

the Public Service, and which the recent earthquake has rendered of an urgent nature, I now, in order to divide the labor among you, and under equally urgent circumstances, request your assistance to purchase and transmit to New Plymouth (Taranaki) 9 corrugated and galvanised iron houses, about 33 x 24, in which and within a Stockade, it is proposed to place 200 men about to be sent to that place, in order to watch an insurrectionary movement among the Maories or natives, and protect the inhabitants from the probable annoyance consequent on these hostile movements which at present are confined to the natives themselves.

Previously to shipping those houses, they should be ascertained to be complete in all respects, and judging from the little estimation they are held in in Melbourne, where I understand they are at a great discount, they should not cost more than 150*l.* a-piece, or 1350*l.* for the nine, and this sum together with all shipping expenses, I am authorised to inform you, will be paid by a bill on the Colonial Treasury at Auckland, signed by yourself, and for the due payment of which I hold myself responsible.

With these houses, 9 stoves and piping fit to warm them, should be sent, which will also be paid for in the same manner. It is very desirable that no time should be lost in transmitting these articles, and his Excellency Colonel Wynyard will consider himself personally obliged by your forwarding them without any delay, as I shall also myself. I send a sketch to show how I propose to arrange these buildings, and which with a copy of my letter to Colonel Wynyard, will give you an idea of what I want.

I remain, &c.,

(Signed) F. H. BADDELEY,
Colonel commanding Royal Engineers

Victoria, Melbourne,
May 16th, 1855.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, with enclosures of the 17th ult., containing instructions for the purchase and transmission of iron houses for the accommodation of two hundred of the troops to be stationed at New Plymouth.

Acting at once on your letter, which represented the extreme urgency of the case, I lost no time in instituting inquiries, by advertisement and otherwise, to ascertain for what iron houses similar to your requirements could be procured; but I regret to say I was unable to hear of any at all suitable, nor, had I been successful in obtaining the description of buildings you desire, could I have guaranteed their completeness without I had first had them erected here—a tedious and expensive process.

It is indeed owing to the almost general incompleteness of these structures, as imported from England, with the difficulty of erecting them, that they do not command a higher price in this market.

Even of those to be had here, in addition to their being of small dimensions, and far exceeding your limits in price, I found that I could not obtain more than two alike, being of various sizes and heights, and all of a light kind of iron, which would have afforded no protection from even distant fire, and so far from their constituting a block of buildings of that regular construction so desirable for the accommodation of bodies of men, where cleanliness and discipline are to be observed, these buildings would have formed an irregular and heterogeneous mass, costly in construction, unsightly to the eye, wholly incapable of withstanding even a distant attack, and from their very defective construction, not calculated to preserve the health of the occupants.

Under these circumstances, seeing that buildings were not to be procured of the kind ordered in your letter, and adapted to the service, without incurring a serious loss of time, and ultimate increased expense, and yet feeling that dependence was placed on my sending down from hence shelter for the troops at New Plymouth failing which might involve disappointment, and other than pecuniary loss—exposed as the troops would be, to the cold and wet of Winter on the Western Coast of New Zealand, I resolved on adopting the same plan as is now pursued to a very great extent here, of having the buildings built in such a manner that they might be readily taken to pieces, packed up, and re-erected on the site they were intended finally to occupy. And although at first glance this may appear to cost considerably more than the plan proposed in your letter, yet I am persuaded from experience, and strengthened by the advice of others whom I have consulted, that the buildings I now propose will in reality be not only much better adapted for the service to which they are to be applied, but they will cost far less in the end than the houses you desired, the cost of whose erection, even if complete, would have far exceeded the original expense estimated in your letter. I have therefore, after due deliberation, prepared plans for a strong building, of the area laid down in your tracing, and which will afford ample accommodation for the force named, but exclusive of officers, for which no provision is made in the original design I received; and after having carefully estimated the expense of its construction. Just now being a favourable opportunity, wages, iron, and timber, being comparatively low, I deemed it advisable to let the work by contract, including all materials, packing, cartage, and delivery, for the sum of £4,000,—a sum which will leave a bare profit to the contractor,