

consequently the transfers must be stamped. The power of Attorney from Charles Gascoigne to Thomas Randall Gascoigne must also be produced. It appears to be bad, as an Attorney cannot sell to himself.

Mr. Gascoigne.
Continued.

I have, &c.,

W. H. CUTTEN, Chief Commissioner.

J. C. Brown, Esq., Tuapeka.

No. 7.

Mr. Grundy being duly sworn, examined—

I am a farmer on the Agricultural Reserve, Waitahuna District. I was a Warden, but resigned. So far as the Reserve is concerned (the depasturing of stock in the Waitahuna District), I think there would be quite sufficient for the stock belonging to settlers, were it not for the large amount of sheep depastured by non-agriculturists. I allude to the sheep-owners named by Mr Gascoigne, all of whom cultivate very little land—taking up from 10 to 50 acres merely to put a dwelling-house upon, and give a right to depasture. I may state, as far as Tuapeka District is concerned, there is not a sufficient Commonage for the depasturing of the stock of the settlers. They want more. Many of these latter, in proximity to No. 137 and 123 Runs, are always in difficulties with their cattle. These cattle are kept for dairy purposes. About 25 head of cattle and milch cows is about the largest number owned by any single person of those I speak of, Fitzgerald, whose cattle have been driven off when not 400 yards from his house, to the Pound, for trespass on Smith's Run, a distance of over 30 miles. This is the only case of impounding cattle I know of. None of these farmers keep any sheep. There are only 10 sheep-owners in the district. Between them they monopolise the greatest portion of the grazing capabilities of the district. The settlers on the Agricultural Reserve are, generally speaking, thriving. They depend on the Goldfields for a market. There is no doubt the Goldfields will last out the time of the youngest man among us. The Blue Spur Diggings will be working for many years certainly; and both banks of the Tuapeka Creek are known to be auriferous, all the way to its mouth. They will be worked whenever there is water enough. There is as good market for this district for farm produce as any in the Province. Produce fetches a higher price than it does in Dunedin. So far as the leasing system is concerned (Agricultural Leases), the expense in connection with applications is a great drawback to the settlement of the district. Ten pounds for 50 acres deposit is considered too much to cover expense of survey. Fifty acres is not sufficient for a person to undertake profitably in farming: not less than 200 acres should be farmed to give any chance of success. In taking up 200 acres, four applications are required, for which £10 each have to be paid, or £40, to cover survey cost of 200 acres. Another grievance in connection with the applications is the cost of advertising in the public papers. Generally £1. I do not wish to condemn the leasing system in itself, which is good. It is the restrictions and conditions and bad administration of it that we complain of. It is five years since I first made application for land. I have made four applications. The first, five years ago—two tens and two fifties—and the first lease is not executed yet. I have applied frequently for them. This difficulty is not mine alone. It is usual for leases to be delayed for three years.

No. 7.
Mr. Grundy.
20th Feb., 1869.

MONDAY, 22ND FEB., 1869.

Mr. Grundy being again sworn, examination resumed—

Mr. Grundy.
22nd Feb., 1869.

Statement made.—I wish to take up my evidence where I left it, as to the Agricultural Leases.

The real grievance of the settlers in the Tuapeka District is the want of a more liberal and prompt administration of the Agricultural Leasing system; the reduction of the cost of survey, and making the rent a portion of the purchase-money; also, the local management of the grazing interests in the district. At present the management is by Wardens, elected by Lessees, License-holders, and holders of Miners' Rights, but with a Chairman nominated by the Superintendent. The settlers wish to have a Chairman elected by themselves directly, in a manner similar to that adopted in Hundreds. They wish to have special provisions made by Act of Parliament for the Management of Agricultural Reserves within Goldfields, similar to those in the case of Hundreds. This would give to the *bona fide* settlers and the mining community the exclusive power of managing the Block themselves. The country held by Smith and M'Lean—123 and 137—not only obstructs the advance of settlement in these Runs, but also in their immediate vicinity, from the fact that in the event of the settlers' cattle straying, they may be fined for trespass. One of these runholders, some years ago, received a large amount of compensation for one of his Runs, and now occupies a large portion of the Agricultural Reserve with his sheep. I believe Mr Smith has a pre-emptive right within the Agricultural Reserve. If that is the case, the runholder has a great advantage given him over the settler in the Reserve. As for the grazing capabilities of the Agricultural Reserve, I believe on the average it would carry a sheep to two acres, exclusive of agricultural land. There are over 30,000 sheep on the Reserve. I am satisfied of that. There are over 4000 great cattle—that is, horses and horned cattle. I believe there are over 10,000 acres of agricultural land in the Reserve. The present system, if pursued, will be a great drawback to the district, and drive away many settlers. A number of these settlers are advertising their places for