

*Mr. Ferrand.*  
Continued.

could arrange with Messrs. Gregg and Turnbull for a block of 10,000 acres for commonage, there should be an elected Board of Wardens to manage it and the existing Reserve. There is not sufficient agricultural land for to supply the wants of persons desirous of cultivating land. I think 20,000 acres of good land would be taken up if obtainable. Most of those who want this land are miners; but they would expect commonage with it. If 20,000 acres were offered for agriculture, there should be 40,000 or 50,000 acres of commonage given with it. All the flats and gullies under or within the south side of the Dunstan ranges are fit for agriculture. A little of this belongs to Messrs. Greig and Turnbull, and the rest to Mr. Glassford. It would ruin both Runs to take this land. I do not think the plan of taking blocks under the covenants with runholders will work, because the diggers want the land near their work, and then land would generally be taken at a distance.

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No. 36.

Mr. James Hazlett being duly sworn, examined:—

No. 36.  
*Mr. Hazlett.*  
6th March, 1869.

I am Mayor of this Corporation. I agree with Mr. Ferrand as to the commonage. It would be a great benefit if an additional commonage, including agricultural land, were thrown open to the settlers. I believe it would pay the Government well to throw open the Runs of Messrs. Greig and Turnbull, provided they could come to an arrangement with those gentlemen. I am confident a deal of it would be taken up for cultivation, and the rest would be taken for commonage. The return would be in purchase money of land and assessment on cattle. I some time since advocated the formation of a company to give compensation to Government, and acquire the right of selling and leasing the land. There is a deal of land in the Run fit for agricultural purposes. The present commonage—some part of it—is useful for either agriculture or running horned cattle. When M'Morin was mustering sheep the other day, I was present and saw that, for every two of his own sheep, there was one of Messrs. Greigg and Turnbull; so that the runholder is actually using the Reserve. As far as the functions of Mr. Baird are concerned, they are of no use as regards the commonage in the Dunstan District. He merely grants Licenses to every person who applies to run cattle on the commonage. He can give or refuse Licenses as he pleases, as far as I know. The applications are received by the Clerk of the Bench here, and are sent on to Mr. Baird, who gives his decision upon them. I believe there are many cattle running on the Reserve without License at all. Those who have Licenses pay up the assessment for the number they apply for. It would be much better if the present Commonage Reserve were put under the control of the Town Council, or, which would be better still, a District or County Council. Referring to deposits, only last week a man named White applied to me to buy him a plough, he having paid all his money on account of deposits to the Provincial Government.

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No. 37

Mr. James Petterason being duly sworn, examined:—

No. 37.  
*Mr. Petterason.*  
6th March, 1869.

I am a member of the Town Council of Clyde. I have been in the Dunstan District going on for seven years. I have been part of the time mining, part hotel keeping. I have no cattle. The great question agitated here for some time is, that the land is locked up, and the poor man cannot get any for cultivation. They complained very much of the squatters getting those long leases. I do not know whether the settlers made any representation to the Provincial Government before the leases were given. I have known a great many individual instances of persons complaining, both that they could not get land to cultivate nor even to keep a single cow. I have known one man who had to remove because he could not get leave to keep two or three cows—a poor man with a family. I think his name is Holden. There is some land fit for cultivation, but not a great deal, in the Clyde Agricultural Reserve. The greater part of the agricultural land is, I think, taken up. There are very few diggers in this (Clyde) District. Those who want land are some diggers, some business people, and some already settled on land—the greater part of the people of small means up here. There are people in my opinion who, in consequence of the population falling off, would take land, and have means to farm it if they could get it. If I could get land I believe I should settle down myself. I see no means of keeping my wife and family.

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No. 38.

Mr. Vincent Pyke being duly sworn, examined:—

No. 38.  
*Mr. Pyke.*  
6th March, 1869.

I am Warden of the Dunstan District, and in my previous capacity of Secretary for the Goldfields, have been acquainted with the district since 1862. I may state that there is a very great want of more land open for agricultural purposes in this district. The mere opening up of land for agricultural occupation without surrounding commonage, is not only useless but mischievous. As far as the neighbourhood of Clyde and Alexandra is concerned, I am not aware of any quantity of land existing available for agriculture. There are well situated patches in the brows of the mountains and mouths of gullies, but I think it would be difficult to find patches of 100 acres each, the greater part of the country consisting of loose sand and shingle, sometimes bare at the surface, sometimes covered with a very thin coating of soil. As you proceed up the Manuhirikia Valley, at the face of the Dunstan Hills, the land at the foot improves—it has a good deal of clay with it—less shingle and more soil. I may add that the whole of the land of the Dunstan District is excellent for pasturage. With regard to the use of the commonage, when I first came up, I found Macmorrins's sheep over the whole of the Reserve. I remonstrated with and spoke to him about it. He then put his sheep back into