

capital; and they find that if they were allowed to take up a larger extent of country, and to cultivate it gradually, the capital which suffices for the smaller portion, would suffice for the larger. They also complain, and I think with reason, of the want of sufficient commonage for sheep and cattle, finding that agriculture alone is not remunerative; but that the two together would make thriving men of them. As regards the mining population—those actually engaged in mining—there are numbers of them particularly upon the River Molyneux (from Cromwell to Beaumont—the portion known to myself) who are possessed of mining claims, which by themselves will not pay, because they are only workable during a portion of the year, when there are freshets in the river. If these men could obtain land to cultivate, and on which to run cattle, between the two industries they could obtain more than a livelihood. Mr. Mouat was asked whether *bona fide* miners were interested in this agitation that has been going on here. I wish to corroborate Mr. Mouat's opinion that they *are*. And as regards the amount of land required in this district for agriculture and commonage, I am of opinion that, in the long run, nothing less than the two Runs known as Smith's and Treweek's (123 and 137) will suffice. But I think one of those Runs would be ample for some time to come.

[*Mr. Strode*: Which one?—I am not prepared to say, as I am not sufficiently acquainted with the country.] I am satisfied that if one Run were thrown open, such a large portion of land would be profitably taken up by a considerable population, that the Government would soon find it to the advantage of all parties to open the other run. The only difficulty which the Provincial Government has ever presented is the matter of compensation to the runholders, which, in my opinion, would be amply provided for by the revenue which would be derived from the population that would settle. There have been recently—within the last twelve months—several cases where the cattle, the property of poor settlers, which have trespassed upon the neighboring Runs, have been impounded by the runholders, causing the owners very serious loss both of time and money; and it has been represented to me that the cattle strayed on to the Runs in consequence of the absence of sufficient pasture upon that portion of country where they were allowed to run: the fact being, that the Commonage is insufficient for the number of cattle upon it. And this led to some of these settlers selling their stock, and in some cases, I believe, leaving the district. A Memorial was recently sent by the Tuapeka Land League to the Provincial Government, bearing about 350 signatures, out of which I believe that upwards of 250 were the signatures of *bona fide* miners. Relative to the acts of the present Provincial Executive, immediately after Mr. Macandrew's election, I should like to remark that the Provincial Executive took no steps whatever to ascertain, during the six months they had at their disposal, what lands would be wanted during the terms for which they were about to grant leases. I apprehend that a Commission such as this would have supplied them with very valuable information upon that point. Perhaps it would be going almost too far to say that, just before the elections alluded to, very extensive promises were made as to what should, and should not, be done. But such was the case, and the public are the sufferers from the non-fulfilment of these promises. Some four years ago, an application was made to the Government to sell or lease 1000 acres on Cargill and Anderson's Run, for which the applicant offered to give £1000 cash (that application was to the Provincial Government), and undertaking immediately to spend another £1000 upon the property. This application was refused by the Government, and the applicant shortly afterwards left the district, I apprehend taking his money with him. A portion of this same 1000 acres has since been leased to other applicants. The terms, I apprehend, would scarcely be so advantageous as those refused, to say nothing of the loss of a valuable settler. I know, moreover, that the person to whom it was leased was not in a position to do as much as the said applicant. The name of the rejected applicant was M'Alister, and of the accepted, MArthy,

[*Hon. Mr. Domett*.] In the cases you allude to, of cattle trespassing on Runs, could you say whether the cattle-owner was keeping only the necessary amount of cattle for his agricultural operations, or an amount considerably in excess of that?—The only thing I can say with certainty is, that I believe, in the majority of cases, it will be found that the number kept by these settlers was rather under than above the mark; but I am not personally acquainted with these farms. I am satisfied, to my own mind, of this, although I would not undertake to swear to it.

What was the effect of the memorial you mentioned?—They told us in reply that, as the question involved was one of policy, the Executive intended to transmit it by Message to the Provincial Council. This is only within the last month—the Provincial Council has yet to meet.

What was actually promised before the elections you speak of?—It was promised by Mr. Macandrew that, in this immediate neighborhood, a large quantity of land should be thrown open for Agricultural Settlement and Commonage.

[*Mr. Keen* suggested that a local office for the reception of applications would tend very greatly to facilitate the transaction of land business, which now causes a great deal of delay and travelling about the country; and also thought that the existence of such an office would tend to bring the actual requirements of the district more immediately under the notice of the Government.]

[*Hon. Mr. Domett*.] Is there any other particular in which the Administration of the Land Laws is complained of?—I certainly do not think we receive anything like a fair portion of the revenue we contribute; but I am not prepared to go into figures to prove it. There is one other point I would remark upon. The most inexpensive class of mining is gradually declining in this district (alluvial washing); and the class of mining taking its place requires a large amount of capital to prosecute. Some industry must supercede the former mode of mining; and to this may be attributable, to a very great extent, the present demand for land. I am satisfied that many of the miners, forced to abandon the old system, would become settlers, and are making every endeavor to do so.