

No. 28.

Copy of a Letter from Captain HOLT to Major EDWARDS.

(No. 186-2.)
SIR,—Colonial Defence Office,
Wellington, 22nd March, 1867.

As you are about to proceed to the Chatham Islands on special business on behalf of the Government, I am directed by Mr. Richmond (acting for the Defence Minister) to request you will, during your stay at that place, be good enough to inquire into and report upon, for the information of the Government, the general state of the Native prisoners and guard; whether it is necessary to continue rations to the former any longer, and if so how long, and to what extent; also as to the means of earning money open to prisoners, and the arrangements provided for the security of life and property; and generally to report on any matter requiring the attention of the Government which may come under your observation.

I have, &c.,

J. HOLT,

Under Secretary.

Major Edwards, Wellington.

No. 29.

Copy of a Letter from Captain HOLT to Major EDWARDS.

(No. 188-2.)
SIR,—Colonial Defence Office,
Wellington, 22nd March, 1867.

I am directed to transmit for your information and guidance copy of a letter which has been this day addressed to Captain Thomas, wherein that officer has been instructed to assist you in preparing the report you have been requested to furnish in my letter No. 186-2, of this day's date.

I have, &c.,

J. HOLT,

Under Secretary.

Major Edwards, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 29.

Copy of a Letter from Captain HOLT to Captain THOMAS.

(No. 61-5.)
SIR,—Colonial Defence Office,
Wellington, 22nd March, 1867.

Major Edwards, of the New Zealand Militia, having been commissioned by the Government to proceed to the Chatham Islands on special service, he has been requested to inquire into and report upon all matters connected with the Native prisoners and their guard, and the capability of the latter to secure order and good conduct on the part of the prisoners. More especially, he will, after consultation with you, report upon the necessity or desirability of continuing the present issue of rations and clothing to the prisoners. On these and all other questions upon which this department is required to take cognizance, I am directed to request you will afford Major Edwards every assistance in your power, and all the weight of your authority to procure full information. As a Major in the Militia, he will of course take precedence of all other officers in the Colonial Forces now serving in the Chatham Islands.

I have, &c.,

J. HOLT,

Under Secretary.

Captain Thomas, Resident Magistrate,
Chatham Islands.

No. 30.

Copy of a Letter from Major EDWARDS to the Hon. the DEFENCE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Porirua, 8th May, 1867.

I have the honor to make the following report relative to the guard and Maori prisoners at the Chatham Islands.

I left Wellington per s.s. "St. Kilda" on the 23rd March, and arrived at Waitangi on the 26th. I put myself in communication with Captain Thomas, the senior officer there, who afforded me every assistance and all information in his power.

The guard, consisting of Europeans and Maoris, is quartered in a square redoubt situate on a cliff, and distant 300 yards from the whares of the prisoners. It is an earthwork, weak, badly placed, and indefensible. It is desirable to level it, and construct a stockade of Karaka timber on the crest of a hill, about 200 yards from and overlooking the huts of the prisoners. It is also advisable that two wooden huts, one as a barrack-room, the other as a store, should be built within the stockade. The present store and men's huts are made of ponga and tohi-tohi, and are extremely inflammable, besides harbouring quantities of rats, which destroy the stores.

I would suggest the guard should consist entirely of Europeans; the strength to be two officers and thirty rank and file. The present mixed guard is well nigh useless, neither Europeans nor Maoris having any confidence in each other.

A building has just been constructed of ponga and tohi-tohi, to afford hospital accommodation for the prisoners and guard. It will hold about twenty patients.

I enclose a report by the medical officer in charge of prisoners, with reference to his application for increase of pay, and would suggest that he should be supplied with drugs by the Government, not so much with a view to increase his salary, as to make sure that his patients are supplied with such medicines as they require. I instructed Dr. Watson to inspect the prisoners once each week, and to report the state of their health to the officer commanding.

The officers' quarters are built outside the redoubt, and distant from it about 100 yards. If a stockade is built, the officers' quarters should be within it.