

MESSAGE No. 12.

His Excellency the Officer administering the Government forwards to the House of Representatives certain papers which have been received representing the necessity of establishing a branch of the Customs Department at the Chatham Islands, and in the event of the House considering it advisable to appoint a Collector of Customs and Resident Magistrate at this station, His Excellency suggests that provision should be made for the expense of such an officer.

R. H. WYNYARD,

Officer administering the Government.

Government House, Auckland,
September 6th, 1854.

Wellington Hotel,
Wellington, July 24th, 1854.

SIR,—

We, residents at the Chatham Islands have the honour to request that you will lay the following statement before His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, and that you will have the goodness to transmit to us any decision which his Excellency may come to thereon.

The Chatham Islands contain a population of about 600 aboriginal natives and about forty Europeans. During the whole period which has elapsed since the authority of the Queen was established in the Islands of New Zealand, the Chathams have remained without any indication of it. Nevertheless peace and order have been generally preserved until recently which is to be attributed to the very little intercourse which has existed with strangers. Lately, however, since a demand for the vegetable productions of the Island has arisen the intercourse with strangers has much increased and the consequences resulting therefrom have been already injurious to the population of both races and threaten to become still more so.

The increased intercourse with strangers has consisted almost entirely of transactions in which money was to pass between them and the natives. Differences as might have been anticipated, have arisen, and from want of a tribunal to accommodate them or to decide between the parties these differences have ripened into quarrels. These have almost invariably terminated in the same manner, the natives having had their own way. Another and a greater evil produced by increased intercourse has been the unrestricted introduction of spirituous liquors, some time ago, an entire cargo of contraband spirits was landed and publically sold on the beach.

The demoralization caused by this event was instantaneous and promises to be permanent. The native character has been suddenly changed, and those who formerly were industrious, peaceable, and trustworthy, have suddenly become turbulent, rapacious, and dishonest. Before this great change took place any contract between the Europeans and the natives was adhered to by the latter as fairly and honestly as a contract between the Europeans would have been, but this good faith is no longer to be found; on the contrary, so soon as the fulfilment of a bargain threatens to become onerous to a native he repudiates it, sets the person injured by his dishonesty at defiance, and taunts him with the absence of any legal means of redress.

Such is the conduct of the natives when sober, and when intoxicated—seems of confusion and outrage plainly shew that whatever control over them by the Europeans may have once existed has entirely disappeared.

The European residents who, with very few exceptions, are industrious and well conducted have been seriously injured and alarmed by what has happened, injured by a large loss of property caused by the dishonesty just alluded to, and alarmed at the prospect of being forced in self-defence to retaliate the increasing violence of the aborigines. As a remedy for this state of things, we respectfully venture to suggest the propriety of establishing the authority of Her Majesty the Queen in the Chatham Islands. An easy and inexpensive way of doing this would be by placing one or two of the European residents in the commission of the peace so that the Resident Magistrate's Ordinance with its machinery of native assessors might be enforced. The only expense attending on such an arrangement would be that of maintaining a police constable or two towards which the European inhabitants would cheerfully contribute according to their means.

We, as well as many persons, unconnected with us and perfectly disinterested but well-informed judges on the subject, feel assured that such a measure would by restoring order and tranquility confer an invaluable benefit on the whole population as well as greatly assist in rendering the Islands attractive, and thereby accelerating their progress towards wealth and prosperity.

We, speaking in the name of nearly all the European inhabitants of the Islands whose signatures to a memorial similar to this statement we will procure, if required, trust that our being without representatives either in a Provincial Council or in a House of Representatives will be a circumstance not without weight in inducing the Executive Government of the Colony to afford us, as loyal subjects of the Queen, its assistance on the present occasion.

We have the honour, &c., &c.,

(Signed) { WILLIAM McCLATCHIE,
F. H. C. BANCKE,
WILLIAM ONIN.

To the Honourable
The Colonial Secretary, &c., &c.

Custom House, Wellington,
31st July, 1854.

SIR,—

Enclosed herewith I do myself the honour to forward you the copy of a letter received by me from Mr. H. C. Bancke, German Missionary of the Chatham Islands.

It must be quite clear that the large quantities of spirits and tobacco landed cannot be consumed on the Islands, and therefore I think it reaches the west of New Zealand contraband.

I have the honour, &c., &c.,

(Signed) S. CARKECK,
Collector,

The Honourable
The Colonial Secretary, &c., &c.

July 24th, 1854.

SIR,—

I have taken the liberty of writing this note requesting the interference of your authority in a matter which I believe comes within the jurisdiction of the Wellington Custom House; the facts are as follows:—

Towards the end of last year, a vessel arrived at the Chatham Islands called the Randall, and commenced the sale of spirits to any person who would purchase them, she had come from Melbourne and therefore most likely had paid no duties. This year a person by the name of Cameron has arrived and is now living on the Chathams who has landed several gallons of spirits and wine, several casks of which he has sold to the natives who are continually in a beastly state of intoxication, and also thirty-five casks of tobacco; the vessel came from Melbourne direct, and we have proofs that no duties were paid either on the tobacco or spirits. He has now in his house the whole of the tobacco, and several hundred gallons of wine. It is also well known to me that three other vessels are expected shortly at the Chatham Islands with spirits, &c., which of course will have paid no duty. I therefore beg that you will inform me whether you have the power to prevent this barefaced robbery of the revenue as well as the horrible demoralizing effect, the unrestrained sale of spirits have on the natives; I shall therefore be obliged if I can have an answer to this note as soon as possible as I leave here for the Chatham Islands in a few days.

I have, &c., &c.,

(Signed) H. C. BANCKE,
German Missionary.

To S. Carkeck, Esq.,
&c., &c.

Her Majesty's Ship Calliope,
Port Jackson, 8th June, 1854.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th April, 1854, (received yesterday only) with the enclosures, copies of which reached me from Commander Drury on the previous day. I much regret that there is no ship of war available for the service to which you allude. It is highly desirable, however, that the system which appears to be carried on at the Chatham Islands should be put a stop to, and you may depend on my detaching a vessel for that purpose at as early a period as possible, but as under present circumstances I see no probability of my being able to do so unless the squadron is reinforced probably the suggestion of the Collector of Customs of chartering a vessel might be worthy of your consideration.

I have, &c., &c.,

(Signed) J. C. FITZGERALD,

Captain and Senior Officer on the Australian Division of the East India Station.

His Excellency
Lieut.-Col. Wynyard, C.B.
Administering the Government of New Zealand.

Custom House, Auckland,
11th July, 1854.

SIR,—

I have the honour to transmit herewith for the consideration of His Excellency the Officer administering the Government, copy of a letter received from the Collector of Customs at Sydney, having reference to an accusation made by me in April last in the Resident Magistrate's Court against the master of the barque Ino for a breach of the Customs Regulation Ordinance in having landed at the Chatham Islands the greater portion of his cargo without the duties being first paid or secured.

I have since been credibly informed that there are sometimes as many as thirty American whaling vessels laying in the harbour of Wangaro, having tobacco and cotton manufactures on board and prepared to barter for produce with the natives.

Under these circumstances (and being fully assured that after paying the expenses of a Custom's establishment there, the surplus revenue would be considerable) I fully concur in the suggestion contained in the latter paragraph of the letter of Colonel Gibbes that it is expedient and highly desirable for the safety and general benefit of the revenue of this colony that an officer of experience and ability should be as soon as possible appointed to that station.

I have the honour, &c., &c.,
(Signed)

WILLIAM YOUNG,
Collector.

The Honourable
The Colonial Secretary.

Custom House, Sydney,
9th June, 1854.

SIR,—

I do myself the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th April last informing me that the Ino had been cleared out at this port for the Chatham Islands and that she had landed nearly all her cargo at some place in those Islands, and also stating that it is highly injurious to the revenue of New Zealand to allow vessels to obtain clearances outwards at this port for those Islands as there is no port of entry and clearance there: and I beg to state that I do not think it in my power to refuse to allow a vessel to clear outwards for any place even though not a port of entry, and to show you that such is the case, I beg to inform you that some years since I addressed the Honourable Commissioners of Customs on this subject in regard to Cloudy Bay and have never received any definitive answer to this question showing that there was too much doubt for their Honours to give any order on that head.

I would therefore suggest that the Government of New Zealand should place an officer at the Chatham Islands, so that the Revenue might be protected from the injury which it now sustains.

I have, &c., &c.,

(Signed)

J. GIBBES,
Collector.

Collector of Customs,
Auckland, New Zealand.

Custom House, Auckland,
26th April, 1854.

SIR,

In connection with my letter of the 19th instant having reference to the barque Ino, I have the honor to state for the information of His Excellency administering the Government, that I have been credibly informed that forty tons of tobacco, the duty on which amounts to five thousand pounds, with a vast quantity of customable goods have been landed and are still deposited at the Chatham Islands.

The American whaling vessel the Awashonks has gone to sea without obtaining her clearance, having sailed early on Tuesday (yesterday) morning, and there is every probability of her calling there after the information taken out by me on Saturday last for a breach of the Customs Laws, and an immediate visit to that place will, I apprehend, be of much benefit to the revenue of this port.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

WILLIAM YOUNG,
Collector.

To the Honourable,
The Colonial Secretary, &c., &c.

H. M. Surveying Vessel Pandora,
Manukau, April 21st, 1854.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of April 20th and its enclosure.

In answer to His Excellency's enquiry as to the Pandora proceeding to the Chatham Islands on the special service therein mentioned.

I much regret that it is not in my power to render assistance on this occasion, as a positive clause in my instructions relative to the survey forbids me from entering upon such service.

I have, &c., &c.,

(Signed) BYRON DRURY,
Commander.

To the Honourable,
The Colonial Secretary.

Custom House, Auckland,
19th April, 1854.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report the arrival of the brig Ino, Aldrich master, from the Port of Waitanga, Chatham Islands, a dependency of this Colony, having a clearance from Sydney bearing date the 14th February last.

The following vessels were at the Chatham Islands when the Ino sailed. The Swedish brig Experiment, the schooner Cheetah, the brig Christina Reece, the brig Prima Donna, and the schooner James Gibson in which vessel it is reported a German named Byer had arrived with a quantity of muskets and ammunition which had been sold to the Maories. The cargo of the Ino which is considerable, has all been landed there with the exception of seventeen bales of gunny bags, seventeen boxes tea, and sixty boxes of soap consigned to Mr. David Nathan of this place, and the duties on which will amount to nearly five hundred pounds.

The ship will of course be detained until the duties are secured or paid.

I should have observed that all the trade on the East Coast, say from Hawke' Bay, is supplied from Auckland, and it is a matter of much complaint amongst the merchants and traders of this place that such a depôt for smuggling should be allowed to exist, to their great injury and detriment, and to the very serious prejudice of this revenue it being reported that there is some four thousand pounds worth of customable goods, and several tons of tobacco laying there at the present time; I beg therefore to recommend for the consideration of His Excellency the Officer administering the Government the propriety of chartering a vessel should a man-of-war not be available to proceed there without delay, for the purpose of levying the duties on such goods, and making arrangements *profuturo* if found expedient for a Custom's Establishment.

I have, &c., &c.,

(Signed) WILLIAM YOUNG,
Collector.

The Honourable
The Colonial Secretary,
&c., &c.

