

payment. I do not state this with a view of making any claim for further payment, but in answer to the contemptible assertions made by persons who see no other motive of action or ambition except money.

35. Have you at any time, to prevent inconvenience and delay to the settlers who have done labour for the Government, advanced the amounts due them out of your own private means, and to what amount?—Yes; besides small sums advanced to different settlers (of course without charge) at various times to assist them in their struggles, last July I advanced nearly £200, and in August £200 more. At the present time I hold vouchers for £223 for money advanced. In each case the money has been paid by me in order to save private persons the inconvenience arising through the irregular postal communication with Karamea, or the delays in the Colonial Treasury.

36. Did you at any time endeavour to induce any person in Nelson or elsewhere to open a store at the Karamea; if so, please state their views on the subject, and why they declined to do so?—Yes; both in Nelson and Westport the views of parties with whom I communicated were generally that it would be a very bad speculation; all insisted upon some guarantee from Government, and most were prejudiced by the constant repetition in newspapers of the tale that the “Karamea was a failure.”

37. Please explain the reason why flour was charged at 20s. per 100 lbs. at the Government store, while at the same time it is asserted that it was quoted in Nelson at 13s. ?—I am not aware that such is the fact, but if so it may have been an error in the quotation, or that the flour was purchased at a higher price. From the delivery of goods on board to the landing at the Karamea store, the cost would be enhanced about £3 5s. per ton, made up in this way: Wharfage, 2s. 6d.; freight, £1 10s.; proportion of subsidy, £1 5s.; landing and storing, 7s. 6d.: total, £3 5s. To this must be added store-keeping and other incidental charges—for instance, when all the settlers were working on the track between Little Wanganui and Mokihinui, their provisions and tools were carried to them at the works at a very heavy expense, but no extra charge was made.

38. State the reason why some of the settlers appear to have received more work than others?—The reasons are various, each particular case having its own. For instance, take Scarlett's and Johnson's—they are the two highest—their families were much larger and better able to work. Some again have small earnings because they did not need so much employment as others; but it will be found that all had sufficient to keep them free of debt, and that, when they did not keep so, it was either in consequence of their unwillingness or inability to work.

39. Is there any truth in the assertion that after the County Council election you refused work to persons who were supposed to vote against yourself?—The day after the election I laid out work, as the books of the settlement will show, and all, without distinction, who were in need of employment received work either by the day or under contract.

40. Is there any truth in the statement made that you gave work to J. Hammond, L. Laurenson, D. Scarlett, J. Sinclair, E. Merchant, C. Martin, W. Remnant, and A. Lineham, but that they were unable to do the work for want of provisions?—There is not a particle of truth in this statement. You will find, by the statement of J. Hammond at the inquiry, that a contract was given to him, and that he had means at his disposal to purchase provisions, and that he had also received credit for provisions from the storekeeper, Mr. Dolphin. With regard to the others it will be sufficient to refer you to the books, where you will find that all the persons named, except J. Sinclair, were fully employed on day-work under Benjamin Brown (overseer) from the day after the election to the end of August, at which time all work was discontinued, except such as was then under contract. J. Sinclair completed a contract, in company with J. Moffat, which put them both in credit; neither received any work since, nor did they apply for any. It is needless for me to enlarge on this subject, as each of the parties contradict the assertion in the statements made at the inquiry.

41. Please explain the circumstances under which you discontinued importing cattle or sheep, either for the supply of fresh meat or dairy cattle to settlers?—I discontinued importing cattle for the purpose of butchering in consequence of my realizing the fact that, what between the price paid for the stock, the freight, cost of looking after the stock when at Karamea, losses by death, and other causes, as well as the expenses connected with butchering, the meat became very expensive indeed, I calculated that 10d. per lb. would not cover cost. Under those circumstances, I arranged with Mr. Dolphin for the supply of fresh meat to settlers at 6d. per lb., and by the arrangement secured to the settlement a constant supply of fresh meat at a much more reasonable price than the Government could supply it without loss. With regard to dairy cattle, I discontinued bringing them down, first, because when settlers wanted dairy cattle they wanted them either on the point of calving or in full profit, and I found that, if I succeeded in purchasing cows suitable as springers, the price was generally high, and the risk of shipping cows in full milk, if brought down to Karamea, owing to the want of pasture and shipping, were generally worthless when they arrived, and, besides, I found a great mortality prevailed among cattle during the first six months after their arrival. If I had undertaken to bring down dairy cattle for settlers, they would have taken such as suited them, the balance would have been left on hand, and the losses through death or otherwise would have fallen upon the Government. Mr. Dolphin was at this time importing a large number of cattle of all kinds, and offered to supply settlers with any animals they wanted, at reasonable prices, and to give them a choice from his lot. Under the circumstances, I discontinued importing stock on Government account—in the first place, because I did not think it would be fair to Mr. Dolphin, whom I had induced to settle at Karamea, and, secondly, because I concluded that the settlers would, through him, get cattle with less risk, in consequence of their being acclimatized, as they wanted them, and at such prices as would not be too high. Previous to Mr. Dolphin receiving credit for cows sold to settlers, I generally satisfied myself that the price was not too high. If it was found that the price was excessive a reduction was insisted on. On one occasion a cow and a calf were bought, I think, by E. Hall for £20. I thought this too much and refused to pass the amount to Mr. Dolphin's credit, insisting upon a reduction of £4, which was agreed to. On another occasion I found fault with the prices he proposed charging for some cattle which were yarded for sale, and Mr. Dolphin agreed to allow me to value them; I did so, my value being nearly £2 per head less than his. They were sold at my valuation.