

Letter-of-Instruction #1: from Governor W. T. Denison to Lt. G.W. Gregorie:

Government House, Sydney, February, 1856

SIR,

I expressed to Captain Fremantle my wish that he would appoint an officer to superintend the removal of the inhabitants of Pitcairn's Island to Norfolk Island, and I have received from him an intimation that he has ordered you to undertake that service. He has also informed me, that directions have been given to you to conform to such orders and instructions as you may receive from me.

2. In this letter you will receive such general instructions as I am in a position to give; but from the manner in which Captain Fremantle has spoken to me of you, I feel that I can place perfect confidence in your zeal and intelligence, and I believe that you will exert yourself to carry into effect the very peculiar duties which will devolve upon you, in accordance with the spirit of the instructions which you may receive, - instructions which of course cannot be very precise or definite, but in which much must be left to your judgment and discretion.

3. First then, with regard to the removal of the inhabitant from Pitcairn's Island, I am informed that some of the families are disinclined to remove, and it is probable reference will be made to you as to the wish of the Government with relation to this. Should this be so, it would be well that you should use your influence to induce the whole community to move together. But as the Government has nothing in view but the promotion of the happiness and welfare for the people themselves, you must not consider yourself at liberty to do more than advise the people to act in a manner, which, it is believed, will accord best with their own interests and future well being.

4. Those who embark should be warned to take with them all their stores of yams, &c. for although provisions have been made by the Government for their subsistence in Norfolk Island, yet it will be wise to guard against the possible risk which may occur to render this provision insufficient. They should also bring with them clothes, bedding, &c.; in fact, they should leave behind nothing which may be useful to them hereafter.

5. You will, of course, pay special attention to maintain the strictest separation between the crew of the vessel and the female passengers, on their way from one island to the other, and after their landing on Norfolk Island, bearing in mind that the simplicity of the islanders lays them peculiarly open to receive impressions from others.

6. On your arrival at Norfolk Island, you will make such arrangements for landing the islanders and their goods as will altogether prevent any intercourse between them and the convicts now on the island. The details of these arrangements must be left to yourself, as they will of course vary according to the side of the island upon which the debarkation and embarkation will be made; but you will understand that the greatest stress is laid upon the

complete separation of the new comers from the old occupants of the island, none of whom should be called in to assist in landing either passengers or stores, unless some absolute necessity should exist for so doing, in which case the rule respecting non-intercourse must be most absolute, and you may enforce it by any means in your power.

7. When the Pitcairn islanders are landed, you will arrange, in concert with the magistrate or whoever may be in authority amongst them, for their accommodation in the houses and buildings which are now standing. The officer of the Commissariat now on the island will probably be able to give you a good deal of assistance and information, which will facilitate these arrangements; and when this is settled, you will proceed to divide among the different families the land, which having been already cleared will probably be easier brought into cultivation than the bush land, and you will impress upon each and all the absolute necessity of proceeding to clear and cultivate it without delay. Maize has been sent down for seed, and sweet potatoes will be found on the island itself.

8. You will mark off a portion of the cleared land as a reserve for church and school purposes, that is, as a glebe for the clergyman which will be sufficient for his support; for that of a schoolmaster, say 150 or 200 acres.

9. You will also mark off as a reserve for public purposes a portion of land along the margin of the sea at both landing places, and it would probably be as well that the land now occupied by the goal and some other of the public buildings should be included in this public reserve, unless they are absolutely required for private occupation.

10. Of the uncleared land a portion, say 500 acres, more or less, may be reserved for public purposes, the remainder should, I think, be handed over to the different heads of families according to some scale of distribution agreed upon between yourself and the magistrate, the object being to check as much as possible any attempt on the part of the inhabitants of the adjoining Colonies to settle on Norfolk Island.

11. No detailed instructions can be given for your guidance in the performance of this part of your duty. I will, however, if possible, send down by the Herald, a plan of the island, and at all events I will dispatch by that vessel a sapper surveyor or two, who will be placed under your orders, and will assist you in the mechanical part of the work of allotting the land to different families.

12. I need hardly say that in all you do with reference to this distribution, you should be most scrupulously careful to consult the wishes of the new comers, and that you should act in concert with the magistrate on every occasion.

13. You will be specially careful to avoid mixing yourself up with any party movements among the islanders, of which I regret to hear there are some traces, originating, I believe, in some differences of opinion as to the position held by Mr. Nobbs. As regards your own conduct with relation to Mr. Nobbs, I have to instruct you to pay him such respect as the

position which the island authorities acknowledge him to hold would entitle him to receive; but you will not listen to any claim on his part to be recognized as having authority beyond that freely accorded to him by the islanders themselves.

14. You will not hand over to him the land reserved for the church and school purposes, which will be left at the disposal of the community, but will place him in possession of the allotment to which he will be entitled as head of a family.

15. As the islanders probably know nothing of the cultivation of maize, sweet potato, &c., which will form the staple of their consumption hereafter, it will be advisable that you should obtain from the commissariat officer in charge every information as to the proper season for planting or putting in those crops, the mode of cultivation, the season of gathering, and the mode of stowing them away. In fact, you should endeavour to collect, for the use of the islanders, all the information with reference to the natural productions of the island, and those which have been introduced, either as articles of food or of luxury, which may have been gained during its previous occupations, so that the new comers may not have to commence a fresh series of experiments, but have the benefit of the experience of their predecessors.

16. With regard to the provisions which have been sent down now for the islanders, as well as to the tools and stores of different kinds which will be left for their use, it will be necessary that you should act in concert with the officer of the commissariat, and see that these are handed over to the magistrate, and that a proper receipt is given by him to the commissariat officer, as a release to the latter.

17. With regard to the distribution of these stores and tools among the islanders, you will interfere as little as possible, except when your advice is asked for – it being desirable that the islanders should learn as soon as possible to think and act for themselves under the novel circumstances of their position.

18. In conclusion, I must press upon you the necessity of acting rather as the adviser of these people than as one placed in authority over them. The influence which you will be able to exercise will of course be very great, and I have every confidence what you will exert that influence in promoting harmony amongst a set of people who are about to be placed in a position which may very possibly tend to stimulate those evil passions to which their residence in Pitcairn's Island hardly afforded scope or opportunity of development.

19. You will be good enough to keep a full record of your proceedings with relation to all the matters noticed in these instructions, and to make a full report to me, on your return, of the mode in which you have carried out the duty intrusted to you, in order that I may forward it for the information of the Secretary of State; and you will accompany this report with any suggestions which you may think calculated to facilitate the working of the

experiment about to be made, or which may tend to the happiness and prosperity of the very interesting people who are the subject of this experiment.

(Signed) W. Denison

To Acting Lieut. G.W. Gregorie, R.N.  
Agent on board the ship "Morayshire"