

evils, and possibly much hardship, it may be safely concluded that it would result in the speedier spread of population over the country than would take place under the present system. The farming might not be the best or most scientific or productive—the people would not be in such thriving circumstances, probably, as a smaller neighbour located on better principles; but it seems to the Commissioners undeniable that the country would be more rapidly filled with human beings than under the present system of enormous runs and few runholders.

Land actually  
wanted for  
agriculture.

Moreover, after considering all the evidence given, and fully admitting that the present cry for land is to a considerable extent a demand for the substitution of small runholders for large ones, it does still appear to your Commissioners to be a proved fact that many good *bona fide* agricultural settlers, some with considerable capital, have been prevented from settling in the Province because they were not allowed to buy the agricultural land they had fixed their hearts upon, and had both the means and inclination to cultivate properly. Take especially the case of the Tuapeka District. It can scarcely be doubted by any one who reads the evidence relating thereto, that many intending settlers have been forced to leave the district, and probably the Colony, in consequence of their inability to purchase land for settlement. One highly respectable witness, Mr. Bastings, Mayor of Lawrence, declared on oath his belief that if the two runs adjoining the reserve were thrown open, there would be 500 or 600 families immediately settled upon them. He adds, "I do not overstate it. I know that the men are prepared to do so, and they will leave if facilities are not given them for settling." That this result, or anything approaching it, should be rendered unattainable, is at least a strong condemnation of the present land laws or their administration, and must be acknowledged a galling and grievous evil, and one that cries aloud for removal and remedy.

Should there be  
exceptional legis-  
lation for gold  
miners?

It will scarcely be denied, then, the Commissioners think, that in itself it would be a very desirable thing to find land for all these people to settle upon, even in their own way, rather than compel them to go elsewhere to seek it, could this be done without injustice to others. And the objections on the score of injustice are principally of three kinds:—First, it is urged, that to adopt any extraordinary means for getting the land required would be a special act of favouritism to those settlers which none others, equally deserving, throughout the Colony can obtain. Hundreds of settlers elsewhere are equally desirous of getting land for pasturage, and on deferred payments, and why are those in the gold districts to be exceptionally dealt with? It is rather difficult to answer this question, unless it be allowed as a reason, that those persons have been induced to embark in pursuits in their part of the country by a state of things which has more or less suddenly ceased or altered for the worse. They have been brought in, as it were, on the top of a high tide, which has receded and left them stranded and helpless. And it may be said that it is no good reason for abstaining from doing an avowedly beneficial thing in these cases and in these districts, because it could not, or because it should, be done elsewhere as well. Something might perhaps be also urged on the ground of the very peculiar and marked character for enterprise, energy, perseverance, and ingenuity which the gold diggers, as a class, have shown they possess. This will be acknowledged to be language not unsuitable to the occasion by any one who has travelled through the gold fields, and seen the extraordinary operations they undertake. Water, for instance, has to be carried along what are called "races" (*i.e.*, water running along channels or aqueducts), from any higher levels where it may be accessible to the lower levels where the mines are to be worked. For leagues and leagues these races may be traced, in many instances running in perfectly direct lines across the sides and bases of the hills; now disappearing up a valley, then reappearing on the advancing prominent spurs; carried on aqueducts and cleverly-contrived channels across the face of perpendicular precipices; left to separate and find their way in a hundred little puny falls and torrents to a lower level, where they are all skilfully gathered up again, and carried in one stream round some projecting bluff or headland; following for miles and miles the course of some rapid and winding river, always above its highest floods, or crossing from cliff to cliff, in pipes of canvass or leather, over torrents raging a hundred feet below. And if these would not be sufficient to justify