

*Interpreter.*—In accordance with your Excellency's instructions, I engaged a half-caste Maori, named Harry Swanson, to act as interpreter at Penrhyn, Manihiki, and Rakahanga. This man was highly recommended by the Resident and the Rev. Mr. Hutchin, of the London Mission Society.

After coaling at Rarotonga, we proceeded to Penrhyn, arriving on the 28th July.

*Tautaitini.*—The natives were quite unanimous that it was unnecessary to appoint any one to assist Tautaitini—that he was quite able to do the work with the assistance of his hau, and that the letters written to Mr. Moss were written without authority.

*Intoxicating Liquor Regulation.*—I gave Tautaitini a copy of this regulation, after it had been interpreted to the meeting, to post in his Courthouse.

*Divorce and Wrecks.*—Many questions were asked on these points, which I replied to.

*Tauwepa Tapanga, Elikana, Tima, and Daniela the Aged.*—These four were land disputes. I was able to settle them all, with the exception of Daniela the Aged. I was able to lay down the basis upon which this dispute was to be settled, and left the settlement in the hands of the chiefs and haus of Manihiki and Rakahanga.

*Kairua's Case.*—This was a complaint made by Kairua that certain land of his at Manihiki had been taken from him by the Judge at Tauhunu, Manihiki. I was told by the hau that they had already inquired into the case, and that the land undoubtedly belonged to Kairua, and that they had so decided. I told the hau that they must see that their decision was carried out.

Copies of the regulation prohibiting intoxicants were posted in each settlement after being interpreted to the natives. This regulation was received with great disfavour by the natives, more especially at Penrhyn.

The character, position, customs, and manner of living of the natives, their form of government, laws, missionary influence and interference, and the settlement of their land and intertribal disputes I have reserved for a further and fuller report, which I am compiling from notes taken by me.

This short and meagre report is merely to give your Excellency a short synopsis of my proceedings during my late visit to these very interesting islands and people.

I have, &c.,

HAMILTON HUNTER,

Special Judicial Commissioner.

His Excellency the High Commissioner,  
Western Pacific.

## No. 2.

(No. 15.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 30th April, 1897.

I have the honour to transmit to you the accompanying copy of a letter from the Board of Trade, covering a memorandum by their solicitor on the subject of the Act to further amend the laws relating to shipping and seamen, passed by the Legislature of New Zealand (1896, No. 37), a copy of which was enclosed in the Earl of Glasgow's despatch No. 46, of the 21st December.

A.—1, Sess. II.,  
1897, No. 11.

It will be seen that some of the provisions of this Act, so far as they purport to apply to ships other than those engaged in the coasting trade within the colony, are, in the opinion of the legal adviser of the Board of Trade, inconsistent with the provisions of "The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894." I would accordingly request you to press upon your Ministers the desirability of amending the Act so as to limit the application of the provisions in question to ships engaged in the coasting trade, in accordance with the representations of the Board of Trade.

I have, &c.,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

The Officer Administering the Government of New Zealand.

## Enclosures.

Board of Trade (Marine Department), 7, Whitehall Gardens, London, S. W.,  
12th April, 1897.

SIR,—

I am directed by the Board of Trade to state that they have had under consideration Sir R. Meade's letter of the 18th February, forwarding the transcript of an Act passed by the Legislature of New Zealand to amend the laws relating to shipping and seamen.

The Board of Trade now desire me to enclose, for the information of Mr. Secretary Chamberlain, a copy of a memorandum by the solicitor to this department, from which it will be seen that certain sections of this Act are open to objection, by reason of the application of their provisions to other vessels besides those employed in the New Zealand coasting trade.

In these circumstances, the Board are of opinion that the sections to which attention is directed should not be allowed to remain in operation.

I have, &c.,

WALTER J. HOWELL.

Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.