

Col. McDonnell.
26th Aug., 1875.

255. *Sir D. McLean.*] You did not believe him?—No, I have no belief in his statements. I told this story to Dr. Pollen, and I got Mr. Brissenden to repeat the story to others. He said to me, "Now, I have been thinking if I cannot do some little service for you." I said, "You are very kind; what would you do?" He said, "You told me you had £300 a year, and 10s. 6d. a day travelling allowance. I will give you £100 a year in addition." I said, "Have you any authority?" He said, "It will come out of my own pocket. It will pay me to give it, and you to receive it." He said, "How much land have you bought?" I had my pocket-book, and made a rough calculation, and said, 80,000 or 100,000 acres. He said, "You let them rip; drop them; let me pick them up; I will get the 4d. an acre, and I will give you half." This was on board the "Rowena," on the 16th of June. I had some thoughts of taking action, but I thought it better, from my experience, to leave him alone. While at the Bay of Islands we had a walk on the beach, and he then repeated that offer again; he repeated just as I have told you about the offer. At Ohacawae I saw Mr. W. Earl, and I told him the whole statement; I also told Mr. Busby and other gentlemen. Mr. Earl advised me to take the £100, and enclose it in a letter to the Native Minister. I went to the Bay of Islands from Ohacawae; I met Mr. Brissenden coming from Haruru. He got into my boat, and when we got to the hotel at Haruru, I said, "About that offer, I am going to speak clearly and straightforwardly." I took him upstairs; Mr. Dalton followed him. I had my own impression, for I told him what I thought, that he was a scoundrel and a Yankee sharper, and that I would not mix myself up with him in these transactions, that he could go his own road, and that I would never interfere with him, and that if I found him interfering with me I would horsewhip him. He said, "I think you are right." He said, "the Government don't like you." I said, "Don't they; it does not matter much to me." He said, "They don't like you; they won't give you money to pay the Maoris, while I can draw a cheque for £10,000." Mr. Brissenden, also said, "If you don't help me to buy land, I will not be able to buy land. You were living in that district for some years, and have influence over the Natives, and if you attempt to baulk me I will not be able to buy land." I said, "I am not at all desirous to interfere with your purchases, as long as you do not interfere with the blocks I have made advances upon—that I will not permit. I was requested by Sir Donald McLean not to interfere with you, and I do not wish to do so." I told him, "As the Government were pleased to employ you, I consider it my duty to help you, but your proposal could only emanate from a scoundrel;—you were so connected with mining and swindles, but I believe you acted honestly up to your light." Here are letters which I wish to put before the Committee, written to my wife of the 17th, 18th, and 19th of June. In a letter dated the 18th of June, from Ohacawae, I wrote—"Mr. Brissenden was a passenger with us in the steamer, but he intended to land at Whangarei. Owing however to the gale of wind, we came on to the Bay of Islands. I had heard before I left Auckland that he was on his way to Mangakahia to try and purchase a block of land that I had promised the Natives to take from them. He tried to make himself agreeable, and commenced to talk about land, and how he got his present appointment. I felt, he said, when McLean offered it to me that I might, if I accepted it, be doing yourself and Kemp an injury, and I told McLean so, but he assured me that Kemp was well provided for, and that you had a claim on the country, and in consequence would draw your pay even if you never bought an acre of land, but that they (the Government) were obliged to put you under the head of some department or another. After a pause, he told me he had been thinking if he could not contrive to better my position. 'It's very kind of you,' I remarked, 'I only get £300 a year, and 10s. 6d. a day travelling expenses, which won't pay. Pray, might I inquire what you get?' 'Well,' he said, 'I'll tell you. I get two guineas a day pay, one guinea allowances, which makes three guineas a day. Then I am allowed an interpreter at one guinea a day, and travelling allowance for him at 10s. 6d. per diem; besides that, I get 4d. an acre on all land I buy, and the chance of doing business privately. I told McLean that unless I could do this it was not worth my while to accept service.' 'Then,' I replied, 'you make a good thing of it.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'I pick up a good many bits of sugar.' He continued: 'I think if you and I can agree we will do well.' 'Well,' I said, 'how?' 'Why, you see, I am allowed an interpreter,' he went on, 'but as you will continue to draw your pay whether you buy land or not, and if I applied to McLean that you be attached to me, you might simply be ordered to come with me without any extra pay. Now, I'll tell you how we can work it. I will give you £100 a year increase to your pay. You can draw it by the month or quarterly as you choose; in the meantime you had better let your purchases lapse and fall through, and let me commence over again. What is about the extent?' He paused. 'I can tell you,' I replied, and produced my pocket-book. 'Well,' I said, 'taking Mangakahia, Waoku, and Mangonui, on a rough estimate, there is about eighty odd thousand acres.' 'Ah,' he said, 'I will share the 4d. an acre with you. Are you on the way to get more land?' 'Yes,' I said, 'about 3,000 acres and 2,000 acres.' 'Any more,' he asked? 'Yes,' I said, 'there is one block with some good timber on it, but there is no trouble about this block (Waitaroto), as the Natives have a title, and it can be bought off the reel!' 'Ah,' he said, 'if it is any good I will buy it myself.' 'Would you let me stand in with you in that too,' I inquired? My 'cute Yankee friend said he would; and I then asked him 'if, when we had finished North, I was to go South with him, and share with him there.'" Waitaroto was of about 7,000 or 8,000 acres. He had told me that when he had finished the lands in the North, he would get the whole of the land purchases—in fact, that he was to be your (Sir D. McLean's) factotum in Native land purchases. This I did not believe; I only believed his offer to me, and trifling things, when he spoke. This took place when we were going up together in the "Rowena." In a letter to my wife, of the 17th of June, I wrote:—"I have much to tell you when I return; and have been offered £100 a year more on to my pay; but not by the Government. This appears mysterious, but I will explain in another note next time, when I can write more collectedly." On the 18th I wrote to my wife:—"Brissenden told me that he gets £3 3s. per diem pay, and travelling expenses, and an interpreter allowed him at £1 1s., and 10s. 6d. travelling expenses, and a commission of 4d. an acre on all the land he buys, besides doing business for other people, and getting paid for it. He offers me £100 a year in addition to my pay, from himself, and half the com-