

He has no intention of residing on the land. At first I was reluctant to come and give evidence, but when the Press, taking up the opposite side in regard to aggregation, thought fit to refer to the matter they practically gave me the lie direct that nothing of the kind was taking place, and that I could mention no specific cases. The statements put forward by the Lands Department and the Crown Lands Ranger are not correct in regard to Gorrings's sections. The report stated they only owned some 3,000 acres of land, but, as a matter of fact, they have over 6,000 acres, and I have the testimony of Mr. Gorrings himself before the Californian Thistle Commission in Mangaweka, in which he said that he farmed 6,000 acres in the Kawhatau district, and yet the Crown Lands Ranger says they only own 3,000-odd acres. I am prepared to substantiate the statement I have made in connection with the above by giving the size of the farms they have bought out, and, in addition to these, it is reported they have from 8,000 to 10,000 acres in the Waikato, and also last week they purchased two large farm holdings on the Manawatu line. Of the properties they purchased in the Kawhatau there was one section of 200 acres, one section of 1,497 acres, a section of 1,435 acres, a section of 320 acres, a section of 315 acres, one of 188 acres, one of 177 acres, one of 196 acres, and another of 1,756 acres. The last is a Native lease with a compulsory purchasing clause, and in all it makes a total of 6,000-odd acres. It has been stated that the land is not worth more than £8 or £10 an acre. I know Mr. Guthrie is familiar with the land in the district, and I can mention a section opposite to this owned by the late Mr. Thomas Cooper which carried six hoggets to the acre all the year round, and yet the Ranger gave the value of that land, improved, at from £8 to £10 an acre. Some of the land is worth £15 to £20 an acre there. I have a photograph here showing Dixon's land, which he paid £25 an acre for. [Photographs produced to Committee.] Now we come to the Stuckey family. I notice in the report that it was said Mr. Stuckey and his son held the land. Well, Mr. Stuckey had been out of New Zealand for the last twelve or fourteen years, and Mr. Stuckey, sen., has nothing whatever to do with that land. I have known the whole family for the last thirty years. The land is held by Mr. Stuckey, jun., and another young fellow there, who is either a nephew or a brother. Two of them held six sections of land, containing 1,294 acres. I think the statement made in the evidence which was sent to me in connection with the people who held the land there previously is correct. There are about six families who have been bought out there. The evidence in regard to the Stuckeys is quite correct. Now, in regard to Harry and Charles Wilson, the sections they hold contain 1,800 acres altogether. I might mention in this connection that I know nothing whatever and had nothing to do with the report published by the Lands Department in which it was shown that this Wilson family own some 8,000 acres. It never appeared in my paper. The fact is that when the Lands Department were drawing up their report they took the whole of the Wilson people together, whereas, as a matter of fact, one Wilson is about twenty miles away from the others I am referring to. Mrs. Wilson has a 200-acre section, but they have not resided on it, and there is no residence on it. Mrs. Wilson has never resided on it, but resides on another place adjoining with her husband. In connection with this I have already mentioned that the land owned by Mr. C. Wilson he would be quite prepared to sell at £15 an acre. The whole of this section is one of the finest and best dairying country in the Kawhatau country. The land is honestly worth the amount they are asking for it according to the stock it carries. Of course, I do not go altogether by the reports that appeared in the Reform newspapers, but I think in the interests of the country it is only right that the Lands Department, when they issue information of that kind, should issue information that is correct. Now, in referring to the effect that this aggregation has had on Mangaweka—I am referring to Mangaweka more particularly because I am interested in the case, and have been resident there for the last twelve years—I could mention numerous instances of aggregation going on all over the country. As a matter of fact, the *Feilding Star*, which strongly supports the present Government, ridiculed the assertions I made in connection with land-aggregation, but recently it called attention in a leading article to the fact that it was desirable if those who were taking an interest in land-aggregation were to turn their attention in the direction of Waiata, in the Colyton district, where an enormous amount of aggregation was going on, which proves that not only in our own district, but all over the country, aggregation is taking place. I think one of the most serious charges I can level against the aggregation curse in our district is the fact that our only creamery has been closed down this season. I have here a photograph of the creamery, which no doubt is well known to some members of this Committee. Settlers in the Kawhatau Valley and in and around Mangaweka looked forward to the creamery being a source of revenue and assistance to them in connection with their industry. The only industry we had there in connection with dairying was the creamery, and this has been closed down because there is an insufficient number of cows being milked to carry on the industry. I think this is a very strong point in favour of the statements I have made in connection with aggregation which has been going on in and around the district. As far as Te Kapua is concerned, I have a statement here which has been published which will prove conclusively that Te Kapua, which is adjacent to Mangaweka, is suffering from the same thing.

5. How far is Te Kapua from Mangaweka?—It is about thirteen or fourteen miles. The aggregation commences from the Mangaweka railway-line, and it is continuous right throughout the country as far back as Ponui. I will just briefly refer to some inquiries made, because it may be interesting to the Committee. It is as follows: "It is about twenty years since the Te Kapua Block was first made available for settlement. Mangaweka and Taihape were practically non-existent in those days, and access to the holdings was by means of a track from Hunterville. The block comprised just over 13,000 acres of first-class land, and was cut up into sections varying in size from 100 acres to 320 acres, sections of less than 200 acres being in the majority. The number of settlers was originally more than sixty, but aggregation has been indulged in