

S. Marsden to J. Pratt, 15 March 1814

Parramatta, March 15,

1814

Rev Sir/

I have long wished for an Opportunity to bring forward some of the Masters of Vessels who visit the Islands in the South Seas, for their wanton Cruelties, Robberies and Murders, of the natives in order to put a Stop to these Acts of Violence in future as far as possible— A few months ago I received Information that the Master of a Vessel from Port Jackson had treated a New Zealander very ill, by beating him cruelly, stripping him naked, and taking from him what little Property he had acquired by acting as a Sailor on Board.— These Acts took Place in the Bay of Islands.— I wrote an official Letter to the Governor (a Copy of which I here with transmit,) when the Master of the Vessel arrived, requesting that his Excellency would cause an Inquiry to be made, which was done. I immediately brought forward another Master of a Vessel upon a similar Charge. The Facts which I circumstantiated, induced his Excellency [f] to issue a Proclamation for the Protection of the Natives of the South Sea Islands; and to require all Masters of Vessels, who clear out of this Port, to enter into a Bond, that they will not commit any of those acts of Fraud and Violence, upon the natives. In this Case I obtained the utmost of my wishes. My next Step was to try if I could not get a Society formed for the Protection of the Natives of the South Sea Islands who may come to Port Jackson. In this I also succeeded far better than I expected. I have no doubt but this Society will greatly aid the Missions to New Zealand, and to the other Islands. I consider this Society of

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vast Importance to the common Cause. For the governing of this Society, as well as for constituting it, I copied your Rules as near as I could – which were approved. – and I shall transmit to you the Proceedings as far as we have gone. The Society will see from all these Circumstances that divine Goodness is preparing a way for these poor Heathens to receive the glad Tidings of the Gospel – [f] I think much has been done here in clearing away the difficulties. From the depositions, which I shall transmit for the Information of the Society, you will see what just Cause the Natives of different Islands have to redress their own wrongs, upon the Europeans. You will see how Captain Fodger, Master of the *Daphne*, and Walker Master of the *Endeavour* acted. The one was murdered in his own vessel, and the other now lies in Sydney Gaol, and will be tried for his Life for hanging the Lascar in Matavi Bay – Walker had also treated the New Zealanders ill, and I had him before the Court for his Conduct, when he was convicted. I trust the Steps that have been taken will prevent such dreadful Crimes in future. I have found Governor Macquarie very ready to meet my wishes, and to interpose his Authority when ever requested so to do. By purchasing the *Active*, it is keeping alive the desire to assist the Natives of these Islands, which has been kindled, and I trust all will be well – [f] We have many Enemies to the Cause of Christ here as well as in other Places, and men of wealth and Power are not easily managed. It requires much Prudence to carry on any Plan for the good of Souls in such a work. But the Lord does overrule the wills and Affections of sinful men in a very surprising way. I see the Footsteps of Divine Providence strongly marked in many Circumstances that

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have happened in these Parts of the World— all tending to make way for the Blessings of the Gospel— The Attention of those in Authority would not have been awakened to the Sufferings of the Natives of the South Sea Islands, unless some great Crimes had been committed. Those Crimes will produce the effect. Governor Macquarie assured me that he would write both to the Governor General of India; and also to his Majesty's Ministers, to request that they would not allow any Vessel to sail either from England or India to these Seas till the Masters had entered into the necessary Bonds for their good Conduct towards the Natives— From this you will see that the Missionaries will be more secure from the Hand of Violence than they could be other wise.

I am yours

Sam^l Marsden