

169. Those people, with the permission of the Land Board, were allowed to join two and three sections together?—Yes.
170. And consequently several settlers had to go, and the children had to go too?—That is so.
171. But you would not call that aggregation?—No, not in that case.
172. Then, in connection with the Martin small-farm blocks, I understand they were 200-acre sections?—Yes.
173. And many of them were too small?—Yes, some of them. They ought to have had at least 500 acres. When it came to broken country it was not enough. Some of that country is very broken.
174. You believe the Land Board was justified in a case of that kind in allowing the sections to be aggregated?—Yes, decidedly so.
175. You mentioned large sections in the upper Kawhatau that are held by absentees?—Yes.
176. Would you tell the Committee where those sections lie?—They lie practically about eighteen miles from Mangaweka—some of them right up under the ranges.
177. What are the areas?—1,000, 1,500, and 2,000 acres, or they may be a little more.
178. The majority of that country would not be fit for close settlement?—No, the majority would not be.
179. You mentioned some places in Mangaweka: Bertlestones—have they left their place?—Yes; McDonald has bought it.
180. Did he not purchase it because of the difficulty of getting the children to school?—I do not think so—he has a school close by.
181. In regard to the Gorrings Brothers, you characterized them as not being settlers?—Probably it is hardly right to say they are not settlers, but it is more land speculation than settlement.
182. Have they ever been off their land?—Just periodically, when they visited the Old Country. They work on their land, certainly, and no doubt do their share of work.
183. Do you know any harder working-men in the Kawhatau?—I believe they are industrious men.
184. You referred to them as still further aggregating down the Manawatu line?—Yes.
185. Have they both aggregated down there?—M. Gorrings has. I have taken it from the names in the *New Zealand Times*, written by that paper's Shannon correspondent.
186. You cited Stuckeys as having taken six sections between two of them?—Yes.
187. What does the whole lot amount to?—To 1,294-odd acres.
188. One of those sections of 300 acres is an education reserve?—Yes.
189. Do you consider that good land?—I had a letter from one of the previous owners, who since have another property. They declared that by disposing of that section they had jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire.
190. There are two Stuckeys there, and you said you thought they were related?—The Ranger said they were father and son, but the father of the elder one has been out of New Zealand for ten years to my knowledge.
191. They are two separate people?—Yes.
192. And have 1,200 acres?—Yes.
193. And your idea is that when you get on to the Titirangi Road it is rough country?—Yes. If I went up there I should want 600 acres. I do not think I could make a living off less on the roughest portion.
194. Now, in regard to Harry Wilson and his wife, they got that land seven or eight years ago?—Yes.
195. He has been farming there all the time?—Yes, consistently.
196. And is a hard-working man?—Yes.
197. Are you acquainted with the whole of his 1,200-acre block?—No, I have not been over the whole of it, but it is rough at the back.
198. There is a portion along the front that would be eminently suitable for dairying?—Yes, but not some of the back portion.
199. Would you say that Vile's old section was fit for dairying?—No, only a portion.
200. Now, in regard to Charlie Wilson, you do not suggest for a moment that there is any connection between them except that they are brothers?—No, they are absolutely separate and work their land separately.
201. Charlie Wilson has always resided there?—Always.
202. How was that land classified in the beginning?—Second-class land.
203. And he could hold 2,000 acres?—Yes.
204. The next section is Gorrings's section, and he bought that from another man, did he not?—Yes.
205. That is second-class land also, and also the adjoining sections?—Yes, it was all classed as second-class land in those days.
206. When these people took up that section there was no access to that land?—With the exception of a rough track. There were no roads or bridges to a portion of the holdings.
207. Do you not think that the bad access and the difficulty of getting any one to go in there would make it necessary to class it as second class?—I have always been of that opinion. There is no such thing as unearned increment with land of that description.
208. You say they have taken up another 1,700 acres this year?—Yes.
209. Is not that only a lease?—It is a lease at the present time, but with a right of purchase.
210. They may or may not purchase it?—Yes, but they have the right to do so.
211. You say they hold other land on the other side of the river on the main road?—Yes.