

Land Commissioner's Office,
Auckland, April 1, 1857.

SIR,—

In reference to your letter of the 5th February last, recommending a further payment to be made to the Natives of Port Levy and adjacent districts in preference to the granting of a large reserve demanded by them, together with the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds originally proposed for extinguishing the Native title to Kaiapoi; also bringing forward strong circumstances connected with the rights of these Natives which have been hitherto overlooked, and urging their case on the favourable consideration of His Excellency the Governor.

I regret my inability to acquaint you with the decision of the Government by this opportunity, but you may rely on an early and definite answer by the next vessel that sails from this port for Canterbury.

I have, &c.,

(Signed,) DONALD McLEAN,
Chief Commissioner.

J. W. Hamilton, Esq.,
Lyttelton.

[MEMORANDUM.]

March 30th, 1857.

Referring to Mr. Hamilton's report of the 5th ult. it appears that he has extinguished the claims of the Port Levy, Rapaki, and Kaiapoi tribes over an area of 1,140,000 acres of land in the Canterbury and Nelson Provinces for a consideration of £200.

The Natives demanded a sum of £500, or of £150 and certain large reserves; Mr. Hamilton did not accede to the proposal of making large reserves, inasmuch as the land demanded by the Natives was of great value; and he proposed, at the request of the Natives, to submit their claim to the favourable consideration of His Excellency the Governor, for a further payment of £300 to which he considers them justly entitled; and strongly urges and requests that at least £200, should be paid to them. Mr. Hamilton and the Natives concerned, rely on His Excellency's generous consideration of this case, and I can see no other alternative but that of paying the £200 recommended by Mr. Hamilton in addition to the £200 already paid, leaving the question of the further sum of £100 open for future consideration, to be invested, (if approved by the Government) in something for the permanent benefit of these Natives; to whom it must be conceded that great injustice has been done from the fact that their claims were not earlier enquired into and recognized.

I submit, therefore, that an authority should be sent to Mr. Hamilton for the payment by him of £50, in excess of the £150 already authorised for this service; and that he should have a further authority to pay the Natives a sum of £200 in consequence of their relinquishment of all their claims, including the large reserve which they demanded, and which it would be most inconvenient to grant, from the various European interests it would involve.

(Signed). DONALD McLEAN.

Chief Commissioner's Office,
Auckland, March 31, 1857.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th January last, respecting the unsettled claims of Wakatau and his tribe to lands between the White Bluff and the Waianua.

I feel exceedingly obliged for the trouble you have taken in enquiring so fully into the merits of this claim, which from the statement of Wakatau, who I am informed is a very upright and trustworthy Chief, deserve most careful consideration on the part of the Government.

The New Munster records are now being searched with the view of having copies of all documents connected with the purchases at the Middle Island examined, and ascertaining the merits of the claims referred to, and in order that copies may be forwarded as records to your office at Canterbury if you will kindly take charge of them.

My absence at the Northern Settlements has prevented earlier attention to this subject.

I have recommended in my report on the final settlement of the Nelson land question, that a sum of £100 should be set apart for the remnant tribe residing at Arahena, together with sufficient reserves for their present and future requirements. Admitting that they are entitled to £50 more, and the Kiakoura Natives to £150, this would only leave £300 to be provided for the final extinction of the claims of the aboriginal tribes to the Provinces of Canterbury and Nelson; a sum which I feel satisfied the Government would not hesitate, on its being fully ascertained that the rights of the Kaikoura tribe are clearly established, in addition to making such reservations for them as may be found requisite.

The Government is placed at great disadvantage in not having an officer stationed at the Middle Island, who should be entrusted with the sifting of such information as would lead to a thorough knowledge of cases like those now adverted to by you; consequently it has been inadvertently led to overlook claims that required greater consideration. I trust, however, that this may now be rectified, and that in the course of next summer, which will be the best season of the year for collecting the Natives and marking off their Reserves, that a final adjustment of these out-