

Letter: William JENKINS to the Superintendent, Nelson
Archives NZ Wellington Reference NP 7 Item 11 Letter 1864/225

Written 16 Jan 1864 from Birmingham, Warwickshire, England.
Received 28 Mar 1864.

To His Honor the Superintendent of Nelson.

Sir, Having been eight months in England and now turning my attention towards home I beg to trouble you with a line or two, as I dare say your home will be glad to hear of our welfare.

I am thankful to be able to state that I have been enabled to maintain a respectable position ever since arrival in England and have done all in my power to procure valuable information for the Natives under my charge - hoping thereby to confer a lasting benefit on them & in the tribes with whom they are connected. We have moved in high circles and have mixed with good society in every town we have visited and ... to say we are greatly respected wherever we go. Our meetings are of the most interesting character and every one experiences the highest satisfaction at our visit & proceedings.

In fact I have the most satisfactory testimonials from very respectable persons & from many of the first ..., yet, we out of pocket our expenses are so heavy that altho our meetings are well attended we barely clear our way so that was invested at the onset will be lost, I fear, unless the wealthy English public subscribe to make it up - this they could do easily if they chose and, I think, all things considered they ought to do it.

You know none of us can afford to lose a penny ... I fear we shall be all of us the worse for our journey, while the New Zealanders will, doubtless, be benefitted greatly.

We have been four months in Birmingham and are now only waiting for a "... meeting" in the Town Hall which comes off Feb 4th. The Mayor B. Holliday Esqr has granted the free use of the building. We are to have a written testimonial presented on the occasion & many presents of Birmingham ... presented to the New Zealanders.

I often regret I had not entered into an arrangement with your Honor for bringing out a number of really valuable servant girls and a few picked? Emigrants. I know many who would be glad to emigrate but have not the means. Perhaps I may manage to bring a few yet by some means or other. Altho I really do not know to which port I shall sail I hope to get an appointment in Auckland. I think no one is more entitled to it & I shall ask the Duke of Newcastle to recommend it to Sir Geo Grey in consideration of my losses & the creditable manner in which I shall be able to... I have conducted this expedition... unfortunately it has proved unprofitable to us all.

However, should I ... in this I hope to regain a position in Nelson & take my former post as Interpreter. I am much improved in health. My... agrees with me. At last the winter has set in fiercely there has been much frost and for a week past dense fogs & very unpleasant weather. "Br..mmargue"? looks as gloomy as ever it did in the oldens time. The fog keeps down the smoke & the smoke fills the houses so that breathing is difficult and one really longs for a breath of ... Nelson Air. There is no place I really believe at least I have never yet seen one, equal in all respects to Nelson altho people call it a "dull place" in a "Sleepy Hollow" &c &c &c

I have had many enquiries about Coal pits as very little inducement would bring out a few well to do Colliers & their men to work the Coalfield at the West Coast and there are the people who would benefit Nelson greatly. I wish I could telegraph messages to your Honor. I receive replies while I am here. I am sure I could do something that would benefit the province - people here are in want of bona fide information respecting New Zealand. When I talk to them & tell them of the Mineral wealth of Nelson province they ... amazed ... and wonder how it is they have not heard of it before and yet they may ... have read of it in the papers a score times if they had chosen but when they have been assured of its truth by a disinterested eye witness they believe it and desire to go out forthwith & wonder everybody else does not go likewise - I think you will have some ... through my visit to England. I only regret I cannot afford to spend another year in England for the express purposes of providing the right sort of settlers.

I have met many Nelson people... Messrs Fell & Seymour... Tinline - Thorne? - Cullen & others and ... some twins at Mrs Renwicks.

I trust Your Honor will ... this rambling note and ... pardon by abruptness. I have had an offer of a Ship to take out passengers to Auckland - with free passage for myself & the Chiefs & many other advantages including sole management of the ... office (excepting the Sailors) But I have since been told that some parties here are desirous of providing the means to send us back respectably with handsome presents for the Natives &c &c.

This will overturn the former scheme much to my regret & pecuniary loss - but as Mr Lightband & others seem to think it will be right to accept this bona fide office I accede to their wishes – so perhaps we shall ... sail about the middle of March. With great resp.. I am
Your Hon Obt Servt W. Jenkins