

183. *Mr. J. Green.*] It is all timber land?—Some of the timber is fit for firewood; it is not fit for sawmills.

184. Are there no sawmills in the locality? There is one close to Ormondville—a very small one. At Kopu there was a large sawmill, but it was burned down. The bush is still in the hands of the natives, and they get, I think, 1s. per 100 feet.

185. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Is the land fit for grazing or cropping?—At Ormondville none of the land is fit for cropping. The settlers keep cows, and the man goes out to work; that is how they have been able to pay the instalments—by what they earned outside.

186. If there had been no public works there, they could not have paid?—No; they work at the sawmill, felling timber, and sending it to the mill.

187. At Makatoko they are chiefly Germans; at Ormondville they are English; but at Norsewood they are Scandinavians, brought out by the Government, and put on the land there. They have turned out a very good lot of settlers, taking them all round. I think there are scarcely any cases of not paying up, and there are no cases asking for relief; but they object to the regulations, which are very strict, and are strictly adhered to.

188. I suppose the increase of the population is one reason why they want an extended area?—Unfortunately these poor people—many of them have large families—I do not think there has been a large increase of population.

189. They were mostly married people?—Yes.

190. *Mr. J. Buchanan.*] What, in your opinion, is the object of the deferred-payment system—is it to settle people on the land on permanent holdings—was that the object?—Yes; that was the object, as far as I understand it.

191. Do you think it would be advisable to encourage them to quit those homes already made by giving them another piece of land?—No, I do not think it would be wise; but according to their petition giving them an increased piece of land would be the means of keeping them there. At Ormondville they said to me that unless they got an increased area of land they would, in many cases, have to sell and go; but they do not want to move.

192. Would it be possible to increase the areas in the district for each of them?—There are only a few of them who require it. There is no general wish. Of course, those who are able to make a living out of the present pieces do not wish more.

193. There are only a few who require to be increased to 320 acres?—Of course, I may not know all of them.

194. *Mr. Macandrew.*] How many signed the petition?—Forty-seven signed the petition from this place. There was another petition.

195. *Mr. J. B. Whyte.*] It does not follow that the whole forty-seven want an increased area?—It does not follow that the whole of those who signed, wish to take up the increased area now; they look to it that they may in the future.

196. *Mr. J. Buchanan.*] It has no reference to immediate relief?—Yes; some of them want immediate relief for this reason, there is land about to be thrown open there, and they want to take advantage of the opportunity to take up now.

197. As a matter of general policy, would it not be better for the Government to put new men on this land, instead of these men who are now there?—I do not think so. Experience has shown that you will not get men in sufficient quantity to take it up, and these men have gone through all the hardships, and experience of the bush. As a matter of fact, a certain proportion of new people work for a little while, and go away. The people wanted are those who are absolutely determined to settle there.

198. *Mr. Stevens.*] Do you not think this would give the relief—if those persons who hold leases of 120 or 150 acres were invited to make applications to the Minister of Lands for permission to take up increased areas of 150 acres? Would that meet their case, instead of framing Acts whereby all are entitled to take up 320 acres?—No; I do not think the Minister of Lands has power.

199. Supposing power was given by the Bill before us. Of course these people will have to apply to the Lands Board to take up this land,—is it in the hands of the Board to grant the applications or not?—They want to be in the same position as if they took up land now.

200. Are there not many of those settlers who have fifty, sixty, or seventy acres of land nearly the whole of which is the side of a hill, and composed of yellow clay, in the Scandinavian Settlement?—I only know it is poor land.

201. In other parts the land is remarkably good?—At Ormondville there is really no first-class land.

202. The timber on the land is very valuable?—No; the deferred-payment settlers have no timber on theirs. At Danebirk there has been some valuable timber, but there is no application from the people at Danebirk. It is the best English settlers at Ormondville who have applied, and a very few at Woodville.

203. Is there any petition from the Makatoku settlers?—No; but those people are entitled to any little relief the Board can give them. Applications came in some cases to allow them to pay up the balances. They are not allowed by law to pay so as to enable them to borrow a little money and go on improving.

204. *Mr. J. B. Whyte.*—Do not you think they ought to pay up the cash value?—The regulation is, that they have to pay up the deferred-payment value. They are not allowed in the Hawke's Bay District to pay if they wish to. I may add that, from experience, they do not find the regulations under which they took up the land work well. Where the land turned out poor, they have not sufficient to live on, and those who wished to stop wished to take up another piece. They have fulfilled all the present regulations; and the next thing is after improving the property, and paying for three or five years, they are in the position that they are not able to raise money on it to keep up those improvements.