

As Mr. Maudslay's report shows that the estate on which these cruelties have been practised is worked by an agent of Messrs. M'Arthur and Co., of Auckland, I request that you will bring the subject under the serious consideration of that firm, in order that the necessary steps may be taken, with the view of putting an end to the abuses which have been shown to exist on their plantation.

Governor the Most Hon.

the Marquis of Normanby, G.C.M.G.

I have, &c.,

M. E. HICKS BEACH.

Enclosure 1.

Mr. MAUDSLAY to the Right Hon. the SECRETARY of STATE.

SIR,—

British Consulate, Apia, Samoa, 14th May, 1878.

On the 23rd April I held an inquiry at Mr. Cornwall's plantation, at Lata, into the condition of the Tapitenga labourers working on that estate, and investigated certain charges made against the manager, an American citizen named Moors.

2. The plantation of Lata is situated on the south-west coast of the Island of Savaii, between the native villages of Taga and Saleailua, and is about fifty miles distant from Apia.

I have attached a sketch-map of the coast, showing the position of the plantation. Black lava cliffs extend almost the whole length of the south coast of Savaii, against which the surf is always beating with great violence, and navigation in small boats is always dangerous, and often impossible.

At Satupaitea and Saleailua some protection is afforded by short stretches of coral reef, but between these two places, for a distance of twenty miles, there are only the small boat passages at the villages of Tufu and Taga, which are only practicable in very fine weather. There are only two paths along the coast, both passing over level land, but owing to the rocky nature of the ground they certainly rank amongst the worst native tracks I have ever walked over. The plantation is thus in a very isolated position. The clearing commences about half a mile from the coast, and runs inland. There is a dense forest all round, and the nearest native village is distant about five miles.

3. Mr. Cornwall claims to be the owner of a large tract of land in the neighbourhood of Lata, amounting to something like twelve or thirteen square miles. The land, however, has not yet been surveyed, and it is impossible to give the extent of the claim with accuracy. The natives have acquainted me with their intention of disputing the validity of the sale of a great portion of this land.

4. A small break in the lava cliff just opposite the plantation affords sufficient shelter for boats to be loaded in fine weather, but the work must always be attended with some risk, and since the date of my visit Mr. Cornwall's small cutter, the "Bertha," has been struck by a squall and totally wrecked whilst lying alongside the cliff.

5. I had walked through Lata on my way from Satupaitea to Saleailua, and had held some conversation with the labourers, many of whom speak Fijian. They appeared to be discontented with their lot, and complained of want of food and too much work.

6. The surface of the ground at the plantation is covered with loose black volcanic rock, and the only cultivation at the present time is an inferior crop of maize. I should say about eighty to one hundred acres of land had been cleared.

7. I enclose a copy of Mr. Hunt's letter, which you gave me before I left Fiji. I believe this letter to have been written from motives of personal animosity to Mr. Cornwall, and the charges are consequently somewhat exaggerated. I am not aware that there is any dispute about that part of the estate which is now under cultivation; and the murder of the labourer, which Mr. Hunt refers to, as showing the opposition of the natives to the occupation of the land, took place when the Tapitenga labourers were gathering cocoanuts, two and a-half miles distant from the plantation.

8. I enclose a copy of a statement, sworn to before me by Joane, the Native ordained minister of the London Missionary Society, resident at Saleailua, and copies of the statements made to me by Mr. Cornwall, Mr. Moors, and others, when under examination at Lata. I also attach a copy of a letter I have since written to Mr. Cornwall, stating the opinion I had formed from the inquiry, and directing certain changes and improvements to be made in the treatment of the labourers.

9. The labourers employed on the plantation were brought from the Line Islands in the "Flirt." I have not yet been able to obtain the information I wish for with regard to the "Flirt's" voyage. Mr. Cornwall, for whom the labourers were engaged, was Acting Consul at the time of their arrival, and I am informed that he boarded the vessel in Apia before she had dropped anchor, and went off in her to Magia, his plantation on the north coast of Upolu. I am, therefore, not able to obtain much independent information as to the condition of the labourers and their families on their arrival in Samoa, but there is little doubt that in their own homes the Line Islanders had been suffering much from want of food owing to bad seasons.

10. No list of labourers was recorded in the Consulate, and the list given me by Mr. Cornwall at Lata, which was made out some weeks after their arrival, is imperfect, and Mr.