

Mr. Grundy. sale in consequence of dissatisfaction with the system of administering the system. I am one; Mr. Fraser is another; and several have left the Province altogether. In my district (between Tuapeka and Waitahuna), about two-thirds of the land taken up is actually fenced in and cultivated.

No. 8

Mr. Alexander Fraser, being duly sworn, examined:—

No. 8.
Mr. Fraser.
22nd Feb., 1869.

I live in the Waitahuna District. I am farming 56 acres under Agricultural Leases on the Agricultural Reserve. The greater portion of the Reserve is fully occupied by sheep and cattle. I have cattle. The feed is scarcely sufficient. I have about 30 head. I could not carry on farming profitably without them. I have no sheep. They are not actually used in farming. Farming will not pay without stock running on commonage, nor without as much as 100 or 200 acres. The best of the land in the Agricultural Reserve has been taken up, and the rest could not be taken up (except small portions) profitably under the present system. The conditions on which 200 acres are now leased, viz., payment of £10 deposit for each 50 acres, prevent this working beneficially. The power of compelling owners of cattle to pay for their trespass on unfenced cultivations (which they enjoy at present), will be a great draw-back to settlement. The evil is now only commencing. I think the law should provide that cultivation must be fenced, before damages for trespass on them should be given. The conditions generally on which agriculturists can settle are such as to prevent them doing so. Respecting the covenants, I think the Reserves on Runs 123 and 137 do not much affect the question. If the leases of those Runs had been cancelled two or three years ago, I think all the available land would have been settled upon. I should say about two-thirds would be taken up by *bona fide* settlers in the course of time. If the Government would make the deposit and the rent a portion of the purchase money, many would settle that would not think of settling under the present system. If this were done with respect to the Agricultural Reserve, most of the people settled there would extend their areas. There is some splendid land, the pick of the Run 137, along the Beaumont Road in different Blocks, amounting to perhaps 2,000 acres, lying within a space of 10 miles. But the land must be taken in not more than two Blocks. The Block of 3,000 acres on 123, is being surveyed. A great portion of this, however, is auriferous, and cannot be leased for agriculture. But nobody of any experience in farming would settle on land unless commonage were joined. I think 15,000 acres of commonage would be required to make the 5,000 acres on 137 available for farming. 2s 6d compensation per acre was given for the land on 137. There are at this moment several agricultural settlers on the Reserved Land in these Runs. A great portion of these Runs is fit for agriculture—as fit as the land between Lawrence and Waitahuna, now under cultivation. Beside the greater facilities the new land gives, there is bush upon the Runs, chiefly on 123.

Mr. Grundy.—My experience goes to show that settlers would desire more than the amount of land allowed by law.

No. 9.

Mr. Adams, being duly sworn, examined—

No. 9.
Mr. Adams.
22nd Feb., 1869.

I am of opinion that one-tenth part of the Runs 123 and 137, would be taken up in three years if the land could be taken in any sized blocks over the whole of the Runs. The land is about the same as between here and Waitahuna. Perhaps you might call it one quarter agricultural, and three quarters pastoral. Perhaps in a long course of years, (not in our time,) the whole might be cultivated. The one quarter would include, in my opinion, all land on the Runs as good as that under cultivation between Lawrence and Waitahuna. Several sections have already been surveyed about the Beaumont, on Run 137; but Government could not give possession on account of the Government not having yet made arrangements with the runholders as provided by law. The average amount of land taken up for agriculture is about 40 acres. I have laid out several allotments of 28 acres lately, for persons who could get more if they liked. I have not had, in a single case, to lay out a block of as much as 200 acres for a single individual. I do not think there have been any applications from the Blue Spur diggers. Of the 3000 acres lately thrown open, about 1000 are auriferous; and I am now engaged in marking off seven applications in the remaining 2000. These applications have been made within five months. I think there are six applications for 50 acres, and one for 25.

No. 10.

Mr. Nicholson, being duly sworn, examined:—

No. 10.
Mr. Nicholson.
22nd Feb., 1869.

In 1863 there were 29 applications for Agricultural Leases.

1864	74	“	“
1865	20	“	“
1866	242	“	“
1867	147	“	“
1868	114	“	“

Total 626 from the Tuapeka Goldfields and for land within the Tuapeka Agricultural