

CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEPOT AT THE AUCKLAND ISLANDS.

No: 1.

Copy of a Circular Letter to the Governments of VICTORIA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES,
QUEENSLAND, and TASMANIA.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Wellington, 28th January, 1868.

SIR,—

The attention of the New Zealand Government has been drawn to the comparatively numerous wrecks which have occurred during the last five years at the Auckland Islands, and to the suffering and loss of life which has ensued from the absence of almost any means of supplying the wants of survivors cast away on those inclement shores. The recent news of the wreck there of the ship, "General Grant," on her voyage from Melbourne to London, and of the rescue of a few survivors of her crew and passengers, after they had undergone for upwards of eighteen months on the islands, much suffering and privation, has forcibly shown the necessity, in the interests of humanity, of making proper provision there for the relief of persons shipwrecked, and for facilitating their removal to a place of safety.

It will be in your recollection, that in October, 1865, both H.M.C. steamer "Victoria," from the Colony of Victoria, and the steamer "Southland," from New Zealand, proceeded to the Auckland Islands in search of persons reported to have been shipwrecked there, and that some animals and vegetables were left with a view to affording relief in cases of shipwreck. The experience, however, of those wrecked in the "General Grant," has proved that this provision was very inadequate.

Possessing, as the Australasian Colonies do, a common interest in the ships whose course is in the vicinity of the Auckland Islands, this Government is desirous of taking, in concert with the Governments of the other Colonies, such steps as may, by the formation of a depôt of stores on the islands or otherwise, adequately provide for the object in view.

Believing that the Government of will be willing to co-operate in this work, I have the honor to suggest that, after consultation with the other Australian Governments, to whom I have addressed a similar letter, you would intimate what provision should be made and the most practicable mode of making it, the cost of such provision to be equally divided amongst the contributing Colonies.

As I understand a depôt, with a similar object has been made on Booby Island, in Torres Straits, I shall feel obliged by your furnishing me with any information in your possession showing the exact nature of the provision made there, and of the regulations for maintaining it. In the Auckland Islands it would be necessary that not only a stock of animals, vegetables, preserved food and clothes, but also all the requisite material for building and navigating large boats should be kept. It will not probably be considered advisable that any staff of persons should be permanently maintained at the Auckland Islands, and it will therefore be necessary that periodical visits for the purpose of rescuing shipwrecked persons should be made; this Government, as being the nearest to the Auckland Islands, would undertake as part of the scheme to send a vessel there twice a year for that purpose.

I have, &c.,
E. W. STAFFORD.

No. 2.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. H. PARKES to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 68-858.)

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, N.S.W., 28th February, 1868.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th ultimo, and to inform you in reply, that the proposal of the Government of New Zealand, therein made, to take in concert with the Governments of the Australian Colonies such steps as may, by the formation of a depôt of stores on the Auckland Islands, or otherwise, adequately provide relief to the crews, &c., of vessels wrecked thereon, will receive the early consideration of this Government.

2. With regard to your request to be apprised of the provision made on Booby Island, and of the regulations for maintaining it, I have the honor to inform you, that 168lbs. salt beef, 168lbs. salt pork, 336lbs. biscuit, 1 tun of water, and 10 gallons of rum, are sent from Sydney and placed on the above island in the month of April in each year, in order to replenish the stock already existing there, the masters of the vessels conveying them certifying that such provisions are safely landed on the island in good order.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

HENRY PARKES.