in warlike stores. I trust, therefore, it is unnecessary for me to exculpate the officers employed at the period from any charges of neglect or dereliction of duty.

I have, &c.,

W. YOUNG,

Collector.

The Secretary and Inspector of Her Majesty's Customs, Wellington.

## 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, &amp;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, &amp;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.

These observations will I trust cause such measures to be adopted as will prevent future occurrences of a similar nature, and I am convinced an armed smart cutter under the command of an energetic master would put a stop to these proceedings.

I have, &c.,

THOS. BATEMAN,

Sub-Collector.

The Collector H.M. Customs, Auckland.

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Enclosure 4 to No. 5.

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

SIR,—

Custom House, Russell, 21st February, 1860.

Having perceived in the office books a record of a Report from the late Sub-Collector at this port to you, dated the 19th May, 1857, relative to the illegal unshipping of Gunpowder from the "E. Corning," United States whaler, and that vessel being now in port, I sought for and obtained the necessary evidence.

The case was heard this day before the Resident Magistrate, and the master, Francis Rotch, mulcted in the penalty of one hundred pounds, under the Customs Ordinance, 4th Victoriae, No. 3, which was in force at the time.

The fine has been paid, and is now in the Customs' chest.

I enclose copies of the depositions taken in the case, and beg to draw your attention to the discrepancies between the evidence of the pilot, Mr. Edward Bolger, and the other witnesses, relative to the time he quitted the vessel, and the fact of a whale-boat, manned by Natives, being alongside while he was on board.

As there were some points of law involved in the case on which I did not feel myself competent to decide, I thought it better to employ a solicitor, and beg now to enclose his account.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE M. MITFORD,

Sub-Collector.

The Collector of Customs, Auckland.

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