

INSTRUCTIONS AND AUTHORITIES UNDER WHICH THE NATIVE PRISONERS WERE SENT TO THE CHATHAM ISLANDS.

No. 1.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. Colonel RUSSELL to the RESIDENT MAGISTRATE, Chatham Islands.

(No. 176.)

Native Secretary's Office,

SIR,—

Wellington, February, 1866.

You will be pleased to proceed per "Lord Ashley" steamer to Napier, and on arrival report yourself to Donald McLean, Esq., Agent for the General Government, to whom you will show these instructions. You will proceed under his directions on board the Colonial Government steamer "St. Kilda," to receive about one hundred Native prisoners taken in arms against us, and will sail with them to the Chatham Islands, of which you are Resident Magistrate. You will be accompanied by an officer's guard, who will be entirely under your orders; and to prevent your authority being questioned, you will be appointed captain in the Colonial Militia. You may allow such number of the prisoners' wives and children as you may have room for to accompany them; and those who cannot be accommodated will be allowed to follow as arrangements can be made for that purpose.

On arrival at the Chatham Islands you will cause the prisoners to land forthwith, and proceed to hut themselves in the manner they are accustomed to do, so as to procure immediate shelter from the weather. It is understood that material for the purpose is plentiful, and that they may therefore be temporarily huddled before night, and that such temporary shelter may suffice until better can be procured by themselves.

It is also understood that no want of either animal or vegetable food will exist, and you will be at liberty to provide them with rations upon the annexed scale until they are able to raise food for themselves. With this view you will provide them with sufficient land to cultivate for their own support, probably half an acre to each person will be found sufficient. You will be furnished with tools for that purpose, also with seed potatoes, wheat, &c.

You will place the guard in a defensible position at a safe distance from the prisoners. A few of the prisoners may be employed to build their stockade and store, which should be surrounded by an outer fence. Within this stockade the arms and ammunition should be always kept, and where a large proportion of the guard must constantly remain on the alert.

It is the wish of the Government that the prisoners should be treated with all kindness consistent with safe keeping, nor is it desired to detain them longer than may be necessary. They should be informed, therefore, that their return will depend upon their own good conduct and the termination of rebellion. A few of the best-behaved will be allowed to return periodically, and it is to be hoped that none of them need be kept prisoners for any lengthened period.

You will detain the "St. Kilda" for a week, so as to enable you to report that the first party has been fully established. You will then direct the captain to return to Napier for a second party, under such instructions as you may receive from Mr. McLean. You will direct half the guard to return with her under the officer in command.

You will have ascertained from Mr. McLean whilst in Napier what number the second party of prisoners will consist of, and you will make due arrangements for their reception with the means at your disposal.

It may be necessary to make some small compensation to the present occupants of some particular piece of land upon which you may desire to locate the prisoners or guard, but you are aware the title to land in the Chatham Islands is undetermined, and you will therefore be careful in making any such compensation that no recognition of permanent title is thereby implied by the Government in favour of either Europeans, Maoris, or Morioris. The Government simply desire to leave the question as it stands until it can be more carefully dealt with.

It is desirable that the prisoners should be occupied in some healthy and useful manner; they will therefore be supplied with vegetable food only until they have had due time to raise it for themselves. They may also be employed in such light labour as may be useful to those now living on the islands. They may be rewarded for such work by a promise of earlier release and small indulgences such as an allowance of tobacco, leave to fish, &c.

A copy of the information which you have furnished to the Native Minister is appended, in order that you may understand upon what ground he proceeds, and what are the expectations which he entertains as to supplies, &c., for the prisoners.

Upon the completion of the second voyage of the "St. Kilda," you will, after detaining her for a week at the Chatham Islands, direct the captain to proceed to Wellington, unless he should have received orders from Mr. McLean to return for a third party of prisoners. You will afterwards be visited by a steamer or other vessel once in three months.

You will receive on board at Napier two months' provisions for 200 men, so as to make you independent of the supplies of the islands; but it is desired that these should not be used except as a check upon any attempt at extortion or in case of emergency.

You will report fully by every opportunity.

The Resident Magistrate, Chatham Islands.

I have, &c.,

A. H. RUSSELL.