

If steamers ran regularly between here and Westport we could get goods cheaper and also dispose of our produce.

Witness inquired how certain cattle were purchased by Mr. O'Connor and brought here.

Mr. O'Connor explained that some cattle were brought to be killed. Some of these were killed. The working bullocks brought at the same time were used, and the remainder were sold at cost price. Government paid the freight of these cattle.

Witness asked who paid Meyrich Jones when employed—the Government or Dolphin?

Mr. O'Connor stated the books would show who paid Jones. Every facility would be given to furnish information on that or any other point. Concerning the subsidy paid to the steamer, Mr. O'Connor explained that, under the first arrangement with Messrs. Edwards and Co., the Government guaranteed £100 freight; after this another arrangement was entered into, the nature of it being that the owners should be paid £25 and all freights besides. Cost of carriage from Nelson here had been £3 per ton. The work done on Sabbath-day was very pressing; the occasion referred to happened at the commencement of the settlement, and was caused by a desire on his part to place the people on the land as early as possible. Volunteers were called for to assist in finding the lines, in order that the survey could be started.

H. Jordan claimed to be a special settler. Had not been classed as such for some time, not having built a house or complied with conditions of settlement. Had been debarred from getting work, while O'Connor's nephew had been employed constantly. Considered that the prices charged for some things to be very high.

Mr. O'Connor declined to give Jordan reasons why he declined to receive him as a settler after his dissolution with Black, his former partner. Dolphin had been paid at the rate of 30s. per week.

Witness stated that he had held land at Granity Creek, but Mr. O'Connor would not make a track to it. The track would have opened up other land. There was another settler living there (H. Enright) at the time. The cost of making a track would have been at least a week's work.

Mr. O'Connor stated, in answer to a question from Jordan, that the Government paid freight on cattle for Dolphin on one occasion, but that he had to repay it.

Henry Hawes: Had seen a copy of the original prospectus of settlement, dated September, 1874. When the settlement was first started, there was an abundance of stores at moderate prices. Wages were then 6s. per day. The stock of goods was soon limited and the prices raised. Day labour was also raised to 8s. per day. Have earned about £173 in three years, and on this my family (six) have lived, with the addition of some survey work. We earned £23 10s. and some other small sums in that way, but not enough, on the whole, to keep me out of debt, however careful I might be. I have had to wait four days at the store to get supplied with goods, because of the uncertain way in which the goods were served out; at times there was quite a scramble for goods. Consider I have not had a fair share of work in proportion to the cost of keeping my family. For nearly eight weeks at a stretch my family have lived on bare bread. Was refused goods at the store on one occasion even when there was £3 odd to my credit. I had previously refused to work on the Mokihinui track, because Mr. Rawson, the overseer, had dealt unfairly in refusing to pass the work done. My credit at the store was not stopped for that reason—the stoppage alluded to happened some time before. Mr. Rawson gave me notice to stop work on the track, because I earned too much money. I was aware that Mr. O'Connor had stated that the store would be closed and the settlement wound up; but he also said every man should have six months' provisions. Whenever a man has earned a pound by chance work, Mr. O'Connor has made them pay the money over to him. With reference to unequal division of work, am of opinion that those who run after Mr. O'Connor and wait on him, get a better share of work than those who do not do this. Have about an acre of land cleared and about four acres under-scrubbed. I own two cows and two calves, purchased with money I brought from England; have also one pig. Have not purchased stock from the Government. Have not had any produce for sale. Goods supplied since the closing of the Government store have been dearer than before. As a general thing the goods right through the store have been raised in price.

C. Glidwell said he had received goods from the store, but could never get an account. Never knew how he stood at the store, or the amount earned from the Government. Had earned £3 at the survey, but could not say how much he earned otherwise. Had not attempted to keep a personal account, because he noticed, when others made the attempt, the accounts never tallied with the store books, consequently they were always in trouble. Mr. O'Connor had promised to get him a cow out of money coming to him, but was told afterwards that he must purchase one from Dolphin. Was charged £15 for a beast only worth £5. At least he had been compelled to kill her, and that was all he had realized. The animal's weight was only 5 cwt. Had bought another cow since for £16. The first cow had a calf with her when he bought her. Supplied certain settlers with butter through the store, and took goods in lieu. This arrangement was stopped after a time, and some of the butter supplied was not settled for. Nothing further to say.

Inquiry adjourned to 9 a.m. on the 21st September.

FRIDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER, 1877.

J. Sinclair, special settler (wife and two children): Considered that the prices charged for some of the articles obtained from the Government store were too high. Sugar of an inferior quality was charged at 6d., should only have cost 3d. During the last two months in 1875 my store account, with a family of two adults and two children, was over £20. This was while I was employed on the track, between Wanganui and Mokihinui. My average expenses after were about £5 a month. Was refused articles at Dolphin's store in March last. This was because my credit was stopped. Was not aware that the store was about to be sold. Was employed on the track for six months, at first on day-work at 10s., and afterwards at piece-work. My average earnings would be about 15s. a day. Cannot say whether the sum of £235 set down as the amount of my earnings is correct, as particulars of the work done were not furnished. Have earned £4 on the survey since January last. Cannot say