

No. 9.

Copy of a Letter from Captain HOLT to Captain THOMAS.

(No. 473-3.)

Colonial Defence Office,

Wellington, 19th October, 1866.

SIR,—

By direction of the Hon. the Defence Minister, I have the honor to inform you that a further body of Native prisoners, numbering about fifty men, are being sent in the "St. Kilda" for safe custody at the Chatham Islands, under the charge of two officers and twenty non-commissioned officers and men of the Napier Military Settlers, whom the Government purpose to retain at the Chatham Islands for some months. The officer of the guard has been directed to report himself to you on arrival, and place himself under your orders.

The guard will receive, while on this duty, the same rates of pay as when authorized on a previous occasion, viz., 1 lieutenant, 14s. 6d. per diem; 1 ensign, 12s. 6d. per diem; 1 sergeant, 4s. 6d. per diem; 1 corporal, 4s. per diem; 18 privates, 3s. 6d. per diem. The whole will be paid at Napier at the end of the present month.

The "St. Kilda" will also take the supplies (including rum for the guard) noted in the margin,* which are calculated, in respect to the guard, in accordance with the usual allowance to men of the Colonial Forces, and for the prisoners, according to the scale furnished to you by the late Native Minister, Colonel Russell, and should be sufficient for six months, receipt of which, in detail, you will please acknowledge. These stores do not include meat and potatoes, excepting one month's supply of salt meat, to be issued occasionally, or in cases of emergency. As a general rule, it is understood that you will have no difficulty in procuring fresh meat and potatoes on reasonable terms on the island.

The disposition of the prisoners, Colonel Haultain desires me to say, must be left to your discretion; but the guard must be kept together, and in such a position as will enable them to keep a vigilant watch.

Two officers are being sent on this occasion, as Colonel Haultain considers that one should always be on duty. The guard is sufficiently strong to furnish one sentry by day and night; and I am to request you will give such instructions to the officer commanding as will ensure these sentries being carefully posted and regularly visited, night and day, by the officer on duty, who will send in reports daily to you.

You will be good enough to send to this office reports by each opportunity that may offer, both as to condition, behaviour, occupation, health, &c., of the prisoners, and of the discipline and conduct of the guard; and I am further to request you will, by the "St. Kilda," inform the Defence Minister what arrangements you have made with regard to the housing of the prisoners and guard, and if you are deficient of anything which should be supplied by the Government.

I have, &c.,

J. HOLT,

Under Secretary.

Captain Thomas, R.M., Chatham Islands.

P.S.—Half a ton less biscuit than mentioned, but a like quantity of flour in lieu thereof, has been shipped, as no more than 5,300 lbs. of biscuit can be obtained.

J. HOLT.

No. 10.

Copy of a Letter from Captain HOLT to Captain THOMAS.

(No. 537-3.)

Colonial Defence Office,

Wellington, 18th December, 1866.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th ultimo, No. 55, acknowledging receipt of money and supplies sent to you per "Flying Cloud" and "St. Kilda," and forwarding estimates of further sums required, requisitions for provisions, clothing, &c., and adverting to various other subjects relating to the Native prisoners and their guard.

In reply, I am directed to state that the sum of £430 is now being remitted to you in charge of Captain Johnson of the "St. Kilda," for payment of officers and men comprising the military guard to the 31st instant; and that by the same vessel are forwarded the various articles of provisions, clothing, &c., noted in the accompanying schedule, of all of which please acknowledge receipt.

The sergeant and corporal named in the margin were paid off and discharged on arrival at Wellington, this being the only course possible under the circumstances; but, at the same time, I am to observe that you placed the Government in some difficulty how to deal with these cases, from the fact of your sending up men under arrest from a distant and inaccessible place, without any evidence whatever of their offences, or pointing out how proof of their guilt could be obtained. I may add, that both of the men emphatically denied the charges of which they were accused.

As only a small number (about twenty-two) of prisoners will by this opportunity be added to your present number, it is not thought necessary to send any addition to your present guard, further than one sergeant and one private in place of the two above referred to.

According to your request, you are authorized to expend a sum of £10 in erecting suitable quarters for the officers of the guard, and the timber for the magazine to be erected inside the redoubt is now forwarded in the "St. Kilda."

Your arrangements with regard to the housing of the guard and prisoners are approved—the latter may be allowed to receive payment, on good behaviour, for any work done for settlers on the island; and I am again to impress upon you that they are to be induced to work for their livelihood, as it is not the intention of the Government to maintain them in idleness.

* Biscuits, 6,300 lbs.; flour, 6,300 lbs.; sugar, 1,575 lbs.; coffee, 75 lbs.; tea, 130 lbs.; salt, 395 lbs.; pepper, 22 lbs.; rice, 4,500 lbs.; salt meat, 1,350 lbs.; rum, 120 gallons.—*Vide Postscript.*