

Mr. Murray.  
Continued.

20.—Can you state shortly the advantages and disadvantages of pastoral land being held by many run-holders and few runholders respectively?—The difference between a comparatively populous country, divided into moderately sized farms, suited to the means of the owners, more or less improved and cultivated, and occupied by a resident proprietary and numerous persons to whom they would give employment; and pastoral wilds held by the managers of absentees, or fully mortgaged to foreign usurers. (such properties being too large for the ability, pecuniary and otherwise, of ordinary capitalists and colonists,) while a few scattered shepherds' huts and their occupants would respectively represent improvements and population.

21.—Is there any complaint of mal-administration of the Land Laws by the Province, except in the particulars of the covenant with the runholders and the sale of land at ten shillings?—I am not prepared to state here all that I have heard on the subject. I may refer, however, to the great injury done to the Province by the indiscriminate manner in which *all* the Runs were released; some despite of petitions and the promise of the then Superintendent to the contrary. The policy, or rather machinations, of a certain leading spirit appearing to tend to the locking up of the country against the legitimate settlement of population.

22.—Please make suggestions?—I would suggest that considerable areas of country be from time to time, as required opened for settlement as follows:—

- 1st. All main road lines to be properly laid out.
- 2nd. Reserves to be made of two classes, the first not to be diverted from the purpose for which they were set apart, without an Act of Assembly and Ordinance of Council; for the second class a Provincial Ordinance to be sufficient.
- 3rd. Adapting the Survey to natural features. The district to be laid out into properties of greater or less extent, according to the quality and position value of the land, natural boundaries or good lines for march or ring fences; and also to suit the means and requirements of intending buyers, and so dispose of the land as to be of the best advantage, and, of course, value to both buyer and seller.
- 4th. To resident selectors I would concede the privilege of paying only one-fourth of the purchase money at sale, the remainder bearing low interest, at say 5 per cent. per annum, to remain or be paid off by installments during say eight years, but the residence condition to be strictly enforced. If selectors refused or failed to comply with the residence and other conditions, they would, in the option of the Government, have either to pay up the balance, or forfeit their right to the land; they being repaid their one-fourth deposit (less costs) when the land was re-sold.
- 5th. Buyers or selectors to have the depasturing rights over the unsold and unoccupied remainder of the district till sold or selected.
- 6th. Buyers and selectors of land, and ratepayers, to elect from among themselves annually, a District Board to attend to pastoral, road, education, and other local matters.
- 7th. Any attempt at fraud, by dummy applications or otherwise, to be liable to severe penalties.

I consider that the aim of legislation in disposing of our Crown Lands, should be to settle them with men of moderate means, avoiding on the one hand vast unimproved estates, and, on the other, potatoe patches insufficient for the respectable maintenance of a family; for the owners of such can neither improve their own position, nor that of others, and will drag out a miserable existence, and with their noses to the grindstone all their life, will after all leave their families in beggary. While 50 acres is too small to support a family, 50,000 acres is too large for the limited area of our little Island: At the same time, we must not limit the rights of individuals to buy as much as they wish, and can pay for at once in cash. More and better wool will be produced on moderate-sized freehold farms, than under the present unthrifty system of vast Runs held often on borrowed money.

WM. ARCHD. MURRAY.

No. 19.

Letter from Mr.  
Keen with  
Enclosure.

No. 19.

(Mr. Keen to the Commissioners.)

Lawrence, 6th April, 1869.

GENTLEMEN—Having received from His Honor the Superintendent a copy of a Statement\* which he has forwarded to you, in which His Honor gainsays some of the evidence† which I gave before you in your capacity as Waste Land Commissioners, I have the honor to forward to you (as a reply to His Honor's statement) copy of a letter this day addressed by me to His Honor, and I have to request that any publicity which you may give to the one, you will likewise give to the other.

I have, &c.,

JOHN SHADWELL KEEN.

To the Hon. A. Donnett and A. R. C. Strode, Esq., R.M.

(Enclosure).

Enclosure.

Lawrence, 6th April, 1869.

DEAR SIR—Your letter, dated the 22nd ult., should have been acknowledged prior to this, and would have been but for press of business.

\* See Evidence No. 96.

† No. 2.