

*Thomas Kendall to Samuel Marsden*

Bay of Islands July 25<sup>th</sup> 1817

Rev<sup>d</sup> and Dear Sir,

I have perused with attention the copy of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Andrew Cheap's Letter to the Rev<sup>d</sup> J. Pratt, and I beg leave to offer a few remarks of my own, some of which will not perhaps be unacceptable should the design of establishing a Settlement at New Zealand upon a more extended scale than this be carried into execution. My countrymen will undoubtedly feel desirous to obtain all the information they can with respect to their future prospects before they set their feet upon a foreign land.

It may be proper to observe in the first place as a caution— any company of adventurers, however small, approaching the shores of New Zealand, that A "Slandrous report" which you will recollect was raised by some of our enemies, and instilled into the mind of Duaterra and the other chiefs at Port Jackson three years ago has made a deep impression upon the minds of several chiefs at the Bay of islands. They are very jealous, lest as was then reported "a number of settlers should be sent out with an armed force and take possession of their country." [f] Too much pains cannot possibly be taken to remove every disagreeable idea of this nature from the thoughts of the New Zealanders by those who are about to sojourn amongst them. They cannot endure the thought that they shall lose the property which has descended to them from their forefathers, and be driven into the bush, as they say is the case of the Natives of New South Wales.

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The territorial possessions of the New Zealanders, as far as I can learn are hereditary, descending, as above alluded to, from the father or mother to the eldest son or daughter. When a chief has more wives than one the lawful heir or heiress issues from his head wife. The whole of the natives have a fixed place of abode. The districts, fisheries, woods, villages, houses &c— have each their distinct proprietors. The burying places belonging to a village or family are also kept distinct. It is very remarkable but a proof of the above facts that altho' we have now resided here nearly three years, yet no natives from different parts of the island, or even the bay itself (I mean strangers) have come to settle near us, and the bodies of some natives who have died a natural death whilst on a visit at the adjoining village have been conveyed by their friends to their own family Cave at a convenient time. I do not [f] think that the number of inhabitants at Ranghee Hoo has increased since our arrival. It is against the custom of the country for one native to trespass upon a-nother [sic] native's possessions, and I believe it is seldom done except as a punishment for the breach of some public law or custom, in inflicting which a whole party or perhaps a whole district will unite.

The surrounding chiefs tell me that they will gladly receive an additional number of settlers, such as may be inclined to act in their dealings towards them upon the same principles as ourselves so that they do not come in a large body. I am of opinion that the number specified in Mr Cheap's letter would generally speaking be as dependant upon the natives for protection as we now are. They

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would have no advantage over us, in point of fixing upon a more eligible spot for a settlement. They would be in less danger if situated at a greater distance from a native village, as a small plundering party would be afraid to molest them; but they could do nothing without the general good wishes of the native chiefs in their favor, nor would they other wise be in safety.

a portion of land for a settlement, it would be advisable to take care that it be as clear as possible of what the natives call the Wahhe Tabboo. Whenever a person has breathed his last, or his bones have been laid for a time there is always [f] a piece of timber set up, if there is no tree already growing to perpetuate his memory. This Wahhe Tabboo is not suffered to be molested and is held sacred both by friends and strangers. Amongst the Natives the least disrespect paid to their sacred relics, or religious ceremonies and customs is considered a sufficient ground for a War by enemies, and for a public debate by friends. The Natives will seldom slay a man for a great offence, or fine him for a small one immediately after it has been committed: but they will remember it: If a fine is his sentence, he must take good head to his little property, and to his crop of potatoes &c at the time of taking up, or else all hands around him will make demands upon him in behalf of the Atua until the fruit of his labour is gone. The Natives in their conversation with Europeans will sometimes say that their religious institutions are all a farce: but this is only by way of accommodating their expressions to the sentiments of the latter. Those who know them cannot but know that the fetters of their superstition

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are fasded [sic] locked upon them. My colleagues Mr Hall and Mrs Hall suffered at Whitange on account of the disrespect which had been paid by Wanakkee's people to some sacxred relics, and not on account of any ill will which the assailants entertained towards them. [f] It may be noticed that the New Zealanders have no established law for the punishment of Adultery, Murder, theft &c<sup>a</sup>— and therefore such of them as are inclined to commit these offences do not avoid accomplishing their purpose through any fear, except of the parties against whom they wish to act. When a man breaks an established custom for instance, when he cohabits with a widow<sup>(a)</sup>, the whole of the people around him, especially if the woman's husband was a chief, will rise in behalf of the departed Atua and inflict punishment; but the case of a man committing theft, it will not awaken the attention of the general body. The party aggrieved will take advantage of his unwatchfulness at some time or another and retaliate: but it is not known that Murder, adultery, theft or lying are offensive to the Supreme Being. They are not offensive to the general mass of the people only as they affect their interests. The Bible and that alone can teach them a better System of Morality.

Care should be taken to expose as little property as possible to the sight of the natives at the time of disembarkation or at any time. If this is not attended to it will be soon known amongst them what articles the New Settlers possess and all European property being precious [f] in their Eyes one and another of them will not fail to be very tedious and importunate in soliciting favors until a man is

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almost wearied into compliance. Many of them are tempted to steal such articles as are loose and exposed to their view whilst they are very quiet with respect to concealed property. It would be prudent for settlers to furnish themselves with plenty of boxes, casks &c. for the above purpose and to bring as many weather boards, posts &c at least as would build a store house with them.

The Natives approve of Europeans settling amongst them through motives of self interest. How can we expect it can be otherwise at present? I believe Self Interest has been the chief cause as far as they have been concerned of their kind behaviour towards us here. We have endeavoured to do all we can for their benefit. They knew this, and were thankful. Many of them by repeated acts of a conciliating nature appear now to be very sincere in their attachment and they are therefore displeased when they see us insulted or disquieted by our neighbours in any way but they are heathens still. We must not try them beyond their strength; and it becomes us, as it will [f] do any others who may settle with us, or near us, for the sake of the natives as well as our own, to be watchful, and not to injure them by placing too much confidence in them. When a native steals from us we must bear it. We can go no farther than "remonstrate". To attempt to inflict corporal punishment would be the greatest impolicy. Prevent fraud as much as possible. Watchfulness and patience are the principal requisites in all transactions of a temporal nature amongst the natives.

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The Natives are eager after trade. Prompt payment for every thing received or for labour is best. Falling axes, large and small chopping axes, hoes, spades, shovels, large and small fish hooks & c<sup>a</sup> please them well.

The Air is much cooler in general at New Zealand than at New South Wales. A man can bear a great coat here in the winter. Settlers would do well to bring with them warm clothing, flannels, worsted stockings &c.

I would just hint that in the first formation of a settlement, and when settlers are all of them in immediate want of accommodation, it is best, to depend upon one another for assistance as little as possible. Ministers as [f] well as laymen will feel it their interest to assist in erecting their own houses.

If there should be a ship employed upon the coast as a whaler, I do not think the natives would be of any essential service in procuring whales in any reasonable time. They would not be quick enough when their services were most wanted, having no notion of prompt obedience to orders. A whale might be lost, or a boat staved to pieces whilst they were bartering and gazing at the enormous creature. English sailors are the only men for this arduous and dangerous employment. It would be a great thing indeed if any plan could be adopted whereby a vessel under the patronage of the Church Missionary Society could pay her own expences. The benefits which this settlement has derived from a regular conveyance from hence to Port Jackson by means of the Active and other vessels at its first establishment have been incalculable. Our influence has been greatly

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augmented amongst the Natives; Our comforts increased; and, conveniences for carrying on the concerns of the Society completed in two years, equal if not superior to what has been accomplished in similar establishments in twenty under the Divine Blessing [f] without which nothing can succeed, and with a means of conveyance for the supply of needful stores, I am of opinion that a settlement of pious, industrious men must flourish here.

I am happy to hear of your intention to visit us a second time. By living here yourself with the Settlers you would greatly accelerate under the Divine Blessing the work which by your means, has been taken in hand. All the natives, I am confident, would rejoice at your return, and the beneficial effects of your influence must add to the comfort of the settlers in general. In a situation where every thing is entirely new, and where one difficulty succeeds another, it requires an experienced Head to point out the path of duty. A believer's course may be smooth in a christian land, under a pious minister and with pious friends around him; but when travelling abroad in a dark region, where fresh duties and dangers await him he will sometimes be at a loss which way to go. A Ship when in a safe harbour suffers not from Stormy winds and rolling billows, but when she launches forth into the boisterous ocean, beset with rocks and shoals on every [f] side it requires a skilful pilot to steer her. Alas how often have our little barks been thus exposed! I pray that our Divine Master and Heavenly Pilot may keep us and direct our way. When I take a retrospective view of the events of the past three years, and consider

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how unequal we, as instruments have been to the work that has been assigned us, I am astonished at the wonderful condescension of God in making us thus successful. He has pitied us, borne with us and blessed us, and opened a door for other labourers because it is His Work which He has inclined the Society whose servants we are to take in hand. I trust that the Society will rejoice that any advances have been made towards promoting their benevolent design and that they will not regret the money which has been expended in behalf of this noble race of Men. And I also indulge the hope that you my dear Sir whose heart has been so long desirous to assist in raising them from the dust will see some good done before you die. I write my thoughts very freely, because you are unreserved in your communications to me. I doubt not but the interest you take in the eternal welfare of the South Sea Natives will tend to your [f] advantage on a spiritual account. I hope also in the end you will not suffer temporally but should the latter be the case, and you die even poor you will not regret that your money has been laid out in this work, and I will also say your time, as they will be conducive to the happiness of thousands as yet unborn.

I have the honor to be

Rev<sup>d</sup> and Dear Sir

Your faithful Servant

Tho Kendall

Rev<sup>d</sup> S. Marsden



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P.S. It might be hinted to new adventurers that much of a persons happiness and usefulness amongst heathens depends upon his keeping a steady eye upon his proper work. Passing occurrences will naturally divert his attention, and needful intercourse with the natives will take up some of his time: but if he is not wasteful, these things will engross the whole of it. It would be easy for me to [f] do a few things on account of which I perhaps might pass muster with my religious friends whilst as to the main object I sit still and do nothing. I pray that I may always act with a single eye to the Glory of God and now I am at a distance from my earthly masters I remember that "Thou God seest me."

NB I do not think it would be a good thing for settlers to bring many sheep, Turkies, or Geese with them at first, especially if they were to fix upon a spot where there were many inhabitants. Ducks and Cocks & hens do not so much attract their attention on account of the feathers. I dont think the natives take any of the latter, at least from me.