

The Government, however, before it takes definite steps in this matter, is desirous of ascertaining your views, which are the more valuable from your intimate knowledge, not only of the particular circumstances under which these Natives were sent to the Chatham Islands, and of the state of the districts to which, if released, they would probably return, but also of the individual character of many, if not all of the prisoners, and their probable conduct if set free.

I have accordingly to request you to be good enough to state your opinion as to the probable effect of such amnesty, and, in the event of your taking a favourable view, to specify the names of those you would recommend to be included within its terms, and also to suggest any precautions or conditions which you consider it would be advisable to adopt in connection with the release of the prisoners.

I enclose for your information a nominal list of the Native prisoners at the Chatham Islands, showing the districts to which they respectively belong, and the places where they were captured.

It should be distinctly understood that the amnesty will not include prisoners, if any, who may have committed treacherous murders of unarmed persons.

His Honor D. McLean, Government Agent, Napier.

I have, &c.,  
E. W. STAFFORD.

Sub-Enclosure 4 to Enclosure in No. 26.

His Honor D. McLEAN to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Wellington, 7th January, 1868.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th ultimo, having reference to the granting of an amnesty to most, if not to all the Native political offenders, who, after being captured in arms against Her Majesty, were placed and still remain in confinement at the Chatham Islands.

Having carefully considered the subject of your letter, I have come to the conclusion that a general amnesty would be attended with danger to the peace of the country; and I am further of opinion that hostilities, or even the prospect of any attempt to disturb the peace, should be at an end before releasing any considerable number of the prisoners.

A few of the prisoners now at the Chatham Islands were released from the hulk at Auckland, and notwithstanding assurances of good behaviour, they became violent promoters of rebellion.

With the experience of the past for our guidance, great caution should be used in granting a general amnesty.

It is possible that no danger would result from allowing a few of the best behaved prisoners permission to return. I submit the names of those to whom this privilege could be extended; and should Mr. Rolleston, during his visit to the Chatham Islands, feel satisfied that they are deserving of this indulgence, they might be landed at Napier, and I could place them under the charge of reliable chiefs with whom they are connected. The names are taken from the list of the Poverty Bay Natives, taken at Waerengahika.

I have, &c.,  
DONALD McLEAN.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Wi Mahuika.  
Epeniha Tupuna.  
Rawiri Noti.

Hohepa Tahataha.  
Te Wirihana Tupeka.  
Netana Reha.  
Hohepa Waikore.

Horomona Tutaki.  
Tipene Tutaki.  
Heta Kani.

Sub-Enclosure 5 to Enclosure in No. 26.

Report by Mr. ROLLESTON (Under Secretary, Native Department,) on condition of Native Prisoners at the Chatham Islands.

SIR,—

Wellington, 3rd February, 1868.

In obedience to the instructions I received to proceed to the Chatham Islands for the purpose of inquiring into the general condition of the prisoners, and of bringing back and releasing some of their number, if, upon inquiry, it appeared advisable to do so, I have the honor to report that I proceeded in the "St. Kilda" to the Chatham Islands on the 22nd ultimo, and returned to Wellington early on the morning of the 1st instant (Saturday), with the prisoners named in the margin, together with the son (a young boy) of Teopira, one of the prisoners who returned on a previous occasion, and an elderly woman who was in charge of him, making a total of eight men, five women, and ten children.

The list differs from that given by Mr. McLean in his letter of the 7th January, in the substitution of the name of Hemi Taka Te Whiwhi for that of Hohepa Waikore, and in the omission of Hohepa Taka Taka and Horomona Tutaki, the former of whom preferred to remain, and the latter of whom though desirous of returning determined to stay behind to attend the death-bed of one of his friends. This act of unselfish devotion is the more praiseworthy as he himself is far from well in health.

I found that the "Storm Bird" was on the point of sailing for Napier the same morning at eleven a.m., and I obtained the sanction of the Honorable Major Richardson, to sending off the whole number by this opportunity to Napier. The Company agreed to take them for the sum of twenty-five pounds, being at about half the ordinary rates. I wrote to Mr. McLean requesting him to give the necessary instructions for their disposal in Napier. It appeared the more desirable to send them away at once, as intercourse with the discontented Natives in this neighbourhood, would be likely to be productive of no good in the minds of men whose general feeling is that of satisfaction with the treatment they have received.

The conduct of all the prisoners has been such that I saw no reason to hesitate as to the liberation of these men. It was on the suggestion of Captain Thomas that I substituted the name of the old man Hemi Taka Te Whiwhi, whose age and good conduct made the change desirable.

Natana Puka,  
wife and three  
children.  
Wirihana Tupeka,  
wife and two  
children.  
Rawiri Noti and  
child.  
Hemi Taka Te  
Whiwhi.  
Wi Mahuika.  
Heta Kana.  
Tipene Tutaki,  
wife and three  
children.  
Epena Tupuna  
and wife.