

Sub-Enclosure No. 1.

Mr. J. B. THOMSON to the Hon. F. WHITAKER.

Constabulary Department,

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, Auckland, 20th February, 1880.

In accordance with your instructions, I have the honor to report that of the twenty *ex* prisoners from New Caledonia per "Griffin," I have officially ascertained that eleven are *déportés* or liberated political offenders, and nine are discharged offenders against the criminal code. I had some of the latter brought before me last evening and examined their passports, but none of these documents disclosed the prison career of the bearers, or gave any information about the sentence he has completed.

The men themselves inform me that their respective pardons are unconditional, and that they are at liberty to return to France or to any other part of the world they can, but that no document of formal pardon was ever given them, the passport being the only Government document with which they were furnished on leaving New Caledonia. They further inform me that, of their class, men who had endeavoured to retrieve their character were permitted to leave New Caledonia; each of the nine, after finishing his sentence, having undergone a probation (under police surveillance) of two years, during which probation they worked in or about Noumea at their respective trades and callings, and were thus enabled to save sufficient to pay their own passages per "Griffin" from Noumea to Auckland, for which passage-money each holds a receipt.

The passages of the *déportés* or political prisoners were paid by the Noumea authorities at the rate of £5 for each man.

I beg to forward herewith a report from Serjeant Martin, of the water police, of the information on this subject furnished to him by the captain and the owner of the schooner "Griffin," and also a copy of a letter sent by the New Caledonia authorities to the French Consul here, D. B. Cruickshank, Esq., who is therein officially notified of the departure from Noumea of the *déportés* or political offenders, but has not received any notification *re* the nine liberated criminal offenders, the majority of whom appear to have had sentences respectively of five years, and none of them over seven years, several of them having been soldiers convicted of insubordination or other offences against the discipline of the army.

These men are at present scattering in all directions in search of work; but I anticipate being able to obtain by to-morrow a tolerably accurate descriptive return of them, together with their respective sentences.

The Hon. F. Whitaker,
Resident Minister, Auckland.

I have, &c.,
J. BELL THOMSON,
Superintendent.

Sub-Enclosure No. 2.

Sergeant MARTIN to Mr. J. B. THOMSON.

Armed Constabulary Station, Auckland, 20th February, 1880.

SERGEANT MARTIN begs respectfully to forward, for the information of the Officer in Charge, the following statements respecting the recent arrival of time-expired convicts, per schooner "Griffin," from the Island of New Caledonia:—

John Adam Beswick states: "I am master of the British vessel 'Griffin.' Mr. William Bishop is owner. I recently proceeded from this port to Noumea, New Caledonia. On arrival at that place, I learned from Mr. Manning, commission agent, &c., of that place, that the Government of the Island wished to despatch a number of time-expired convicts to Auckland. Mr. Bishop acted as supercargo on board the vessel, and negotiated with Mr. Manning for the passages of a number. I myself had nothing to do with the matter. I once went to the British Consul to ascertain if we should be acting illegally by conveying these people to a British colony, and was told that I should not. Monsieur Nardin, Superintendent of Police, inspected the passengers, and gave them a clearance on leaving." William Bishop states: "I am owner of the schooner 'Griffin.' On the 16th January, 1880, I left the port of Noumea, New Caledonia, with that vessel, and took from there twenty-three passengers. We landed on the 17th February, 1880, at the port of Manukau. These passengers, I was informed by my agent at Noumea, Mr. Manning, were time-expired convicts, and were sent away by the Government. I transacted no business respecting their passages myself; that was all done by Mr. Manning. I agreed to convey them to Auckland at the rate of £5 per head; their passages were to be paid by a Treasury bill, but Mr. Manning agreed to pay over the amount in cash, and retain the Treasury bill himself. I received no documents from the authorities at Noumea, and had only a list of the passengers supplied by Mr. Manning. This list showed eleven political offenders, and nine offenders against the criminal law, two females and one infant—the latter three being friends of the first-named offenders."

Sergeant Martin begs also to forward herewith copy of a letter referring to these people, supplied by Mr. D. B. Cruickshank, the French Consul of this place.

J. Bell Thomson, Esq.,
Superintendent in Charge of District.

H. MARTIN,
Sergeant, No. 210.