

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

BAY OF ISLANDS.

No. 1.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. G. S. COOPER to Mr. E. M. WILLIAMS.

(No. 359-2.)

SIR,— Native Office, Wellington, 12th October, 1868.
I have the honor to enclose a Resolution of the House of Representatives upon the subject of a Petition from some Chiefs of the Ngapuhi Tribe, and to request that you will make any suggestions that may occur to you as to how the wishes of the petitioners, or any part of such wishes, may be carried into effect by the Government in accordance with the opinion of the House of Representatives.

I have, &c.,

The Resident Magistrate, Waimate,
Bay of Islands.

G. S. COOPER,
Under Secretary.

[Similar letter to Resident Magistrate, Russell, and to F. E. Maning, Esq., Hokianga.]

No. 2.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. E. M. WILLIAMS to Mr. G. S. COOPER.

(No. 80.)

SIR,— Resident Magistrate's Office,
Waimate, 16th November, 1868.
In reply to your letters dated the 12th and 20th of October last, requesting me to offer any suggestions I may be able to give as to the best mode of carrying into effect the wishes of the Ngapuhi Chiefs as expressed in their petition laid before the House of Representatives, I have the honor to offer the following remarks:—

The meeting which took place at Herd's Point on the 29th July last, convened by Moses Tawhai, the chief who took so active a part in bringing about the surrender of Te Wake to justice, evincing as it did, on the part of himself and other chiefs assembled, a strong desire to introduce into the district a better state of discipline than at present exists amongst the Natives, calls for a careful consideration of the subject on the part of the Government, and the petition, if judiciously acted upon, cannot fail to be productive of good.

As the meeting from whence this petition emanated was held at Hokianga; in compliance with the wishes of the petitioners, I would suggest that a gaol be first erected at Herd's Point, where a lock-up is sometimes required in connection with the European population.

This would convince the Natives of the favourable reception of their petition; afford the Government an opportunity of watching the sincerity of their professions; and give to the Natives in connection with Waimate a longer time to consider the question of erecting one in their district, where the immediate necessity for a building of the kind does not exist, this settlement being within an easy day's journey of the gaol at Russell. It must, however, be remembered that the establishment of a gaol will necessitate the appointment of an English constable who should act as bailiff. A Maori constable would also be required. This man's salary could be provided by dismissing the kareres in the out-stations, where they are of little or no service, and giving the pay to one who should reside at or near the gaol.

I would avail myself of this opportunity of calling the attention of the Government to the want of a Court House at Herd's Point, which need not be either large or expensive, but, for the credit of the Government, should be a respectable building. The one at present in use is a disgrace to the place.

The appointment of a Resident Magistrate for Hokianga is perhaps, under present circumstances, a question better left by me to the consideration of the Government. Being myself officially connected with that district, I feel diffident in offering any remarks beyond observing that, as long as it may please the Government to continue my connection with Hokianga, I shall endeavour to discharge my duties to the best of my ability. But, unquestionably, a Magistrate residing on the spot could visit the Natives oftener than one living at a distance, whose time is divided over a large district; yet I do not see how Mr. Von Sturmer, the gentleman named in the petition, could well discharge the duties of Magistrate in connection with those of the Customs and Post Office, which require his daily attendance at office, unless he be released from visiting the Natives at their villages.

I do not consider it necessary, as suggested by the petitioners, that a number of policemen should be appointed; there would not be employment for all. Four men located in such manner as to be of real assistance to the Magistrate, one at Herd's Point, one at Whangaroa, one at Waimate, and one at Puketorea, would be sufficient; special constables being employed when required.

In proposing that soldiers be enrolled to support the law, the petitioners do not desire that troops should be introduced into the district, but that a Native force be raised amongst themselves.

In noticing this request, an idea suggests itself whether, under sanction of the chiefs, it might not be advantageous to embody out of each hapu a number of young men who should take the oath of allegiance and pledge themselves to act as special constables whenever called upon. Such a step might tend to encourage unanimity, acting at the same time as a check upon the more turbulent characters among them.