

# FURTHER PAPERS

RELATIVE TO THE

## CUSTODY AND ESCAPE OF THE CHATHAM ISLANDS PRISONERS.

*Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, of the 18th August, 1868,*

That there be laid upon the Table of this House—"Copies of all further Papers relative to the  
Custody and Escape of the Chatham Islands Prisoners."

*(Major Heaphy, V.C.)*

WELLINGTON.

—  
1868.



## FURTHER PAPERS

### RELATIVE TO ESCAPE OF CHATHAM ISLAND PRISONERS.

#### No. 1.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. RITCHIE to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Lake House, Kaingaroa, 2nd April, 1868.

I have the honor to report for your information that another lot of Natives are determined to leave the Chathams for New Zealand, and that I have been obliged by the force of circumstances to entertain and conclude a charter to convey a number of them to New Plymouth.

With all due deference to the real worth and admitted cleverness of your Commissioner, Mr. Rolleston, it would nevertheless appear, since the period of his visit to inaugurate a new line of policy in Native affairs here, there has been a gradual but steadily growing restlessness and increasing desire amongst the Natives to quit the island; and strangely enough, but too truly, from the same period there has been a great change for the worse in the character of the Hauhau. Whereas before the time named all were most peaceably inclined, and gave cheerful obedience to every reasonable restraint, now the Hauhau is markedly changed: impatient of restraint and insolent in manner, and in a word will be beyond control directly the present guard is withdrawn, although it is a mere shadow as at present constituted, and has lost much of the controlling power it possessed, and this chiefly owing to recent concessions and regulations.

I trust I shall be excused this seeming comment but real relation of facts, in outspoken language, feeling well assured you will sympathize with the uneasy feeling in this, although a small community of British subjects, and will lend your all-powerful advice and efficient aid to change present uncertainty to future good.

I now return to the Native exodus. Immediately on learning that the Native ferment was about to result in a strong desire to follow their friends to Taranaki, I caused Captain Thomas to be informed of it, and he has exerted all his influence to check the movement, but without effect; and at length after repeated koreros and my distinct deprecation of their haste in the matter of the charter alluded to, still I did not bind myself or allow them to make the charter, till they declared at the last korero on Monday, that unless their hands were tied with cords behind their backs, and they were consequently made dogs by the Governor, nothing less would prevent them from joining their relatives in New Zealand. I considered it useless to resist further, well knowing another vessel would be forthcoming if mine was not; and I then and therefore acceded to the charter.

The Hon. E. W. Stafford,

Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

P.S.—I send a copy of the foregoing to Captain Thomas, Resident Magistrate.

I have, &c.,

THOS. RITCHIE.

THOS. RITCHIE.

NOTE.—This letter was not received until after the reply dated 2nd April, 1868, to the letter of the 9th April was sent from the Colonial Secretary's Office.—W. GISBORNE.—31st August, 1868.

#### No. 2.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. RITCHIE to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Lake House, Kaingaroa, 9th April, 1868.

I have the honor to enclose herewith copy of letter I considered it my duty to send you per "Despatch," touching the exodus of the Natives, &c. Since that letter was written, another Maori meeting has been held by Captain Thomas. I attended by invitation, and thinking it might strengthen the arguments in support of the Government position at the proper moment, I offered before the whole assembly to destroy the charter party, and thus release the Natives at once from all obligations in this behalf; but notwithstanding all this, and the advice of Captain Thomas, they refused to be released. I then offered them more time to consider till the day the "Despatch" would leave; but they were to understand, if they still persisted after that time, on them would be all the responsibility, for I would strictly exact and adhere to every clause of the agreement.

I have since learned, to my extreme regret, that Captain Thomas has thought it his duty to threaten that under no circumstances will he allow the Natives to leave the island. This has confirmed their idea that the Government wish to make them all prisoners. I also learn that Captain Thomas has written a letter to the Natives stating that the Pakehas who made the agreement about their passage are fools and cranky, and any money paid them will be lost. (I am glad to find the weight of evidence is against the fact that Captain Thomas used the Maori word that signifies "fools and cranky," but that the Maoris have treated the letter in an undignified manner is substantiated. T. Ritchie, 10th April, 1868.) I feel sincere regret about this matter, the more so as I am told by the same informant that the letter alluded to has been treated in the most undignified manner, and eventually disowned and returned to the writer. I do trust, however, I am misinformed on this latter head, it appears so contrary to the usual good feeling and courtesy of Captain Thomas.

I have now to treat upon what I consider the worst phase of affairs.

The Hauhaus are secretly delighted, and silently working and consulting with each other. It is worthy of note that hardly one, if indeed there is a single Hauhau working, or will remain to work

now with the Pakeha; and this morning I have received notice from a well-disposed Hauhau (Herewini) who has been shepherd with me for over twelve months, and who is attached to the service, that he must leave. On further inquiry I find he has received seven letters at different times, urging him to return to Waitangi and give up his situation at once.

All these little waifs are not without meaning and significance, and it now remains with you to judge of what is best to be done. Perhaps a Commissioner by next steamer would do good: that is to say, if he does not come down here merely to rush over the island on horseback, and rush off again directly, hardly giving the folks here time to write a letter or the postmaster time to seal the mail bags—always in such haste as if afraid of being overtaken by some fatal contagion. The Commissioner, to do good, must go into inquiries throughout the island; and this cannot be done under a month, or even two months, effectually.

I deprecate and much regret that all the quiet Natives are so determined by past and present events to leave the island; but I would still more deprecate the idea of now forcing them to remain, fully believing the mere thought of their not being allowed to come and go like free men has called up present determinations, and will call up future resistance.

My wish is to give the Government every assistance in my power, and this I have tried to do in the most unselfish manner—when I was placed, as in this instance, in a most difficult position.

Awaiting your commands,

The Hon. E. W. Stafford, Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

THOS. RITCHIE.

### No. 3.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. GISBORNE to Mr. RITCHIE.

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Wellington, 21st April, 1868.

SIR,—

I have the honor, by the direction of Mr. Stafford, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, enclosing a copy of a letter, which has not yet arrived, addressed to him by you on the 2nd instant.

The reports which have reached the Government from various sources do not confirm your opinion, that "there is a change for the worse in the character of the prisoners." These prisoners now understand that they are not compelled to work for Europeans, and this intelligence has apparently had a favourable effect on their minds.

I enclose a copy of the *New Zealand Gazette*, No. 15, of the 19th of March last, containing a Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor under "The Passengers Act, 1855," and I am to inform you that any vessel leaving the Chatham Islands will now be bound by this Proclamation, and that Immigration Officers have been instructed to take legal proceedings in the case of any contravention of the requirements of the law in respect of passenger vessels.

Thomas Ritchie, Esq.,

Kaingaroa, Chatham Islands.

I have, &c.,

W. GISBORNE,

Under Secretary.

### No. 4.

Copy of a Letter from Captain THOMAS to the UNDER SECRETARY for DEFENCE.

(No. 30.)

Resident Magistrate's Office,

Chatham Islands, 1st July, 1868.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report, for the information of the Hon. the Defence Minister, that since the date of my last letter of the 18th May last, No. 27, reporting on the conduct of the Constabulary and prisoners as being satisfactory, I have discovered that one of the prisoners, Te Koti Rikirangi, a Poverty Bay Native, who arrived here with the second batch on the 15th June, 1866, has, under the subterfuge of holding services amongst the other prisoners according to the faith of the Church of England, carried on practices tinged with Hauhau superstition. He received my sanction some time back to hold these services, at the request of the main body of the prisoners.

My suspicions were lately aroused by a few of the other prisoners, and on my inquiring of Te Koti, he and his supporters, who form the main body, stoutly denied two main facts reported to me as having been performed by Te Koti, viz.:—1. Anointing another man's wife with oil; and 2. Rubbing his hands with the phosphorus of matches to represent "Atua" before holding service.

I have now no doubt that the latter did take place, and very little doubt of the former: some of the Natives of the Island witnessed the rubbing of the hands.

I find that Te Koti has exercised considerable influence with most of the prisoners, and led them to the belief that the adoption of these practices will tend to deliver them from their bondage.

I have therefore thought it most prudent to detach Te Koti from the rest of the prisoners, forbidding him, of course, to hold service any more, and I have placed him in a separate hut, and at a distance from the others.

I find also that the Natives named in the margin,\* who have been permitted to return to New Zealand, were instructed by Te Koti before their departure to conceal these practices on their arrival until the main body were allowed to return, and that Pehimana was instructed by Te Koti to "pikari te whenua"† in a direct line to Wharekauri as soon as he landed.

I have authorized the sergeant of the Constabulary to resign his office, at his own request, on the 30th ultimo, and think I shall be able to fill up the vacancy here.

The Under Secretary for Defence, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

W. E. THOMAS, R.M.

\* Horomona Tutaki, Pehimana Paihuka, Wirihana Tupeka.

† "Scratch the land." Said to be a practice adopted by Te Ua.

## No. 5.

Copy of a Letter from INHABITANTS of CHATHAM ISLANDS to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Waitangi, Chatham Islands, Friday, 10th July, 1868.

At a meeting of the inhabitants of the Chatham Islands held at Waitangi this day, to consider the late outbreak of the Hauhau prisoners, and their forcibly taking possession of a vessel called the "Rifleman," for the purpose of going to New Zealand, we, as loyal British subjects, resolved to lay before the Government our indignant but respectful protest as to the way our lives and property have been endangered by the carelessness of the New Zealand Government, in sending down Hauhau prisoners to the Chatham Islands with a miserably insufficient guard, and thereby encouraging them to break out; in which outbreak Private Hartnett of the Armed Constabulary, lost his life in the attack on the redoubt, and the lives of the people were in imminent peril—many owing their lives to interference of personal friends amongst the Hauhaus.

Also, to state that since the last Government Agent came down, the guard having been reduced, and the Hauhaus not worked so hard, by his orders; it is the opinion of the inhabitants that the carrying out of these orders has been, to a great extent, the cause of the late unfortunate occurrence.

We would also strongly remonstrate against any more prisoners being sent down here without a sufficiently strong guard to protect us.

(Signed)

G. BEAMISH,  
J. AUKLAND,  
T. RITCHIE, J.P.,  
and 27 others.

The Hon. E. W. Stafford,  
Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

## No. 6.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. GISBORNE to INHABITANTS of the CHATHAM ISLANDS.

(No. 638.)

Colonial Secretary's Office,

GENTLEMEN,—

Wellington, 25th August, 1868.

I have the honor, by direction of Mr. Stafford, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th ultimo, on the subject of the recent escape of the Hauhau prisoners from the Chatham Islands.

I have, &amp;c.,

Messrs G. Beamish, J. Aukland, and others,  
Waitangi, Chatham Islands.

W. GISBORNE,  
Under Secretary.

