

*C. Lawrence*: Am an old colonist; have been admitted as a special settler. Am satisfied with price of provisions, and also with share of work. The only complaint I have to make is concerning employment upon the survey. I understood the work was to be carried on in conjunction with other work in connection with the settlement. Did not hear that the work done by me on the track had been first offered to Scarlett and Hill. Am not aware that skilled hands are required for survey work; was informed that heads of families were to be employed on it. Do not consider that stores had been so high here; have paid 26s. per 100 lbs. for flour, but it has been sold at Mokihinui for 30s. Regular steam communication is much needed for the place. Am perfectly satisfied with the management of the settlement. Mr. O'Connor has devoted a great deal of time and attention to the place. I have heard him traduced by a good many persons without cause. Mr. Jennings is one who has stated that the way the place and the store were managed was a wholesale system of robbery, and that an exorbitant price was paid for things. Could not say why Mr. Jennings offered me work. Was informed when work was shifted to this side of the river that I should get employment. My reason for making complaint is on behalf of the settlers, because a few have been monopolizing the whole of the survey work to the detriment of others.

*J. Blackburn*, an old colonist (wife and six children): Came from Mokihinui. Have been admitted as a special settler. Was not asked to sign the memorial. Have no complaint to make about stores, but had to pay higher in Mokihinui for stores than here. Kept a store for some time myself. Consider that prices are not unreasonable in comparison with what I have paid elsewhere. Am satisfied with share of work received. Bought two cows from Mr. O'Connor for £23; am satisfied with bargain. Hope in regard to survey work that partiality will not be shown, because I am considered to belong to the opposition party. A good deal of dissension prevails at present amongst the settlers as to the manner in which the work has been given out. Know nothing of trading transactions.

*D. Graynay*, old colonist, admitted as a special settler: Was asked to sign a petition but declined. Am perfectly satisfied with the price of the stores, and the manner in which the settlement has been managed. When I first came to the settlement self and mate (J. Black) were employed in assisting the settlers in building their houses. Three days were given to each family, and six days to the Johnson family, because they were more numerous. Bought two cows, one from Dolphin at £15, and the other from Mathews at £16. Would like to have bought the last one cheaper, but Mathews would not sell her for less. Consider that Mr. O'Connor has acted fairly towards everybody as far as my experience goes. Have been in the colonies for twenty-eight years. Am of opinion that no one could have done better, and consider that those who complain have no right to do so.

*E. Merchant*, special settler (wife and two children): Was one of the first who arrived. Was promised 5 acres to form a township, also 5 cwt. of potatoes, a bushel of rye-grass, and one of oats. These promises have not been fulfilled. An overseer was sent down to instruct the settlers, but he did not appear capable. Consider that stores have been too high from the first. Have never had proper accounts of the stores received or of the work done. Do not think that I received a fair share of work. May have earned £212, but cannot say. Never made any difficulty about going to work. Was refused provisions before the Government store was closed, although I had a credit. Since Dolphin has had the store prices have been very high—flour and tea especially. Consider that labour has not been fairly apportioned. If steamer had called and settlers had money to spend, they could have bought provisions much cheaper. There has been very little produce for sale; Lineham had a few potatoes.

*E. King*, special settler (wife and one child): Consider that provisions were not supplied at moderate prices; other things were high also. Was charged £2 15s. for a gun; tools were also dear. The cost of provisions was moderate at first until a fresh storekeeper came. Fowls, selling at 3s. each in Nelson, were sold here at 5s. Purchased a goat for 20s., which died shortly after. A number of other settlers also bought goats, and they all died, owing to the poor character of the soil. May possibly have been poisoned by some shrub. The rate of wages paid in the first place was insufficient to provide for food and procure tools and other necessaries. Many of the tools we got were quite useless.

*Mr. O'Connor* explained that the Government had assisted all the settlers at the outset by allowing them credit for necessaries supplied, and that King had been allowed £50 in that way.

*Witness*: Applied to Mr. O'Connor to obtain two cows. Wanted two heifers in place of full-sized animals. Was present on arrival of a mob of cattle by steamer. Mr. O'Connor separated them as they landed. Dolphin's cattle were put in the stockyard; this was on a Saturday. On coming down on Monday, found cattle had been sold on Sunday. Was offered two heifers by Dolphin for £13 each. Requested to sign a voucher to pay for them. Consider that I was not fairly treated in this matter; in this way, that I could get money to purchase cattle, but when I had money to my credit and wanted it to hand to my brother, who was going home to fetch his sister, I could not get it.

*Mr. O'Connor* explained that the reason for refusing to give King money on that occasion was that the purpose he required it for was not contemplated in the scheme of settlement; that work was not given to settlers to enable them to acquire money to expend outside the objects for which the settlement had been founded.

*Witness*: Settlers were promised that a steamer should call monthly, but this had not been carried out. Consider that provisions could be procured much cheaper if steamer ran regularly, besides allowing opportunity of selling produce.

Adjourned to 9 a.m. on the 24th instant.

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MONDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1877.

*J. Moffat* (wife and five children): Am a special settler. Have nothing much to say concerning the price of provisions; only know from what other people told me. Do not consider that I have had a fair share of work; have always been willing to do work, and have frequently asked to be employed. Cannot say whether partiality has been shown; some of the settlers got more than others, but do not know the reason, perhaps it was because they were heaviest in debt. Am very desirous that a school