

5 pages written 22 Jun 1875 by Hector Ross Duff in Wairoa to Sir Donald McLean

H. R. Duff  
Clydebank Wairoa 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1875  
Sir Donald McLean  
My dear Sir Donald  
I received your telegram  
two days since; I was from home, when it arrived  
I thank you for the honor you wish to confer on me,  
as also, for the good opinion you must entertain  
in that you call on me, to have my name en-  
rolled; amongst those holding commissions of  
the peace for the colony; but at the same time,  
I hope, you will permit me to decline:— I am  
fully sensible of the honor, you would confer  
upon me; and that it is one, which any true  
and loyal, citizen, should be proud to hold;  
but unfortunately, I do not consider my  
position; as yet, sufficiently fixed, to en-  
able me to take my place on the bench, with  
that amount of independence, or rather dignity,  
which I think necessary, for one intrusted with  
swearing to the laws of his country being properly  
earned out; were it not for this, I should be  
very proud indeed, to hold commission of  
the peace; as I am not without ambition, and  
even now, were I situated at a distance  
from a center of population, I would

**MANUSCRIPTS & PICTORIAL**

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return a different answer, but leaving as near  
 town - as I can, do I should often be called upon  
 to sit on the bench, and I should not like to  
 do so, unless in such a position, as to be  
 credit to an appointment made by Sir John  
 Brogans recommendation, had you asked me  
 eighteen months hence, I should gladly have  
 accepted, but I hope by that time, if well,  
 to take some rest, and you are well aware,  
 that we have all a hard struggle, at the first  
 before we get a footing on the ladder -  
 I am glad to see, you have managed to extinguish  
 the native title, over so much land in this district,  
 it is the best thing could happen, for the natives  
 themselves; I have thought much of native matters,  
 since coming here; and get changed views, I now  
 honestly believe, that unlike the Maori shames off  
 the burden of his lands; he will never, he any thing  
 but a Maori; and, that as soon as he finds, he can  
 not swim about, first to one great grove, then to  
 another, few miles distant, he will show better than  
 a life of indolence; and be fully able to compete  
 in the battle of life, with his Euro-pean neighbor.  
 at the time I thought the natives were wronged,  
 and in some instances, certainly were, but

such proving dual, to be the case, from what I see  
 of the Papua Tribes; the result has been good:  
 With regard to the lands you have acquired  
 here, if properly administered, and not allowed  
 to be swept up by speculators, I can see a future  
 for St. Vrain, and a gain to the whole country;  
 without doubtless, the Maori, though possessing  
 an exceptionally fine climate, and fair, to really  
 first class land, will always be poor, and badly  
 situated, and at the extreme end of the two provinces  
 with land, I might almost say my reach, could  
 communication with the capital; his witness over  
 mail communication) no papers for three months  
 from four to five hundred; each of these will  
 return the good to taxes at least the for amount  
 How comes the increased revenue, from the value  
 increase of population; but the class of men who  
 here, are those with a little money: you are now  
 pouring immigrants in to the country; some  
 here; of course you can not expect them all to be  
 prudent, and to save money, still a majority, though  
 perhaps a small one, will do so; they will rather  
 want land, to make homes for themselves; these

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are the men, who would come here; if you  
give the land on deferred payments: I do not  
believe in the 40 acre scheme, give men not  
less than 300 acres, not more than 600, and  
you create, an independant yeoman class,  
I think, the 40 acres; generally leads to poverty,  
as at all events, an undesirable class of  
people: of course selections would have to  
be made; under supervision: so that no  
one person should monopolise, too much  
portage to road, as never, get a class of men  
such as I say, situated in Wairoa: and you  
can withdraw your troops; go to some place  
else; give a man a home, and he will pro-  
tect it; but supposing the land to be so given,  
on deferred payments, it should be made  
compulsory for the original holder, to keep  
the land, bona fide, in his own possession -  
for at least 8, or 9, years he must not sell,  
unless to Govt, and then only at original  
cost: for depend upon it, unless some provision  
of this sort, is made, land speculators (who  
are a curse to any country) will manage  
to get hold of it, you have a good example  
of this, in the way in which the indentured

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of the government, got defeated, namely  
 the Waikato military settlers land scheme  
 on deferred payments. I do not know how  
 much land was given away, but think I  
 am far ~~and~~ the mark in saying 1000 acres  
 and this was the original land, which entitled  
 the application, will bring it up to more than  
 15,000 acres a rough calculation, but certain  
 ly though I have no certain data to go on  
 under the mark: this land instead of being  
 held, by 40, or perhaps 60, settlers is now in  
 the hands of some five, or six, any other land  
 you give on deferred payments, unless you  
 do something, as I propose, and put a clause  
 in your act, that the land will revert to  
 the govt, if the original holders want to  
 dispose of it: within a specified time  
 will certainly be mopped up also

There is a very fine piece of land  
 on the coast, here, between Raukawa  
 and Whakaki, there will be between six  
 and seven thousand acres; about half  
 of it, as good as any land in New  
 Zealand: I think I have heard, that

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you were once, particularly anxious  
to acquire part of it (Tahaenui) for the  
purpose of putting vine growers there.  
The land has not passed the Native Lands  
Court, and is not yet dealt with; old Sata  
Whanga, is I should think the chief owner,  
I was told a few days since, (whether rightly  
or wrongly, I can not say) that certain  
parties, are pressing the old man to pay  
a debt, and want to lease this block from  
him, as payment. If you can prevent it,  
this block should not be allowed to pass  
in to any but the government hands: it is  
most valuable, from position, quality of  
land, and climate. I really believe, the  
orange, would grow in Tahaenui valley.  
I fear to trespass further on your time  
which is too valuable to be wasted.  
Whatever suggestions I have made are  
made thinking of the good of the district  
and hoping you will. You have quite  
recovered from the illness you had in Napier.  
Believe me, yours very sincerely,  
Hector Ross Duff