

Auckland, 3rd September, 1854.

SIR,—

I have the honor with reference to a Return called for last session on the subject of compensation given by the New Zealand Company to Resident and Absentee Landowners at Wellington, to inform you that, so far as the totals are concerned, I can furnish the Return without reference to Wellington.

But there is much of the Return which it is impossible for me to give, because the resident Landowners' compensation was awarded by a Committee, who, by the arrangement (16th September, 1848,) under which the grant was to be made, were constituted sole judges in every claim, and neither by the Company's Agents, nor by the Government, were the reasons for each award either known or enquired for. I had some conversation with Mr. Ludlam, (the hon. mover for the Return) and pointed out to him that this information, which was in reality the gist of what he wanted to get at, could not be given; adding my own opinion that the Landowners Committee would certainly neither consent, nor be justified in consenting at this time of day to reopen virtually the question of compensation, by accounting for each decision they came to.

I furnished in my evidence before the New Zealand Company's Debt Committee last session, a Return of the totals of compensation granted respectively to Absentees and Residents at Wellington, but am not aware whether it was published. I will however procure it from the hon. Chairman of that Committee.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

F. D. BELL,
Commissioner.

The Honorable
The Colonial Secretary, &c., &c., &c.