

No. 5.
Mr. Gascoigne.
Continued.

them to say why they disapproved, and in what. The majority of the Board wished to strike off 5,000 acres for sheep at the south-east corner of the Reserve (Hillend). A single member of the Board (Poulson) was opposed to this, as he owned 9,000 sheep. The Board's decision was sent to the Government, and the Government sent it back with a new proposal, that a portion of the Reserve (consisting of about 16,000 acres) should be marked off for sheep belonging to Poulson and others.—Poulson having waited on the Government about this matter. Under the Government proposal, only about one-third of the whole Reserve would have been left for the *bona fide* settlers. The sheep owners were 10 in number, and those who applied to run cattle, who did not include all the *bona fide* settlers, were 170 in number. The Block proposed to be taken by the Government for sheep, was that most available, being nearest the houses, for the cattle-run for the *bona fide* settlers, out of the whole district. The assessment collected on the cattle for 12 months will be £1,500. I am actually farming myself. I have about 28 acres. It may be as much as one man can work, but it would not pay. The least quantity of land that will pay is 200 acres, and that should be of good quality. Small holdings only impoverish any man taking them up. A man, to make farming pay, must have room for a rotation of crops and to keep cattle on the land. I have put on my land improvements which would do for 500 acres. The cost of the fencing would, of course, be lessened in the latter event. I do not think there is a man in Tuapeka having the experience that I have had in mining; and I have no hesitation in saying that there will be a field for mining in this district for at least 200 years to come. I consider the sum demanded by the Government for survey expenses of 50 acres (Agricultural Lease), £10, far too much. It should not exceed the bare cost of survey. And I consider that 200 acres should be granted to each applicant, and that the rent should be applied towards the purchase of the same. The present system has the effect of draining the beginner of the money he should have for his current and necessary wants.

No. 6.

No. 6.
Mr. Gascoigne's
Letter.

Mr. Gascoigne's Letter to the Commissioners, asking for Remission of Stamp Duty Fine.

Mr. Gascoigne also sent the following letter to the Commissioners relative to the imposition of a Stamp Duty fine upon a transfer of an Agricultural Lease:—

Lawrence, Otago, New Zealand.

February 22nd, 1869.

To the Hon. A. C. Strode and A. Domett, Commissioners, sitting at Lawrence—

GENTLEMEN,—

On or about the 20th April, 1867, I bought a lease of Land from my brother, William Gascoigne, which was transferred to me about the 25th, and was then sent down to Dunedin for the signatures of the Executive; but, Mr. Macandrew not having received the delegated power from the Governor, was unable to complete the transfer, and the documents were detained by the Government until about 22nd April, 1868, when they again came into my possession. It appears that the transfer should have been registered and stamped within three months. Whether this should have been done within three months after my brother signed the transfer to me, or after it had been dealt with by the Provincial Executive, seems to be an open question, as the Executive have the power to refuse. On the other hand, when I applied to have the transfer made to me, I paid all that was demanded (£1) to cover the cost of same; and the stamp Act having just come into force, I was not fully acquainted with what is required. About nine months ago I applied to be allowed to purchase the land, sent down the money, and in due time my application was granted by the Waste Lands Board, and I thought everything was settled, when I received a letter from my agent informing me that I would have to pay £5 10s for not having put on a 2s 6d stamp. I wrote to him to tender the stamp; but it was refused. I then proved that the document had been detained by some of the Government officials for about 12 months, but all to no purpose. The Government still hold the money, declaring at the same time that the fine must be paid. Shortly after the correspondence between the Commissioner of Waste Lands (Mr. Cutten), and myself, there appeared a notice in the local papers that in addition to the £1 paid, all transfers must bear a 2s 6d stamp. In conclusion, I think it would only be an act of justice on the part of the Government to remit the fines in my case, seeing that there was no intention to defraud the Government, and seeing that they put it out of my power to legally comply with the Law by detaining the papers for the time stated. Hoping, Gentlemen, that you will cause an enquiry to be made into the above case,

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES R. GASCOIGNE.

(Enclosure with foregoing Letter.)

Waste Land Board Office,

Dunedin, 23rd May, 1868.

Enclosure.

SIR—With reference to the application of Mr. James Randall Gascoigne to purchase sections 66 and 67, Block 2, Tuapeka district, as the holder of two Agricultural Leases, I have the honour to inform you that the Leases appear to have been transferred subsequent to the passing of the Stamp Act