

should be established. Would be very advantageous to settlers if steamer called regularly. Know nothing of trading transactions.

*W. Harry*, special settler (wife and no family): Have no complaint to make in particular. Stores have been high lately. Have no knowledge of prices elsewhere. The rata tree Mr. Mathews stated had been felled and cleared at Government expense stood on the road. I had a contract to form the road, and in cutting down the tree it fell on Mr. O'Connor's land. My contract included the felling and burning of the tree. Got delayed in the work by bad weather, and afterwards by an accident to my cow. Asked to be released from completing it, and Mr. O'Connor paid me for what I had done. Worked thirteen days at it, and received £6 10s. The work was afterwards completed by Simpkin and Elford at £1 7s. 6d. per chain. Brought two cows by steamer from Nelson. Found no difficulty in bringing them: Mr. O'Connor assisted my wife to put them on board. The animals landed here cost me £26.

*J. Simpkin*, special settler (wife and two children): The price of stores was moderate at first. Some articles were not to be had. Sent for some boots for my wife and child, but could not get them. Had a credit of £29 at the time. The time I allude to is before the last steamer arrived. Have received things from Nelson, but was a long time persuading Mr. O'Connor to let me have them. Have earned about £208 from Government. Have been working for Mathews and Dolphin since February last. Cannot say whether partiality has been displayed in giving out the work. Some men had more payable jobs than others. Where I made £1, others made 30s. Mr. O'Connor offered me work about the commencement of the year, but I was busy at the time. Did not see him again for three months. Self and Elford got work on his return. Asked for work while Mr. O'Connor was absent, but was informed there was none. Made application for some land near the Native reserve on the 19th March last. Afterwards saw Dolphin, who ascertained the date, and then remarked that Healy was too late. Afterwards learnt that Healy had applied for the same land, and that his application had been dated back. Mr. Jennings made out my application, and placed me on the land. Know nothing of trading transactions.

*F. Large*, special settler (wife and three children): Have no complaint to make concerning the price of stores. Would have liked to have been paid in cash for labour done, in place of provisions, as I could have lived much cheaper. Have had a fair share of work, but am under the impression that partiality has been shown to some in getting work near at home, while I have had to go to a distance. Have earned good wages, but ready cash would have been more beneficial. Was offered Government work at £2 5s. per chain nearer home, but did not commence it, although I promised to do so. The same work was afterwards let to some one else. At the end of September, 1876, Mr. Scanlon informed me that I had £11 to my credit, and after Mr. O'Connor came he made me out to be £1 in debt. Would like to see the truck system done away with, and ready cash paid, as the settlers could do better even if wages were lower. I hope to be in a position to send away several tons of potatoes next season. If I can realize a fair price for produce, I have no fear of succeeding. Would have been much better off now if I had been placed on good land at first. Have nothing further to state.

*J. Connor*, special settler (wife and two children): Remember being present with F. Large in the store when Mr. Scanlon, the overseer, made up the accounts in September, 1876. A statement was furnished us at the time showing the state of our accounts, the object of this was to show the position that each person stood at the store. Desire to make a few remarks concerning a statement made that no one but an Irishman could get stores. This statement is incorrect. At the time it was made I had been refused credit for some flour, because I had not sufficient money to pay for it. I afterwards earned some money and went to pay for the flour, and while I was there Hawes came for some, but, as he was in debt, he was refused. This is an explanation of the circumstance that led to the statement being made that Irishmen alone were favoured. Mathews and Black were allowed to remain at home, while others went to work at the track. Mathews had cows in milk and could not leave; he earned fully £1 per day at contract work during the time. Was present at a meeting at which it was announced by Mr. O'Connor that the store would be sold. Understood then that the Government would cease keeping the store, and that the affairs of the settlement were to be wound up in six months from that time. Declined to sign the memorial, although I was pressed to do so.

*W. Castles*, special settler (wife and three children): Did not sign the petition. Have no complaint to make. Have had a fair share of work. Hope the Government will spend more money in the district, to give the settlers a chance. A drain is much wanted along the Pakihi Road, to give access to the sections along it; at present it is almost impassable in places. Have nothing further to say.

*J. Hammond*, special settler (wife and three children): Have no complaint to make about the store while it was in the hands of the Government. Have had a fair share of labour. The only complaint I have to make is that when I asked Mr. O'Connor for work, to enable me to clear off my debt at the store, he refused to give me any; the reason he assigned being that the amount was small. Was anxious to purchase a cow last January, and believed I had a credit of £9; but Mr. O'Connor would not give me any work to do. Mr. O'Connor offered me some work; but I was not in a position to accept it, as I had no credit at the store, or boots to wear. Cannot say that labour has been distributed in a capricious manner. I was contented, so long as I could earn sufficient to keep me out of debt. If steamers had called, the settlers were not in a position to obtain provisions at a cheaper rate. There has been no produce for sale. Provisions have been high since the store came into Dolphin's hands. Flour, 26s. per 100 lbs.; at first it was 22s., and then it rose to 24s.; oatmeal, 6s. per 25 lbs.; tea has been as high as 4s., but 3s. 6d. was the price at first. Heard it was raised owing to the expense incurred in packing it from Westport. Know nothing of trading transactions.

*J. Simpson*, old colonist (wife and six children): Was acting as storekeeper here for the Government. Cannot say why some of the settlers complained they could not send their letters for want of postage stamps. The custom at the time was to forward the settlers' letters to Nelson, to be posted by every available opportunity. There were none delayed to my knowledge for want of stamps. Concerning the complaint made relative to the non-issue of tickets to persons receiving stores, it often happened