

61. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Well, Otago lands were sold at £2 10s. per acre, subject to 10s. being expended within a given time. Had any one subsequently got the law altered so as to dispense with the conditions?—Under the Land Regulations of 1856 the price of land was fixed at 10s. per acre under condition that £2 per acre should be expended in improving the same within four years. A large number of people took up as much as they thought they could improve. Others, again, took up as large quantities as a speculation, and at the general elections in Otago, at which I was a candidate, every Otago candidate excepting myself had to pledge himself to get those conditions repealed, and titles to be issued.

*Mr. Macandrew.* : I do not agree to that at all.

62. *The Chairman.*] It was an expression of public opinion at the time?—Yes. What I am sure of is that deferred-payment settlers, so soon as they are numerous enough, will endeavour to get their lands without paying a single penny beyond what they may then have paid in rent. And unless you insist on the Act being carried out the honest purchasers will be the sufferers. In fact, this perpetual-leasing system will have the effect of making every man a rogue who comes under it.

63. *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] How are the proceeds of these sales invested?—In freehold security—on mortgage of freeholds.

64. On mortgage only?—Yes.

65. What supervision is there of this mortgaging?—The Board supervises.

66. Have any of these mortgages been unsuccessful?—Not one. A large proportion of them are on the land that has been sold. It is the same with the High School Board.

67. Will you state the expense of this department? What do you pay in salaries?—I could not say at the present moment. I do not know. The expenses are not very heavy. There is one thing I might say: the Board gets nothing.

68. On what scale do you base the travelling expenses?—There is only one who gets travelling expenses, and that is Mr. Pearson, the Commissioner of Crown Lands for Southland.

69. On what scale is he paid?—He is paid the railway fare and, I think, a guinea a day.

70. Though he is a salaried officer?—Yes.

71. Are there any other travelling expenses?—None.

72. Do you know the total sum paid for travelling expenses in any one year?—Yes.

73. For 1882, £71 8s. 10d.; 1883, £78 10s. 4d.; 1884, £52 4s. 6d.; 1885, £39 13s. 10d.?—But that also includes the travelling expenses of the Secretary. He has to attend auctions occasionally, and in case of disputes, valuation of improvements, and to ascertain the exact wishes of the settlers.

74. Then you are not aware of the expenses of the department?—I have not got the books here.

75. Could you not say?—I could not. The annual report in the hands of the Government will show.

76. Three, four, or five hundred pounds?—I think the whole expenses would not amount to £400.

77. Do you know the amount of the Secretary's salary?—I do not know. I think it is £200 or £250 per annum.

78. At these auction sales do you pay the commission?—Yes. It is a very small one. I could get the exact amount in Wellington.

79. The expenses of surveyors—who takes them?—The Government.

80. The general administration is really carried on by the Government?—By the Survey Department. That is for the convenience and advantage of the trusts. The Chief Surveyor takes in hand the surveys.

81. Would you not prefer that the Trust should pay?—The Trust does pay.

82. Well; but the time of the Commissioners?—The time of what Commissioners?

83. Mr. Maitland and Mr. Pearson?—If they are to be paid, why should not the other Commissioners be paid for their time? None of them are paid. I do not see why, if they—Government officers—are to be paid, we should not be paid also.

84. The object of my putting these questions is to show that the extra expenditure might be carried on by the department?—There is a difference of opinion about that.

85. *Mr. Cowan.*] In the Land Bill, now before the Committee, there is a provision making it compulsory that 5s. per acre of the proceeds of all lands belonging to reserves should be paid over to the County Councils for road-making. Are you in favour of that?—It is not in the Bill.

86. We propose to put it in?—There are several clauses I should like to see in the Bill. I am in favour of a certain proportion of the funds derived from the sale of these lands being devoted to opening up lands for the benefit of the country—say 5s. an acre.

87. Then you are in favour of the proposal?—Yes. We had no power to do so hitherto, or we should have done it. I can point to a case where the High School Board of Governors and the School Commissioners stretched a point and undertook to give certain contributions for making roads to open up their own lands before sale.

88. It was done optionally?—We have not had the power to do it. It is a question whether we had legal power to do it.

89. You abandoned the leasing system in favour of the freehold. But there is a clause in the Act which provides that purchase can be made within six years?—That does not apply to these reserves, but to land outside goldfields.

90. But this Waikaia land is within a goldfields district. Would that get over your objection to the leases?—Well, I should like time to consider it. I think it would if it is so. I do not think it would be so objectionable then. But that section to which you refer does not apply to this land at all: it applies only to lands outside of goldfields districts.

91. *Mr. Lake.*] I understand you to say, in answer to the questions that have been put to you, that your objection to the perpetual-leasing system is founded on the fact that you, as a business