

food; and there is a heavy expense to be incurred in clearing the land. Most of the settlers that were colonized, and had had experience in bush life, have succeeded. I do not consider that any action on the part of the Resident Agent has stood in the way of the success of the settlement. So far as my knowledge goes, Mr. Macfarlane has done all in his power to forward the interests of the settlers. Until the system of collecting the back debts was introduced, some of the men who are now complaining could not do enough for him, and spoke very highly of him. The Government did all they could to forward the interests of the settlement, until the funds were exhausted.

THURSDAY, 6TH MARCH, 1879.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR, M.L.C., sworn and examined.

I would say, as to the first formation of the settlement, the attention of persons here was drawn to Jackson's Bay as the only place where a good harbour existed from which there was an available outlet through the ranges from the West Coast. When the West Coast rush first broke out, Jackson's Bay was regularly visited by Captain McLean, then in command of the "Alhambra," and the place was highly spoken of by him as a good harbour and a place likely to be settled in future. He used to trade from Otago, and visit and supply diggers working along the beaches. Subsequent to that, from time to time, after Westland was separated from Canterbury, the various successive County Councils did what they could to encourage the settlement of population along the large extent of southern coast, gold having been found in a great variety of places, and a small population became scattered over the coast as far South as Big Bay. The various steps that were taken by these County Councils are referred to in my letters. [*Vide* Appendix, Journals of House of Representatives, D.-5., 1875.] In the year 1869 steps were taken to get a Waste Lands Act passed for lands in the County of Westland, which resulted in the passing of "The Westland Waste Lands Act, 1870." In this Act, Part III., provision was made for the establishment of special settlements. In 1871 the County Council appointed a Committee, a copy of whose report I put in. The Committee consisted of Mr. Reid, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Barff, Mr. Lahmann, and myself. The report recommended that there should be one special settlement, and that the most suitable place for it was the block afterwards selected. This is the report referred to. [No. 20, 14th February, 1871, Report of Committee on Southern Settlements.] That land was then supposed to be set aside under the Westland Waste Lands Act. Until 1874 no person availed themselves of the provisions of the Act on this block. Several parties of men were working from time to time along the coast, and there was one rush to the Haast, which resulted in very little as there was no stock, nor means of getting through the country, and all necessaries had to be imported by sea. In several cases life was lost, from persons being lost in prospecting, crossing rivers, and unable to obtain supplies. In order to reduce this loss of life, and to encourage prospecting and settlement, the County Council passed a resolution authorizing the subsidizing of a steamer to call periodically along the coast, as may be seen by the County Council Report of Proceedings. As a further indication of the mind of the County Council, in 1873, the time when the Council were straightened for means, a Committee was appointed to take into consideration the question of the County finance. That Committee's report I hand in. It will be seen that, after satisfying liabilities, the next proposal was to furnish means for opening up the resources of the southern part of the country. [Report, Departmental Committee on Finance, 20th February, 1873.] Further particulars are in a letter. Negotiations were opened by myself, shortly after being elected Superintendent, at a time when a large number of immigrants were pouring into the colony, and the Government considered it desirable to establish settlements as outlets for influx of population. It was also about this time that public attention was being directed to the conservation of our forests, and it was part of the original scheme that this might be, to a certain extent, used as a suitable place for making an experiment for the more careful management of our timber. A similar settlement was made, I think at the same time, in the Wellington Province; the idea being, I think, taken from the communications which had passed between Sir Julius Vogel and myself. The subsequent negotiations are embodied in the papers before the Commission. [Appendix to Journals of House of Representatives, D.-5., 1875.]

The arrangement between Sir Julius Vogel and myself was this: That a settlement should be formed in this particular locality, comprising 60,000 acres of land; that the Government were to locate, at the expense of the Immigration Department, 250 families of such immigrants as seemed to be of the most suitable class for the work; and at that time the idea was that the most suitable class would be persons drawn from the National Agricultural Union, with which Mr. Holloway was connected. The specific immigrants required are mentioned in my letter. The Government were to advance £20,000 for the formation of the settlement. The Minister was authorised to enter into arrangements for special settlements. £12,000 was placed on the estimates, I think in the session of 1875. The original arrangement was for the sum of £20,000, of which £12,000 was to be placed upon the estimates at once—£10,000 for uses of settlement and £2,000 for survey; the balance was to be forthcoming as required. Out of the proceeds of the land sold in the settlement one-half of the gross proceeds of the land sold was to go towards repayment of the advance made for the establishment of the settlement; the other half to be applied on the terms and conditions set down in clause 16 of agreement. ["The Westland Waste Lands Act, 1870," and D.-5., 1875.] I may say that Mr. Holloway, being on a visit here when negotiations were pending for this settlement, went through the conditions proposed to be made, and, being satisfied with them, said he would do what he could to forward the objects of the settlement in England. The class of immigrants asked for did not reach us, except fifty families selected on the West Coast. In selecting these fifty families there was much difficulty in doing it, owing to the large number of applications received from persons willing to accept the conditions offered; and in making the selection I was assisted by the Executive then in office. The next immigrants—after correspondence, and asking what steps were being taken at Home for getting settlers, but which resulted in nothing practically being done, owing to the great demand for labour in other parts