

fate to see their best lands absorbed in the payment of debts contracted by the New Zealand Company. And they now feel, unless justice be done to them and a re-apportionment of the debt effected upon some equitable consideration of the value received by each province, that they are destined to lose the whole of their land, if not a portion of their Customs revenue, and to sink into that state of stagnation which must exist in every Colony where there are no funds for the construction of public works. Your Memorialists cannot look forward to land sales to any large amount in this province. Their available districts are separated from one another by formidable physical barriers; and without money to open the country up they may be considered as practically beyond the reach of settlement.

Your Memorialists appeal with confidence to the sense of justice which they feel well assured resides within your Honourable House. They ask for a re-consideration of the question of the apportionment of the Company's debt between the three provinces of the Middle Island. They ask for an inquiry into the value of the Company's estate received by each, and that Nelson may have an allowance made to her for the land which she has been obliged to pay away for liabilities contracted by others. They have shewn that Otago has received 556,933 acres, and Canterbury 163,533 acres, in land out of which none, or next to none, has been selected; whereas Nelson has received no more than 72,827 acres, and this consisting of the remaining portions of blocks, out of which all the best land has been selected. If they were to estimate the land received by Otago and Canterbury at ten shillings an acre, it most undoubtedly would not be too low a value for that which Nelson has received to assess it at five shillings. At this rate Otago would receive land of the value of £278,000; Canterbury, land of the value of £81,000; and Nelson, land of not more than the value of £18,000.

Your Memorialists now leave this question in the hands of your Honourable House, assured that the same sense of justice which dictated the re-payment to Auckland of her past contributions to the New Zealand Company's debt, will lead you to recognize the perfect fairness of the claim now preferred by the Province of Nelson, earnestly trusting that the result may be the relief of the province from the pressure of a burden entirely disproportioned to her resources, and to the benefit received, and evidently, in the first instance, imposed, not according to any inquiry into the true merits of the case, but simply in accordance with an unjust and indiscriminating symmetry.

And your Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

(Signed)

J. H. BARNICOAT,
Speaker.