

*Appendix D.*CHIEF COMMISSIONER'S
MEMORANDA.

APPENDIX—D.

D—No. 1.

MEMORANDUM BY THE CHIEF LAND PURCHASE COMMISSIONER, 4TH SEPT., 1856.

In reference to the Governor's Memorandum of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to offer the following observations on the several topics adverted to by His Excellency.

I.—Education.

1. The sum of £7000 set apart for Native Purposes on the Civil List is at present apportioned to the Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Wesleyan Missions for Educational purposes.

2. Considerable diversity of opinion exists as to whether this outlay is productive of results adequate to the expenditure. Information on this point can be obtained by the appointment of an Educational Board, or of an Inspector of Schools, to inquire into and report upon the subject; when, I have no doubt, it will be found that many of the Schools under the management of each of these denominations have been well conducted, and that the scholars attending them have made considerable progress in the rudiments of education. At the same time it must be borne in mind that great difficulties have to be encountered in the conduct of schools of this kind; such as the want of experienced teachers to act under the Missionaries, whose time is too much taken up with religious ministrations to their scattered flocks to admit of their exercising more than an occasional supervision over the schools. The children, moreover, being totally unaccustomed to control, find it doubly irksome to be obliged to conform to the rules and restraints which are necessary in conducting a school. The natural pride of the Natives induces the parents to look upon the restraint, to which their children are subjected, and their being employed in mechanical arts, as a degradation, and they cannot foresee the advantages to be derived from a general system of Education for the People, which might induce them to force their children to attend the schools, in spite of the repugnance they naturally feel to the necessary control.

3. Notwithstanding these impediments, considerable progress has of late years been made through the zeal of the Missionaries in training the children, attending their schools, in habits of cleanliness, industry and regularity, and in overcoming the prejudices of their parents; so that the difficulties in the way of the successful establishment of a general natural system of education, are gradually, though slowly, disappearing. Thus there is reason to hope that the benefit of a regular educational system, combining a knowledge, as well of agriculture and mechanics, as of the domestic, moral, and social duties, may be extended amongst the aborigines, who may be gradually induced to contribute to its support by donations of land, produce, and by small annual pecuniary contributions.

4. The diffusion of useful knowledge amongst the Natives is a subject of such importance to the welfare of the race, that,—while fully admitting the prior claims of the three religious bodies now receiving Government aid—other denominations should not be excluded from a share of whatever public funds may be available for this purpose; if, in the progress of colonization, schools should be formed by them in European Districts, which should be opened on equal terms to the children of the aborigines.

II.—Bridle Roads.

5. The necessity of forming Bridle Roads to open up the Country and facilitate postal communication, is so obvious that no arguments need be adduced in favour of it.

6. The lines of road through this island which I would recommend to be opened up, are:—

First,—the route through the interior, by way of Waikato, Waipa, and Taupo, to Ahuriri; thence through the Forty Mile Bush, to Wairarapa, passing along that valley to the Rimutaka Road, already formed, and on to Wellington. The advantages of this line are that it opens up the interior of the most fertile portions of the Auckland Province; and that it passes through the most open and accessible parts of the country, with fewer natural impediments of dangerous rivers, mountains or dense forests, to encounter, than any other line that can be selected. More detailed information in reference to this line, and the stages for carrying mails, has already been furnished. The chief difficulty in carrying it through might arise from opposition on the part of the interior chiefs; but this could be overcome, and their co-operation and assistance ensured by judicious management.

The Second line is that over which the overland mail by way of Taranaki to Wellington is now carried. The chief object in continuing this line is, that it passes through the English settlements of Whangaroa, Taranaki, Whanganui, and Manawatu. The objection to it is that it opens up no available country, as the road, for the most part, lies along the sea-beach. Eighty miles of the distance between Kawhia and Taranaki is mountainous, heavily wooded, and so broken as to be impassable except to foot travellers; but even this portion may be so far improved, with the assistance of the Natives, who have offered their aid, that a moderate outlay will render it passable for travellers on horseback.

III.—Political Agents.

7. The employment of Political Agents, or Residents, on whom the Government could rely for authentic information, is very much required, more especially in the densely populated Native Districts of the North Island.