

many articles much cheaper if the steamer had called regularly. Consider that flour, tea, and sugar, have been very high since sale of store. There has not been much produce available for disposal. One person had about eight tons of potatoes for sale, but could not get rid of them. Have been put to a good deal of inconvenience and expense by not getting two pigs by the steamer, that were not allowed to come by Mr. O'Connor's orders. My cattle at first were ordered off the steamer, and ultimately I was compelled to sell one animal to pay the freight. Believe Mr. O'Connor refused to let my cattle come because he did not wish other people to have cattle in the place. Sold one cow for £6 to pay the freight of the others. The same beast was afterwards killed and sold out to the settlers for £15. One plea made for raising the price of goods was that the subsidy for the steamer had been stopped. Was informed to the contrary by owners, and also by Mr. Curtis, that £25 was paid for the last boat.

*C. Remnant*, special settler (wife and three children): Consider that stores have not been supplied at reasonable prices. According to the papers, the rate for flour at Nelson was £15 per ton, while at Karamea it was sold at £20. Tea and sugar were also dear; dark sugar of an inferior kind was sold at 6d. per lb., and tea at 3s. Cannot say anything about clothing. I have been charged 2s. 6d. for Steadman's powders, sold at 1s. 6d. a packet in Nelson. Have had a fair share of work up to January last; have earned about £254 to that time. In October, 1876, I was notified that no more goods were supplied on credit. Was in debt to the store at that time, but so were others. Got a few goods afterwards, amounting to £7, notwithstanding notice.

*Mr. O'Connor* explained that the reason notice was given was because Remnant and some others were unwilling to go to work on the track, and this course was adopted to compel them.

*Witness*: The only provisions I received after that was 100 lbs. flour. On the 3rd December and up to the 13th March last, self and family had to live on that and other 50 lbs. flour. The last lot was unfit to eat, being the sweepings of the store. Have had some meat since, but no butter for twelve months. I have no cattle, but own three pigs. Was present at a meeting, and heard that store would be sold. Since Mr. Dolphin has had the store, the price of stores have been very high, flour especially, also tea; the former was charged at 26s. per 100 lbs., and the latter at 3s. 6d. and 4s. per lb. I have purchased recently from Mr. Stitt, of Westport, stores at the following rates: Flour, 25s. per 100 lbs.; tea, 2s. 10d. per lb.; oatmeal, 25 lbs., 7s.; sugar, 6d. per lb. Consider that the prices given according to the quality of the goods are far more reasonable than at Dolphin's store. Consider that work has not been fairly apportioned since last January. A great many of the settlers have been able to obtain work, while I was refused. Am under the impression that this was done to get rid of me. Have been informed that O'Connor said that he would endeavour to drive another batch out of the settlement. Mr. O'Connor has employed me lately to burn some bush at £2 10s. per acre. The price was afterwards raised to £3 10s., owing to it being a difficult job. When Dolphin's store was first opened, I could get extensive credit. Mr. O'Connor paid for the stores out of money due to me for clearing his land. I had intended that this money should have been expended in buying a cow. Could never get a regular account as to how I stood with the store, or of the quantity of work done. Have applied frequently for a statement of account. I have no knowledge whether large profits have been made at the store.

*J. Hart*, special settler (wife and three children): Have no complaint to make in particular against the prices charged in the Government store. A few things were dear. Have had a fair share of work. Heard that the Government store had to be sold. Consider that some things have been high since the store came into private hands, especially flour and tea; the high charge for the latter was probably caused by it having to be packed from Mokihinui. Cannot say anything about clothing. Have no knowledge whether large profits have been made in the store, but have heard so. One complaint I have to make is that I was refused some flour at the store when I had money to pay for it; at least I had the amount less 4s. 6d. Another is, that a clock priced in Nelson at 25s. was charged for here at 35s.

*J. Cooper*, special settler (wife and child): Have no complaint to make; have received a fair share of work. Know nothing of profits being made in the store or otherwise. Tea has been high lately, but that was owing to it having to be packed here. Remember a mob of cattle coming by the steamer, and Mr. O'Connor fixing the price—the first pick at £14, the second at £13, and the third at £12. Mathews got one at that time; Hammond bought it since for £14.

*J. Elford*, special settler (wife and two children): Have no complaint to make about the price of stores while in the hands of Government; have not been able to obtain any since. Have had a fair share of work; have earned about £229 during the past three years. Know nothing of profits made in the store. Bought a cow from Mr. Dolphin for £15. Had a contract to clear a rata tree for £5; about one-third was on the road, and the remainder on Mr. O'Connor's land; the tree grew on the road line, and was felled by W. Harry, while making the road; the tops were used to burn the butt. Have made application to the Waste Lands Board for the land I occupy, but have not received deposit receipt.

*S. Hill* (wife and two children): Am an old colonist, but have been admitted as a special settler. Consider that stores were reasonable while in the hands of Government. Agreed to buy a cow from Mr. Dolphin for £14 if Government would allow me to work it out. Had one-third of the value to my credit, but have not been allowed work to pay off the balance. Heard of meeting at which Mr. O'Connor notified that the store would be sold; about two-thirds of the settlers attended it. Price of stores since then have been very high: flour, 26s. per 100 lbs.; sugar, inferior, 6d. per lb.; tea, 4s. per lb.. This was caused by the extra cost of packing it by track from Westport. Cannot say whether oatmeal was dear, as I have not received my account. Am of opinion that stores were high in comparison with prices elsewhere under the circumstances. Have bought stores recently from Mr. Stitt, of Westport—viz., flour, 25s. per 100 lbs.; Company's sugar, 6d. per lb.; tea, 2s. 10d. per lb.; oatmeal, 7s. per 25 lbs. These stores were purchased wholesale, and paid for in cash. Cannot say anything about drapery. The settlers have been inconvenienced for want of steamers calling regularly; provisions could have been obtained cheaper, and produce disposed of. Some of the settlers had produce to sell. The charges for provisions at the store have been too high; at first flour was sold at 22s., and then raised to 24s., and afterwards to 26s. The settlers were of opinion that the stores should have been sold at cost price, as the goods were sent down at the expense of the Government.