

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

H. R. Duff
Clydebank Wairoa 22nd 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 settlers, 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 weeks
 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 not
 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; see 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