

REPORTS

BY

COMMISSIONERS ON OTAGO HUNDREDS.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BY COMMAND OF
HIS EXCELLENCY.

WELLINGTON.

—
1871.

REPORTS BY COMMISSIONERS ON OTAGO HUNDREDS.

No. 1.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 10th December, 1870.

The Commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor, under "The Otago Hundreds Regulation Act 1869 Amendment Act 1870," have the honor to transmit herewith their Report on the four several proposed Hundreds mentioned in the margin, together with the original evidence in reference thereto, as requested.

We have, &c.,

THOMAS CASS,
FREDERICK WAYNE,
WILLIAM CARR YOUNG, } Commissioners.

1. Kaihiku.
2. Wairuna.
3. Crookston.
4. Beaumont.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

REPORT.

1. *Kaihiku Hundred.*—Plan No. 2.

The Commissioners rode over a large portion of this proposed hundred, from the Puerua River, along the north-east boundary, down the ridge leading to Mr. Ord's pre-emptive right. The weather being exceedingly fine and clear, a good view of the surrounding country was obtained. They then proceeded southward through the greater portion of the available agricultural land in and about the Puerua Flats, and they estimate the amount of the land fit for agricultural purposes at not more than 1,200 acres, which is far short of the requirements of the Act.

But the Commissioners having reason to believe, from the evidence, that it is desirable to open up more land for settlement in this district, are of opinion, that a smaller hundred may be advantageously proclaimed within the proposed limits, not exceeding 3,600 acres, including the above 1,200 acres, so as to meet the requirements of the Act.

2. *Wairuna Hundred.*—Plan No. 4.

The Commissioners, after a careful examination of the country, fully confirm the evidence of settlers in the neighbourhood of this proposed hundred, over two-thirds being available agricultural land, and the whole being in every respect desirable to be proclaimed.

The Commissioners, however, beg to suggest that the natural boundary formed by a small creek, near the proposed western boundary, be substituted instead of the boundary line as delineated on Plan No. 4. Such alteration would probably reduce the proposed hundred by about 500 acres.

3. *Crookston Hundred.*—Plan No. 3.

The Commissioners, fully concur with the evidence as to the desirability of this hundred being proclaimed. It contains a very large proportion of available agricultural land, and bush, for building and other purposes, is plentiful within the hundred and in the vicinity. But your Commissioners would suggest that the Heriot Burn should be substituted for the boundary on the north-west, as shown on Plan No. 3, the burn being a well-defined natural feature. This opinion of the Commissioners is fully borne out by the evidence, and their own personal inspection.

4. *Beaumont Hundred.*—Plan No. 6.

The Commissioners beg to report that the evidence is very conflicting as to the capabilities of the land within the limits of this hundred; but in their opinion, based on actual observation, not more than one-sixth, or, at most, one-fifth of the whole 10,900 acres can be classed as available agricultural land, and therefore the proposed hundred, as a whole, does not come within the requirements of the Act.

The Commissioners, however, fully concur with the evidence as to the necessity of throwing open more land for settlement in this district, although there is still about 3,000 acres in the immediate vicinity of the proposed hundred still open for selection; and, in order to comply with the requirements of the Act as to the proportion of available agricultural land, they are able to report that a small hundred, containing about 2,500 acres, including the township of Beaumont Ferry, may be proclaimed in that locality. Another small hundred might be proclaimed within the proposed limits at the eastern end, in the vicinity of Tuapeka; but, as it would have to include land embracing nearly all the available agricultural country in this locality, and already alienated under the Gold Fields Act, it is the opinion of the Commissioners that it is not desirable to proclaim a hundred under these circumstances.

Before concluding this Report, the Commissioners feel bound to direct attention to the suggestion generally expressed in the evidence, that while it is very desirable to throw open more land, even to double the extent of the proposed hundred in the district referred to, it would be more in accordance with the wishes of the district if the land in question were placed under the provisions of the Gold Fields Act rather than under the Hundreds system. This, however, is a matter upon which the Commissioners do not feel called upon to express any opinion.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

KAIHIKU HUNDRED.

Balclutha, 21st November, 1870.

Mr. R. Grigor, being duly sworn, states: I am an authorized surveyor; have a contract to survey 3,000 acres; am specially acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. It is mostly high, ridgy ground, excepting the valley of the Puerua and at the heads of some of the tributaries of the Waiwera and Puerua. My opinion of the available agricultural land in the limits of the hundred is about 4,000 or 5,000 acres. There would be no difficulty in making roads into it, and a good road could be made up the Puerua at a moderate cost. There is abundance of bush accessible for use in the hundred. There may be a little land available for selection in the vicinity of the proposed hundred. The adjacent hundreds are already well settled on by *bonâ fide* settlers. The portions of the land not agricultural are fair pastoral land. There are no improvements in the way of fencing, that I am aware of, on this hundred.

Mr. Alexander Alison, being duly sworn, states: I am a settler in the Glenoamaru district, farming 100 acres in immediate neighbourhood of the proposed hundred. I am acquainted with the country in proposed hundred, and have been over the greater part of it. I consider it necessary to open it up for the purposes of settlement. There is laid open for selection in the immediate vicinity, within Catlin's Hundred, unsurveyed, as far as I know, 300 or 400 acres open land. To the best of my knowledge, one-fourth of the proposed hundred is available for agricultural land; the bulk of it lies on the banks of the Puerua. I am not aware, of my own knowledge, of any persons waiting to purchase in the proposed hundred, but I know that all the settlers in the district are anxious to have it thrown open. I believe a good dray-road could be made to the proposed hundred at a reasonable cost. There is timber accessible from the proposed hundred suitable for building purposes, and within it bush for fencing and firewood. All the land I have referred to as agricultural is, in my opinion, worth the upset price of 20s. per acre. My ground grows fair average crops. I think the agricultural land in proposed hundred would grow equally good crops. The range on the northern side of the hundred will carry good grass, as far as I know it; but I do not know it north of the Kaihiku.

Mr. Alexander Petrie, being duly sworn, states: I am living at Puerua, about two miles from the proposed hundred, and am farming about 300 acres. I am acquainted with the country within the proposed hundred, and consider it necessary to open it up for purposes of settlement, as a portion of it would be purchased. I should say there are 600 or 700 acres at the S.E. of proposed hundred in Catlin's Hundred unsold. I think that a third of the land in proposed hundred can be ploughed. The largest proportion of this land is the Puerua Flat and Kaihiku Flat. The Kaihiku Ranges have been all sold as far as they have been opened under the 10s. regulation. I do not know at the present time of any intending purchasers in the proposed hundred, although I know of inquiries having been made, and think some of the land would have been sold had it been opened. I think a dray-road could be made to the Puerua Flat within the hundred at a reasonable cost. The Puerua Flat is about 2½ miles long, extending to the rocky dome, and ¾ of a mile to a mile in breadth. There is in the immediate vicinity of the proposed hundred bush available for all the requirements of settlement. A passable dray-road could be made up the Puerua Gorge to the flat for about £500. The settlers in the neighbourhood are all anxious for the proposed hundred, as there is but little land in the vicinity open for selection.

Mr. Thomas T. Ord, being duly sworn, states: I am a pastoral tenant of Run No. 72. About 12,000 acres of my run are included in the proposed hundred. Of this 12,000 acres I do not think more than 800 are available for agricultural purposes; this is of a light micaceous soil. 400 acres of this lie about three miles above what is commonly known as the Puerua Flat, and are situated on the south-west boundary line of the proposed hundred of 25,000 acres as delineated on the map. A road into this flat known as the Puerua Fork could be made from the upper end of the Puerua Flats for £1,000. I know of a few families settled in the immediate vicinity of my own run, say five or six families. There is no land now open for purchase on the boundary of my run. The land in the old hundred has all been sold at 10s. per acre excepting a few sections. There is no dray-road from the main road into the proposed hundred. Sledging and packing is the only means of access at present. Two dray-roads could be made to the proposed hundred, one by the Kaihiku River and the other by the Puerua, which would give access to their respective valleys. I cannot shear on my run because there is no dray-road into it. I know Runs Nos. 96 and 122, adjoining me, parts of which are included in the proposed hundred. I consider them of a similar character to my own. If anything, No. 96 is much worse, there being no agricultural land upon it, in my estimation. I cannot say whether there is any agricultural land in that portion of No. 122 included in the proposed hundred except that in the Puerua Flat, which, judging from the map, is about two miles long.

WAIRUNA HUNDRED.

Balclutha, 21st November, 1870.

Mr. Robert Gregor, being duly sworn, states: I am well acquainted with this country, having just completed a survey there of 10,000 acres. There is about 70 per cent. of available agricultural land in the proposed hundred. The adjacent hundred—that is, the greater part of it—is bought up by large proprietors, with the exception of a portion of the land at Waimai settled on by about twenty families, all adjoining each other. There is little or no available bush on this hundred; the families referred to obtain their firewood from the bush at Popotunoa and Waiwera. There is a good dray-

road made through this hundred. Of what I call available agricultural land, some is swampy, but can be drained. There is a good deal of fencing on the road in this hundred, probably five or six miles—principally sod fencing. I consider the land on this proposed hundred as good, if not better, than the land at Popotunoa. I have received a few inquiries as to the probability of land being opened for selection by intending purchasers.

Wairuna, Monday, 28th November, 1870.

Mr. *John Moffat*, being duly sworn, states: I am a settler in this district, farming 80 acres. I am acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and think the hundred is much required in this district. There is a little country still open for selection in the adjacent hundreds, but I do not consider it fit for agricultural purposes. I should say of the 20,000 acres in the proposed hundred, at least two-thirds are available for agricultural purposes. This immediate neighbourhood is occupied by settlers holding farms of from 50 to 500 acres each. The land in the adjacent hundreds, alienated about two years ago to large holders at 10s per acre, would, in my opinion, have realised 20s had it been held over. I know a good many people are waiting to take up land in the proposed hundred at the upset price, and I believe more than the upset price will be obtained for a good portion of it along the main road, which runs directly through it. There is plenty of bush for the purposes of settlement within two miles of the southern boundary of the proposed hundred, and other bush within twelve miles of the northern boundary, both accessible by good roads.

Mr. *John H. Roy*, being duly sworn, states: I am a settler in this neighbourhood, farming 104 acres. I am tolerably well acquainted with the land in the proposed hundred, and believe it is desirable to be opened up for the purposes of settlement. I do not know of any land in the vicinity fit for agricultural purposes still open for selection. I know of about seventeen families owning and occupying land in the immediate vicinity of the proposed hundred. Along the Popotunoa Hundred boundary I have heard various persons state that they intended to take up land within the proposed hundred when proclaimed. There is a good deal of land in the proposed hundred as good and better than the land sold in the adjoining hundred at 20s. per acre. There are a few small patches of bush on the proposed hundred, available for fuel, and plenty of bush within a day's journey of any part of the proposed hundred. There is coal on the adjacent hundred.

Mr. *Charles Finlayson*, being duly sworn, states: I am farming 125 acres in the neighbourhood, and am generally acquainted with the land in the proposed hundred. I think it desirable to open it for the purposes of settlement. I do not know of any land now open for selection in the immediate vicinity. I should say at least two-thirds of the proposed hundred is land fit for agricultural purposes. The land in the immediate vicinity along the boundary of the Popotunoa Hundred is nearly all settled. I know of only two or three purchasers who have not settled on their land there. I have heard several persons assert that they intended to purchase land in the proposed hundred, if thrown open. There is plenty of bush within two miles of the proposed hundred available for the purposes of settlement.

CROOKSTON HUNDRED.

Tapanui, Wednesday, 29th November, 1870.

Mr. *James Rodgers*, being duly sworn, states: I am a farmer, and own over 700 acres of land in this neighbourhood. I am tolerably well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and consider it necessary to open it up for the purposes of settlement. As far as I know there are only three or four isolated sections unsold in the vicinity, and no land open adjoining the proposed hundred. The quality of land in the proposed hundred is, in my opinion, better than that sold in the neighbourhood. I consider the greater portion of it is fit for agricultural purposes. If the proposed hundred is not to include more than 20,000 acres, in my opinion, the portion beyond the Heriot Burn had better be excluded, as the Heriot Burn may be advantageously taken as a good natural boundary. There is a large population in this district in the immediate vicinity of the proposed hundred. I know that there were, and, as far as I know, there still are, a number of *bonâ fide* settlers ready to take up land in the proposed hundred when open for selection. There is good access to the country, and no difficulty in making roads through it. There is also abundance of good timber easily accessible. I am certain, from my intercourse with the settlers here, that they are as anxious now to have the proposed hundred proclaimed as when they first petitioned for it. The upset price of the land sold in the neighbourhood was 20s. per acre, and a large portion of it realized much more.

Mr. *William White*, being duly sworn, states: I have lived two years in this district, and am occupying 14 acres of land, owned by my son. I have three sons, each of whom are waiting for the proposed hundred to be thrown open, and are prepared to purchase. Had the proposed hundred been open, a considerable portion of it would have been taken up by *bonâ fide* settlers in the last twelve months. I believe at the present time the public generally are anxious to have the proposed hundred proclaimed. There are a great number of families resident in the neighbourhood of the proposed hundred. I believe fully two-thirds of the proposed hundred is land fit for agricultural purposes.

Mr. *Daniel Robertson*, being duly sworn, states: I am farming 140 acres in this neighbourhood, which I purchased about a year ago at the upset price of 20s. per acre. I am generally acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and consider it desirable to open it up for the purposes of settlement. A good deal more than one-half of it is, in my opinion, available for agriculture; the general run of it is as good as land previously sold in the neighbourhood. I am not aware of any land being open for selection in the vicinity of the proposed hundred. I know of several intending purchasers as soon as it is proclaimed. I think nearly all of it would be bought up within three years after it is open for selection.

Mr. *John Mackie*, being duly sworn, states: I farm about 500 acres in the vicinity of the proposed Hundred, and am partly acquainted with its character. There is no land, that I am aware of, open for selection in the neighbourhood, and I think it desirable to throw open

the proposed hundred. When a portion of it was previously advertised I knew of three or four persons who were disappointed in not being able to purchase, and I think it would sell readily now. If the 25,000 acres marked on the map are to be reduced to 20,000, the land north of the Heriot Burn may be advantageously omitted, that burn being a fair boundary. Generally speaking the whole of the land in the proposed hundred is fit for agricultural purposes, and is as good as the land already sold in the neighbourhood. I am aware that a petition has been signed against the proposed hundred being opened, but am of opinion that it should have no weight, and believe that settlers in this and adjoining districts are still desirous of having this hundred proclaimed.

BEAUMONT HUNDRED.

Mr. *Thomas Darton*, being duly sworn, stated: I have been settled in this district nine years, and am farming about 150 acres immediately adjoining the township of Lawrence. I am acquainted with the greater portion of the land in the proposed hundred, and consider it indispensably necessary to open up the land for the purposes of settlement. Of the 10,000 acres in the proposed hundred, three-fourths of it, in my opinion, is fit for general agricultural purposes—I mean by general agriculture, part ploughable and part useful for general farming. The north side of the proposed hundred is more rugged, but there are portions of it fit to plough. If proclaimed, I am of opinion the land would be taken up. I consider the land within the proposed hundred of better quality than the land thrown open on Mr. Smith's run, under the Gold Fields Act. In my opinion, if the land was thrown open under the Gold Fields Act, it would meet the wishes of the people better than if under the hundred system. In proof of the desirability of opening up a larger area of country, I may state that although about 30,000 bushels of oats were grown last year in this neighbourhood, about 20,000 bushels were imported to meet requirements of the district, without taking into consideration a large importation of wheat, flour, and butter.

Mr. *John Francis Herbert*, being duly sworn, states: I am a merchant, and have been a resident eight years in Lawrence. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and think it desirable to open more country in this district, with grazing rights attached, the Tuapeka common being overstocked; but, in my opinion, the wants of the district will be best supplied under the Gold Fields Act, with commonage rights, rather than by the hundred system. The agricultural portion of the proposed hundred being so very limited, it had better, in my opinion, be opened up under the Gold Fields Act. Of the 10,000 acres of land in the proposed hundred, I think not more than 600 acres are available for agriculture. If the two runholders' licences adjoining the proposed hundred were cancelled, and thrown open under the Gold Fields Act, I believe it would not be too much for the requirements of the district. I know of two intending purchasers of about 100 acres each, if the proposed hundred is proclaimed; and, in my opinion, the proposed hundred, as now laid off on the map, will not tend to settlement to any great extent, but if extended southwards, so as to embrace more country, settlement to a larger extent would follow.

Mr. *John Mackay*, being duly sworn, stated: I am Inspector of Depasturing Districts on the gold fields, and have resided ten years in this district. I am acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. It is in my opinion desirable that more land should be thrown open for selection in this district for the purpose of settlement, the Tuapeka common being overstocked and inadequate to the requirements of the district. I think the purposes of settlement would be best answered by opening the country under the Gold Fields Act, instead of by the hundred system. Under the circumstances I do not think it desirable to proclaim the present proposed hundred, because it is badly bounded, and the cattle upon it would be trespassing upon the neighbouring runs. I think a fourth of the hundred might be sold at once if proclaimed. I am not aware of any intending purchasers in the proposed hundred. I think it would be purchased only with a view of securing grazing rights.

Mr. *Horace Bastings*, being duly sworn, states: I hold a publican's license, and am Mayor of Lawrence. I have been resident here five years. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and think it desirable to open it up for the purposes of settlement. If it cannot be opened for selection under the Gold Fields Act, it is better to open it under the hundred system rather than not at all, because if land is not obtainable purchasers will leave the country. Of the 10,000 acres in the proposed hundred, there are, in my opinion, 1,200 or 1,300 acres available for agricultural purposes, in addition to the land already disposed of. I think the main road to the Beaumont would be the best northern boundary of the proposed hundred. If the hundred be proclaimed I think a great portion would be taken up at once. A good number, including the mining population would, in my opinion, take up land in it, for the purpose of combining agricultural with pastoral pursuits; they cannot do this by purchasing any land which is now open for selection in the vicinity of the proposed hundred, because the Tuapeka common is overstocked and inadequate for the grazing requirements of the district.

Mr. *William Laurence Simpson*, being duly sworn, states: I am Warden and Resident Magistrate in the Tuapeka District, and have been resident here two years and a half. I am very well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and think it desirable to open up the country for the purposes of settlement. Looking at the nature of the country, and the fact of the proposed hundred being within a gold field, I am of opinion, that the hundred system is unsuitable as regards the land in question, because—(1) There is so little land on it available for *bonâ fide* cultivation, there being, in my opinion, not more than 1,500 acres, including Mr. Maclean's right of purchase, and the Beaumont Township Reserve. (2) The land being within a gold field, I am averse to the Government alienating the ground at once. (3) I consider the way in which the hundred has been surveyed would be a great objection to its being taken up; it would place any settlers who might purchase land and run cattle on it entirely at the mercy of the runholder holding the country on either side of it. (4) The opinion which I have formed as to what the people do want in the district, is a larger depasturing area. There is a large area of the Crown lands in the vicinity of the proposed hundred, that is in the

Tuapeka district, not selected, partly on account of its great elevation, and partly on account of those already settled on it having so many cattle running; and also because there is in it really a limited area which can be termed good agricultural land. The agricultural lease system, under the Gold Fields Act, secures to the small settlers depasturing rights upon which such settlers chiefly depend for a much longer period than under the system of hundreds.

Mr. *William Sheath*, being duly sworn, states: I have lived in this district nine years, and am farming 200 acres of land. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and do not think it desirable to be opened up for agricultural purposes; but it is desirable for grazing rights. I should think there are between 300 and 400 acres of land available for agricultural purposes, between this and Beaumont Ferry, exclusive of Mr. Maclean's right of purchase and the Township Reserve. If the hundred is proclaimed, I am not aware of any one likely to purchase. I think the way in which the proposed hundred is laid off would prevent land being taken up, as there is no boundary to prevent cattle straying on to the adjoining runs. I know that portion of Mr. Smith's run already open for selection under agricultural leases, and consider the unselected portion better adapted for settlement than the proposed new hundred. I have no doubt that a good deal of land in the proposed hundred would sell at the upset price. I think the main road to Beaumont would form a better northern boundary to the proposed hundred than the one indicated on the map. The Tuapeka common does not meet the requirements of the settlers in this district for depasturing purposes, as it is very much overstocked. I have heard of people complaining of not being able to obtain land in this district, and saying they must leave the country in consequence. I do not think the proposed hundred, as at present defined, will induce them to remain. I would rather advise that the pastoral licenses should be cancelled, and the land dealt with under the Gold Fields Act.

Mr. *Peter Robertson*, being duly sworn, stated: I farm about 400 acres of land in this district, and have been resident here about thirteen years. I am very well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and think it would not be taken up for agricultural purposes, but it might be to secure grazing rights. Of the 10,000 acres in the proposed hundred, I believe not more than 500 acres are available for agricultural purposes, exclusive of what is already taken up or disposed of. I am not aware of any intending purchasers in the proposed hundred. I know that ground, which is about 4,000 acres, part of Mr. Smith's run, on the southern boundary of the proposed hundred; and, in my opinion, the unsold portion of it is better land, on an average, than the unappropriated portion in the proposed hundred, because it is more easily worked, and nearer to a market. The narrow strips of hundreds will, in my opinion, not meet the requirements of any one, and in this instance my private opinion is that nothing short of cancelling both Mr. Smith's and Mr. Maclean's runs *in toto* will satisfy the requirements of the people in this district.

Mr. *Samuel Cowap*, being duly sworn, stated: I hold a publican's license, and own 50 acres of land on the west side of the Clutha, in Crookston District. I have resided here seven years, and am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. I consider it necessary to open it up for the purposes of settlement. There is no land open for selection in this end of the proposed hundred. Of the 10,000 acres in the proposed hundred, which I understand includes the portion fenced in at the eastern end, one-third in my opinion is agricultural land, and the remainder first-class pastoral country. There are ten families resident at this end of the proposed hundred, in the vicinity of the ferry. I know several persons ready to take up land for *bonâ fide* settlement in the proposed hundred when proclaimed. I have no doubt that 1,000 acres would be taken up at this end at once at and above the upset price. Timber suitable for building purposes is obtainable from Tapanui and Tuapeka mouth, and sufficient fuel within the hundred. I am of opinion that if the land were to be sold in small sections, say in 20-acre to 50-acre sections, it would be bought more readily by *bonâ fide* settlers. I am also of opinion that the settlers at this end of the proposed hundred would prefer the land being thrown open for agricultural leases instead of absolute sale, for fear of its falling into the hands of speculative capitalists.

Lawrence, Saturday, 3rd December, 1870.

Mr. *Charles William Adams*, being duly sworn, states: I am District Surveyor, and have been in this district nearly four years. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and think it advisable to open it up for the purposes of settlement. There are about 4,000 or 5,000 acres in the immediate vicinity of the proposed hundred still open for selection, but more than half of it is very inaccessible, and of the remainder about half is available agricultural land. I believe there are *bonâ fide* purchasers ready to take up land within the proposed hundred. It is intersected with roads already laid out at a practicable gradient. There is timber immediately accessible from the Beaumont Ferry end, and also from the Tuapeka mouth. Of the 10,000 acres in the proposed hundred one-half, in my opinion, is available agricultural land, but is not so good as the land already taken up in this district.

Balclutha, 21st November, 1870.

Mr. *Robert Grigor*, being duly sworn, states: I know this proposed hundred of 15,000 acres, as laid down on the map, having lived upon it for a few months, and surveyed about 2,000 acres of the eastern portion on Run 123 for the Government, for agricultural leases in the vicinity of Evans's Flat; also surveyed the boundaries between Runs 123 and 137. I am of opinion that 20 per cent. of the whole 15,000 acres is available agricultural land, the bulk of such 20 per cent. being situate on the Run No. 123. There is manuka scrub scattered on this hundred, available for fuel. The main road to the Dunstan from Lawrence goes through the proposed hundred. There is a good site for a township at the Beaumont Ferry; the best is on the west side of the Clutha River. I consider that the boundary line between Runs 123 and 137 would form a better southern boundary for this hundred, as it would include some rich agricultural land with frontage to the Molyneux River, and to make the main road the northern boundary of the said hundred. Very nearly the whole of the boundary line between Runs 123 and 137 is fenced. The pastoral portions of the land on this hundred are, in my opinion, better than the pastoral portions of the Wairuna Hundred.

Dunedin, Wednesday, 7th December, 1870.

Mr. John Aitken Connell, having declined to be sworn from conscientious scruples, stated as follows: I am an authorized land surveyor and estate agent, and am acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, having surveyed the whole of it. Of the 10,900 acres, I estimate from 1,000 to 1,200 or 1,300 acres as first-class agricultural land, of which about 400 acres is in the vicinity, and inclusive of the township at Beaumont Ferry, about 450 acres in Dale's Flat and up to the township, and 300 or 400 acres scattered between the old station and Tuapeka River. In addition to the above, I may state that there are about 1,200 acres more good rough land which may be classed as agricultural. The general character of the land between the Clutha River and the south-western boundary of proposed hundred and the southern boundary of Run 137 is exceedingly rough and broken, and altogether unsuited for agriculture.

I declare the above statement to be true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

5th December, 1870.

Mr. James McLeod Nicolson, being duly sworn, stated: I am draughtsman and assistant surveyor, and have been in the Survey Office, Lawrence, since 1866; I am acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. There have been numerous applications for land within the proposed hundred under the provisions of the Gold Fields Act, and 500 acres between Dale's Flat and the Beaumont were actually surveyed and applied for, under the impression it would be thrown open by settlers principally at the Beaumont end. I am not aware of any application being made for any other land than the 500 acres referred to; but the same parties have made numerous enquiries since, respecting the same land. With reference to the ground from Dale's Flat to Tuapeka River, I have had several inquiries from different people wishing to apply for land in that locality, principally at Holmes's accommodation house, about 100 acres; and also that land included in Mr. Maclean's pre-emptive right, about 460 acres. I am also aware of a person who wishes to apply for 100 acres immediately opposite Mr. Maclean's homestead. The class of persons who have applied for the land are not, in my opinion, those who would purchase under the hundred system, and I think it would be better for the purposes of settlement to open it up in agricultural leases under the Gold Fields Act. Although of opinion that one-third of the land within the proposed hundred is not strictly agricultural, I believe one-third would be taken up within two years under the Gold Fields Act.

No. 2.

Dunedin, 13th January, 1871.

SIR,—

1. Strath-Taieri.
2. Waihemo.
3. Hyde.
4. Campbell's.
5. Tiger Hill.
6. Lower Hawea.

The Commissioners have the honor to present their separate reports herewith upon each of the six proposed hundreds mentioned in the margin, together with the original evidence in reference thereto.

This completes the series of the ten proposed hundreds referred to the Commissioners, and they now beg to submit the following Supplementary Report upon the whole collectively.

First.—Generally the Commissioners have recognized the fact that more land is urgently required to be opened up in this Province for settlement, and they have consequently given the widest latitude, consistently with the requirements of the Act, in forming their opinion as to the desirability or non-desirability of proclaiming the proposed hundreds.

Their duties in ascertaining certain necessary facts required by the Act, have been rendered comparatively easy by the general uniformity of evidence, confirming their opinion in respect to each hundred.

Of the ten different hundreds proposed, three fail to meet the requirements of the Act, as regards the requisite proportion of available agricultural area: viz., Kaihiku, Beaumont, and Waihemo; and, as regards proper determination of boundaries, which is another distinct requirement of the Act, there is not a single instance where the proposed boundaries of each of these hundreds might not be improved in some particular. But wherever the Commissioners have been unable, from either of the foregoing reasons, to recommend the proclamation of any hundred in the exact form proposed, they have suggested in the one case smaller hundreds, and in the other better defined boundaries, so as to comply with the Act, and at the same time to facilitate as much as possible the opening up of land to meet the known wants of the people.

Secondly.—With special reference to hundreds proposed to be taken out of gold fields, it is a matter for serious consideration in the interests of the gold mining, upon which the general welfare of the Province depends, how far it is expedient to alienate any lands within the limits of the gold fields.

The Commissioners cannot suppose that the Hundreds Act was intended to withdraw land, either embracing or in the vicinity of actual gold workings, from the operation of the Gold Fields Act, which was specially framed to protect and encourage all mining interests. Such a course would, in the opinion of the Commissioners, be most disastrous to the best interests of the Colony. This opinion has been formed after personal inspection of the extent of mining operations in and about some of the hundreds proposed to be taken out of gold fields, and after careful inquiry as to the wishes and requirements of the mining population, whom it is most desirable and politic to settle permanently in the vicinity of their operations.

It is also in accordance with the opinion, as stated in the evidence of the respective Wardens, who, it may be presumed, have the best means not only of learning the true feelings of the people, but also of judging correctly as to what will best promote the permanent prosperity of the particular districts over which they preside.

Under these circumstances the Commissioners have been careful not to recommend the alienation of land likely to involve the destruction of mining interests, as in the case of the proposed hundreds of Hyde, Campbell's, and Tiger Hill.

There are no doubt special cases, where land may be safely taken out of the present prescribed

gold fields, and advantageously brought under the operations of the Hundreds Act; as, for instance, in the case of the proposed hundred of Strath Taieri, where no actual mining operations are going on, and where no reasonable gold prospects exist. In this and similar cases the Hundreds Act may very properly, and was no doubt intended, to override the Gold Fields Act, but under no other circumstances.

In conclusion, the Commissioners beg to direct attention to the fact that the same demand for land exists within the limits of the gold fields as elsewhere in the Province, and that there is plenty of available agricultural country, if judiciously selected, to meet the demand; but they are satisfied by their recent investigations, that while the Hundreds Act may be very usefully applied for the purposes of settlement in many portions of the Province, the more effectual means of conducting to the permanent *bonâ fide* settlement of the mining population in the vicinity of actual working, and attracting other classes of settlers to auriferous districts, is by opening up land in those localities under the agricultural lease system, which appears to be very well adapted to their special requirements, and most in accordance with the wishes of the people as declared by the evidence.

We have, &c.,

THOMAS CASS, }
FRED. WAYNE, } Commissioners.
W. C. YOUNG, }

The Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

REPORT ON STRATH-TAIERI HUNDRED.—PLAN NO. 5.

As regards the requisite agricultural area, the proposed hundred far exceeds the requirements of the Act, and the weight of evidence is in favor of opening up land in this district for the purposes of settlement.

The Commissioners, therefore, have no hesitation in recommending this hundred to be proclaimed, but are of opinion that a modification of the western boundary may be advantageously made.

The present boundary, as proposed in the plan, must give rise to endless disputes, on account of the impossibility of fencing, except at a very heavy outlay, and the consequent certainty of cattle straying on to the adjoining runs. The best natural boundary would, without doubt, as suggested in the evidence, be the watershed of the western ranges; but, since the extension would exceed the limits of the prescribed maximum area, the road line may be adopted as the next best boundary on the west, without disturbing to any great extent the boundary as laid down on the plan.

THOMAS CASS, }
FRED. WAYNE, } Commissioners.
WM. CARR YOUNG, }

EVIDENCE.

Dunedin, 8th December, 1870.

Mr. David Grant, being duly sworn, states: I am an authorized surveyor, and am acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, having surveyed about 10,000 acres of the northern portion. About two-thirds of the proposed hundred is agricultural land, and the remainder good pastoral country. The bulk of the land in the proposed hundred is not more than 750 feet above the level of the sea. I am not aware of any land being open for selection in the vicinity of the proposed hundred. I have had a good many inquiries as to whether the land in proposed hundred will be open soon for sale, by parties who I have every reason to believe would purchase if the land were thrown open. There is a passable dray-road through the proposed hundred, but no bush available for fuel or building purposes upon it. The nearest available bush is from twenty to twenty-five miles off.

Thursday, 15th December, 1870.

Mr. Edward Humphreys, being duly sworn, states: I am pastoral tenant of 213A Run, and have known the land in the proposed hundred for six and a half years, which includes about 7,000 acres of my run, as shown on the plan. One-third of the whole proposed hundred is in my opinion ploughable. I paid to get my wool down to Dunedin, last season, guaranteeing the carter twelve tons more or less of back load, at the rate of £4 10s. per ton each way. For fuel I use imported coals brought from Dunedin. Peat is obtainable in the vicinity, but is more costly than coal from Dunedin. There is no land open for selection in the vicinity of the proposed hundred. The nearest land open for selection is in the Traquair Hundred and Waihemo Block. A very considerable portion of the lower part of the proposed hundred is subject to floods. The township of Blair Taieri, as marked on the plan, is on the low ground, and to my knowledge has been four times under water within the present year. There is ground at a convenient distance from the proposed township, elevated above the reach of all floods, on the ridge of a stray terrace. I know of no one in the neighbourhood likely to purchase land in the hundred if proclaimed.

Mr. W. P. Gordon, being duly sworn, stated: I am pastoral tenant of Run 213B, of which 13,000 acres is included in the proposed hundred. Of the whole 20,000 acres in the proposed hundred two-thirds may be considered agricultural land. If thrown open for selection I know of no one likely to buy. The present current rate of cartage to Dunedin, guaranteeing a back load, is £4 per ton, both ways; in the winter months it is £6 per ton. The plain is liable to be flooded on an average of half a mile from the river, the whole length of the proposed hundred, but there is high sound ground about three-quarters of a mile square, within a mile north of the township of Blair Taieri, which, in my opinion, would form a safer site for said township. I consider the western boundary of the proposed hundred, in its present form, undesirable, because stock would constantly trespass from one side to the other, and the cost of fencing would be very heavy; in some places, where only stone walls are practicable, it would be impossible to fence, except at a ruinous outlay. In my opinion it would be better to make the top of the ridges the western boundary, and if that was adopted, the Doughboy Creek might form a good natural southern boundary, instead of Sutton Stream. This would cut off about 6,000 acres of

rough country at the south, and, add an equal amount of similar country at the west of proposed hundred, as marked on the plan, without interfering with the available agricultural land as required by the Act.

Hyde Hotel, 17th December, 1870.

Mr. George Hunt Attwood, being duly sworn, stated: I am a travelling hawker, and know every portion in and about the proposed hundred, having travelled over that portion of the country for the last six years. As it has been my practice to stay at the several stations and the accommodation house on the plain, I am well acquainted with the district. Land is undoubtedly required for the purposes of settlement on the plain, and I have reason to believe that 1,000 to 1,500 acres would be immediately bought by *bonâ fide* settlers there. I also believe that there are West Taieri farmers who would take up land there. My opinion is, that the division fence between Runs 213A and 213B would form the best northern boundary of the proposed hundred, and the 7,000 acres excluded by this alteration would be advantageously made up by extending the western boundary to the same extent, so as to complete a hundred of 20,000 acres.

Palmerston, Wednesday, 21st December, 1870.

Mr. John Muir, being duly sworn, states: I have been acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred for the last ten or twelve years. There is no land open for selection in this district, and I decidedly think a hundred is required there. Instead of the boundary on the west as laid down on the plan, I would suggest it should be extended to the top of the Rock and Pillar Range as being a good natural boundary. It would be impossible to fence the present boundary on the plan, except at a heavy cost, and without a fence constant disputes would occur between the cattle and sheep farmers. If a hundred is proclaimed in this locality, there is no doubt there will be plenty of purchasers found to take up land immediately. If 40,000 acres were opened, in my opinion all the available agricultural land would be purchased in a few years, if with grazing rights attached, as proposed, to the Rock and Pillar Range.

West Taieri, Saturday, 7th January, 1871.

Mr. Donald Grant, being duly sworn, states: I have lived in Taieri Plain about eight years, and am farming 300 acres of land under lease from the Otago Presbytery. I consider it desirable that more land should be thrown open in this locality, and I believe the country in the proposed hundred is the best land within a reasonable distance from the Taieri district. In my opinion it is desirable to proclaim the proposed hundred open for sale, all the available land in the vicinity having been taken up. I have reason to know, that if the land be put up for sale, a large portion of it would readily find *bonâ fide* purchasers who would settle upon it. I am not personally acquainted with the country within the limits of the proposed hundred, and therefore can say nothing, of my own knowledge, as to the quality of the land or the boundaries shown on the plan.

Mr. Donald Borrie, being duly sworn, states: I have resided eighteen years in the Taieri, and am farming 600 acres of my own on the plain. I have not been on the country in the proposed hundred. I think it is not desirable to proclaim it in its present form. I consider a hundred of 5,000 acres in all, including good and rough land, sufficient to be opened at first. I believe there is a demand for land, but I do not think 5,000 acres would be sold for a number of years.

Mr. John Nimmo, being sworn, states: I have resided in the Taieri district, and am farming 400 acres on the plain, under lease. My lease is nearly out, and I am anxious to acquire a freehold of my own. I am not personally acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, but I think it is desirable to open it up for sale, as there is no available land open nearer to the Taieri district; and I have reason to believe that, if opened, it would be purchased and occupied by *bonâ fide* settlers.

Mr. James Shand, being sworn, states: I am a freeholder, and farming 1,000 acres in the Taieri Plain, where I have resided for the last twelve years. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. Of the whole 20,000 acres, I consider three-fourths available agricultural land. I think it desirable to throw open this country for sale under the Hundreds Act, and am of opinion there will be a good demand for it, as it is the nearest available land to this district, where no good land is obtainable. In my opinion, the proposed western boundary would be better if extended further up the ridge; but the hundred should be opened in its present form rather than not at all.

REPORT ON WAIHEMO HUNDRED.—PLAN No. 1.

THE Commissioners find that this proposed hundred, containing 19,000 acres, comprises about 3,000 acres already sold, which, being no longer waste lands of the Crown, cannot legally be constituted into a hundred. It is impossible, therefore, to proclaim the proposed hundred in its present form.

The evidence shows that more land is required to be opened up for settlement in this district, but the proposed hundred, after deducting the 3,000 acres referred to (which embrace the best of the available agricultural land in the whole area) would then be disqualified under clause 3 of the amended Act.

The evidence, however, further shows that there is more good available agricultural land outside the proposed boundaries, in which evidence the Commissioners fully concur; and they are of opinion that a hundred, judiciously selected, may still be advantageously opened in this district for settlement, unless it be barred by the agreement referred to in the evidence.

THOMAS CASS,
FREDERICK WAYNE, } Commissioners.
WM. CARR YOUNG. }

EVIDENCE.

Salmon's Hotel, Macrae's, Monday, 19th December, 1871.

Mr. Kerins Claffy, being duly sworn, states: I am a storekeeper and teamster, and have been acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred for the last seven years. There is some land

open for selection in the adjoining Mocraki Hundred, but it is unfit for farming purposes. I am aware that a block of land was thrown open for sale about a year ago, which is included within the limits of the proposed hundred. I believe all of it was bought which was fit for agricultural purposes. Of the 19,000 acres within the boundaries of the proposed hundred, I should say about one-third may be classed as available agricultural land. There is a small portion of land on Run 80, within the limits of the proposed hundred, which would probably sell; but I do not know of any buyer. I know that if the proposed hundred was proclaimed, it would be of no benefit to the population resident about Macraes Flat, which is the only resident population on this side of the proposed hundred. There are between thirty and forty families in and about Macraes Flat.

Mr. *Laurence Flinn*, being duly sworn, states: I am a butcher. I have been resident here nearly six years. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. I cannot say whether there is any land open for selection in the vicinity of the proposed hundred. Of the 19,000 acres, I do not think more than a fourth fit for agricultural purposes; and that I believe is nearly all sold. With the exception of a portion of land on Run 80, I do not think the proclamation of the proposed hundred would induce any further purchase. I do not see that there will be any material benefit to the residents in and about Macraes by the proclamation of the proposed hundred; and I believe most of them are adverse to the hundreds system in this district.

Waihemo Hotel, Tuesday, 20th December, 1870.

Mr. *Bernard Luks*, being duly sworn, stated: I am proprietor of the Waihemo Hotel, and farm 100 acres of land—50 freehold, and 50 under agricultural lease—adjoining the proposed hundred. I am well acquainted with the land in proposed hundred, having been here eight years. Of the whole 19,000 acres, I do not think there is more than 500 acres, beyond that already sold, which may be classed as available agricultural land. If the proposed hundred is proclaimed, I think the 500 acres might sell, but no more, at the upset price of 20s. There is no land open for selection in the vicinity of the proposed hundred. I believe more land is required to be opened in this district, and would be taken up for settlement, if judiciously selected; but not as proposed in the present hundred. The whole of the available agricultural land, within a trifle, in the proposed hundred is already alienated consequently throwing open the hundred is not likely to induce settlement. The only persons who would benefit by it are those who have already purchased. Under the agreement made by the Provincial Government with Mr Bell, pastoral tenant of Runs 109 and 80, the depasturing privileges of a hundred are to a certain extent granted to purchasers within the block already opened.

Mr. *Lorenzo Moor*, being duly sworn, stated: I am manager for Mr. Dillon Bell, and have resided here for two years. I am pretty well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. Of the 19,000 acres contained in it, I should say not more than one-fourth may be considered available agricultural land. A block of about 11,000, included within the limits of the proposed hundred, has been already opened for selection, of which about 2,850 acres (exclusive of auriferous reserves embracing about 620 acres) have been sold. Of the remaining 8,000 acres of the block unsold, I consider none of it practically available for agricultural settlement. Of the 8,000 acres outside the block and included in the proposed hundred, I consider not more than 500 acres are available for agriculture, and the remainder fair sheep country. There is an agreement entered into between the Provincial Government and Mr. Bell, whereby the Government agrees not to declare any portion of the 11,000-acre block into a hundred, nor to alienate the grazing rights over such land from the pastoral tenant, except under the provisions of such agreement. I believe portions of the land along the river are auriferous, including some of the land already purchased.

Hunter's Accommodation House, Tuesday, 20th December.

Mr. *Archibald Kennedy*, being duly sworn, states: I am farming 170 acres of land in the Dunbach district, within the limits of the proposed hundred, and am acquainted with the country generally in the proposed hundred. Of the whole 19,000 acres, I consider one-third available agricultural land, of which about 3,000 acres have been already sold, and I am of opinion that the greater part of the remaining available country is outside the original block, and chiefly lies in run No. 80. I think this would sell if put up in sections of from 60 to 120 acres each. If the proposed hundred is declared, I know there are persons who are prepared to purchase in it. The proposed hundred would be better adapted for settlement if extended at the south-east end to Tipperary Gully, and an equivalent area might be advantageously taken from the south-western portion. I am of opinion that the proclamation of the proposed hundred would conduce to settlement in its present form, but more so if the hundred is extended as suggested.

Palmerston, Wednesday, 21st December, 1871.

Mr. *John McKenzie*, being duly sworn, states: I am farming about 320 acres in the block included in the proposed hundred, and am well acquainted with the remainder of the country within the proposed boundaries. Of the whole 19,000 acres in the proposed hundred, I consider fully one-third available agricultural land. I think the proclamation of the proposed hundred would tend to further settlement, with a modification of the boundaries. The modification I would suggest is, that the main road line should be the northern boundary including the few sections already sold north of the road, and an equivalent for the land excluded on the north be made up by extending the western and southern boundaries. There is a desire for more land to be opened, and if the proposed hundred is proclaimed with the boundaries altered as suggested, I know there are *bonâ fide* purchasers ready to invest in it. Several parties have been mining in the southern portion of the proposed hundred, and are still continuing their operations there.

Mr. *John Muir*, being duly sworn, states: I am farming about 2,000 acres of my own in Shag Valley, and am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. Of the 19,000 acres comprised in it, one-third, in my opinion, may be considered available agricultural land. The best portion of the land in proposed hundred is already sold, but I think more would be sold if the hundred was proclaimed, because it is intersected by two main roads to up-country market's: viz., Macrae's, Hogburn,

Dunstan, &c., and because it is required for the purpose of settlement with grazing rights. I believe it would more readily sell if the boundaries of the proposed hundred were better defined. I would suggest that the proposed northern boundary be extended to the natural boundary formed by the Rookery Creek or River, which would embrace probably 1,000 acres more; that the Tipperary Gully form the southern boundary, and that a sufficient portion be taken from the western boundary, so as to bring the total area to the maximum of 20,000 acres allowed by the Act.

REPORT ON HYDE HUNDRED.—PLAN No. 8.

The Commissioners find that land for *bonâ fide* settlement is much wanted in the locality of Hyde. This is exclusively a mining district, and the selection of a hundred, containing a comparatively small area of only 4,250 acres, seems to indicate a desire to meet the requirements of the mining population already settled here, consisting of about twenty-nine families and forty single men. But the Commissioners are satisfied that the proclamation of this hundred will neither benefit those people nor promote the general purposes of settlement, by attracting a population from elsewhere; for it is more than probable that as soon as it is thrown open for sale it will be immediately bought up by one or two individuals, so that the miners who are most anxious to make permanent homes for themselves and families, and should have every encouragement given them to acquire property in the vicinity of their workings, will not derive the slightest benefit thereby.

On the contrary, the evidence clearly shows that the alienation of land with the limits of the proposed hundred (a large portion of which is known to be auriferous, and for the extensive development of which over £15,000 has been already expended in costly water-races) must inflict very serious injury on the mining interests in this particular locality. The whole weight of the evidence, including the important statement of the Warden of this district, is opposed to land being opened as proposed under the Hundreds Act. The objections urged may be epitomized as follows:—

1. The danger of hastily alienating country known and proved, by extensive workings now in operation, to be auriferous.
2. The probable sacrifice of valuable interests in water-races upon which the success of these mining operations altogether depends.
3. The inutility of a hundred to the mining population, who will not in all probability be able to possess a single acre of the land when put up at auction.

The foregoing objections are more particularly expressed in the numerous signed memorial appended to the evidence accompanying this report; and in the face of such direct testimony the Commissioners do not think it desirable to proclaim the proposed district a hundred.

At the same time, the Commissioners cannot overlook the fact of land being much wanted in this locality for *bonâ fide* settlement, and they beg to direct special attention to the wishes of the people, clearly expressed in the evidence, to have the land thrown open in agricultural leases under the existing Gold Fields Act, rather than it should be alienated absolutely.

THOMAS CASS,
FREDK. WAYNE,
WM. CARR YOUNG, } Commissioners.

Memorial to the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Otago Hundreds Regulations Acts, 1869 and 1870.

I AM a miner, residing here for the last four years, and have large interest in mining. I consider the present block, as defined by the Warden, as quite unsuitable, as it takes in nearly all the auriferous lands required by the miners. I have taken a great interest in getting this block of land with a commonage. I am satisfied it would be very injudicious to have a hundred declared, for the following reasons:—

1. That the majority of the people here are miners with large families, and are unable to purchase a farm of 200 acres.
2. That in the event of a hundred being declared, capitalists may step in and purchase the whole block, which would completely lock up the miners. The only solution I can give to the matter, which will satisfy the people here, is for the Government to declare a certain distance from the gold-workings a block under the Gold Fields Act, to pay the squatters compensation, and cancel the whole from his lease (in order that he will have no further claim on it). This will enable *bonâ fide* settlers to take up the allotted quantity, and prevent monopoly, and allow the remainder for pasturage.

I am satisfied miners and sluicers here have not made more than £2 a week for the last two years on an average, some of them having to support families of five and six children,—which is nearly impossible for them to do, considering the high price of living: meat 6d per lb., butter 1s. 6d., bread 1s. 3d. four pound loaf. If this block of land was granted as suggested, those people could keep milch cows, grow their own beef, and economize in other ways, that they would be able to make comfortable homes for their families, and in a short time become *bonâ fide* settlers, in addition to carrying on their mining operations, which is now becoming more of mechanical skill than manual labour.

[Here follow fifty-two Signatures.]

EVIDENCE.

Hyde Hotel, Saturday, 17th December.

Mr. Joseph Kelly, being duly sworn, states: I am a miner in Hyde, and have resided there nearly seven years. I am thoroughly acquainted with the land in proposed hundred. There is no land open for selection in the vicinity. I think the settlers here, who are principally miners, are not anxious to have land thrown open for selection as a hundred. The larger portion of the proposed hundred is, to my knowledge, auriferous, and I believe it to be payable. At a meeting held in Hyde about three months

since, at which Mr. Robinson, the Warden of this District presided, it was then resolved that it was not desirable to have any land declared into a hundred, but that a block of 4,000 acres should be opened under the Gold Fields Act, and that the northern boundary should not be nearer to the present gold-workings than a mile and a half to two miles. The proposed hundred, as laid down in the plan exhibited, is the same as proposed at the meeting referred to and was then objected to.

Mr. *Michael Sylvester Duffy*, being duly sworn, states; I am a miner, and have resided here about four years. I am well acquainted with the country contained within the proposed hundred as laid down in the plan. The site is much about the same as that submitted by Mr. Robinson, the Warden, at a meeting held in Hyde about three months ago. The land then proposed to be thrown open was not to be as a hundred, but under the Gold Fields Act, and the site proposed was objected to because it included the gold-workings. The meeting did not wish any block opened nearer to the workings than within a radius of a mile. No hundred was mentioned at that time, and the people in this district, the bulk of whom are miners, object to land being opened up as a hundred now. If it was opened as a hundred there might be one or two purchasers who live in the district; the bulk of it would fall into the hands of speculators and capitalists for the purpose of monopolizing the auriferous ground. I should think over £15,000 has been expended on water-races in connection with the workings at Hyde. Such a large outlay would not have been expended, except in the belief that it was a permanent investment secured under the Gold Fields Act so long as the workings continue, and that this Act would not be overridden by any subsequent legislation, such as the "Otago Hundreds Acts, 1869-70."

Mr. *William Annett*, being duly sworn, states: I am a miner, and have resided here three years; but have been backwards and forwards in this district for the last seven years. I am well acquainted with the country within the limit of the proposed hundred, as described on the plan. I do not think the hundreds system will suit us; but it is desirable to open up more land with the privilege of commonage, and this can be best secured by cancelling the pastoral lease to the extent required, say 4,000 or 5,000 acres, and throwing open the block under the Gold Fields Act. I am cultivating two acres, and am running a few head of cattle for the benefit of my family, and pay the pastoral tenant for this privilege, of which I may be deprived at any moment. I believe that three-fourths of the population, comprising about twenty-nine families, and about forty single men, are similarly circumstanced. The greater portion of the country in the proposed hundred is auriferous; and on that account it is not desirable to throw open land, even under the Gold Fields Act, nearer to the present workings in Hyde, than a mile. If the proposed hundred was proclaimed the land would, in all probability, fall into the hands of speculators, the mining population located here would be ruined, and have to leave the country. I am satisfied that the whole of the mining population here concur with the views herein expressed.

Mr. *William Price*, being duly sworn, states: I am a farmer, and have resided in this neighbourhood seven years. I farm fifty acres, for which I applied for an agricultural lease about four years ago, and paid a deposit of £20 with my application. I hold no lease, but my deposit has not been returned. There is no land open for selection and purchase in the vicinity of the proposed hundred. It is desirable to open up more land, but not under the hundreds system, because, in my opinion, which is also the general feeling throughout this district, if a hundred is proclaimed, the land would be at once bought up by the capitalist or speculator, and the settlers would derive no benefit thereby. Indeed, as the land comprised within the limits of the proposed hundred is known to be auriferous, the bulk of the settlers, who are miners, would be ruined if it passed into other hands. It would best meet all our views, if the pastoral lease of a block of 4,000 or 5,000 acres in the vicinity of Hyde was cancelled, so as to secure the privileges of commonage under the Gold Fields Act.

Naseby, Saturday, 24th December, 1870.

Mr. *Henry Wirgman Robinson*, being duly sworn, states: I am Warden of Mount Ida District which includes Hyde, and am well acquainted with the country within the limits of the proposed hundred. The most important of the gold-workings in the neighbourhood of Hyde are within the boundaries of the proposed hundred, but outside the limits of the township, as shown in red on the plan. I do not think it desirable, under the circumstances, to proclaim a hundred as proposed, for the following reasons:—

1. Because so much of the land is known to be auriferous, and more, not yet proved, may hereafter be found to be so.
2. Because the alienation of the land would increase the difficulties of leading water-races through it.
3. Because all the purposes of agricultural settlement in the neighbourhood could be better met under the agricultural leases system, established under the Gold Fields Act, than by the declaration of a hundred.
4. Because, to my knowledge, the proclamation of a hundred would be opposed to the interests of the population, which is exclusively a mining one.
5. Because the wholesale alienation of the land would, to my knowledge, be contrary to the expressed wishes of the people in the locality.
6. Because the proposed area would not be suitable for an exclusively agricultural settlement, a great part of the country being rough and cut up by mining, and the communication not being convenient for general markets, but only for the limited market of Hyde.

I am satisfied, from my own knowledge, that what is really wanted by the inhabitants is a right to depasture cattle in the vicinity of the diggings, and to acquire small portions of land for cultivation and to form homesteads for themselves. This would be best provided by the cancellation of the license of the pastoral tenant over some block of reasonable extent, within which agricultural leases could be granted.

But even in the granting of agricultural leases, great caution would have to be exercised, to avoid in any way checking the development of the mines.

In July last I was required by the Provincial Government to recommend a block of land for agricultural settlement in the neighbourhood of Hyde. I reported on the 2nd August last to the Secretary for Land and Works, Dunedin, and accompanied my report with a plan showing two blocks, either of which would, under certain circumstances, be suitable for settlement under the agricultural lease system: the only system adapted, in my opinion, to the neighbourhood of Hyde.

REPORT ON CAMPBELL'S HUNDRED.—PLAN No. 7.

THE same objection urged by the Commissioners to the proclamation of Tiger Hill, applies with equal force to Campbell's hundred, mining operations being now carried on at the southern end of this hundred, and a large amount of capital having been expended in races in connection with the workings.

The evidence shows that the general character of the land is auriferous, and that, with a sufficient supply of water, the whole of the ranges through the proposed area may be advantageously worked.

In addition to this material objection to proclaiming the district a hundred, the evidence points to the fact of the wishes of the mining community being opposed to the alienation of the land. Their desire is to occupy land in agricultural leases under the Gold Fields Act, and they have twice petitioned the Provincial Government to throw open the land in this way for the purposes of *bona fide* settlement.

THOMAS CASS,
FREDERICK WAYNE, } Commissioners.
WM. CARR YOUNG.

EVIDENCE.

Black's, Wednesday, 28th December.

Mr. William Ulick Burke, being duly sworn, states: I am agent here for the Bank of New South Wales, and have resided here nearly four years. I am acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and am of opinion that, of the whole 13,000 acres, one-third may be considered available agricultural land. It is desirable that land should be opened up for settlement in this district, the block of 2,500 acres, which is open under the Gold Fields Act in the vicinity, being unsuitable for the wants of the people, and only a small proportion of it has been taken up. At the southern end of the proposed hundred, gold-mining operations are going on in deep lead sinkings, called Black's No. 3, embracing an area of about 1,000 acres, the alienation of which, under the hundreds system, would be a serious interference with mining interests. About thirty miners are now engaged in Black's No. 3 workings, and other parties are working in other portions of the proposed hundred, in the vicinity of Black's No. 1.

Mr. Joseph Glass, being duly sworn, states: I am a dairyman, and have resided in Black's No. 1 for four years. I have 60 acres under crop, for which I have applied for an agricultural lease, but have not as yet obtained it. Of the whole 13,000 acres of the proposed hundred, I have no doubt 6,000 acres are available agricultural land. I do not consider it desirable to open the land under the Hundreds Act. Personally, I should prefer it, but I do not think it would meet the wishes of the people here generally. They would prefer the agricultural lease system. If proclaimed a hundred, I do not think many persons would purchase in it, though a large number would take up leases under the Gold Fields Act. There have been two petitions numerously signed to have land opened up in the locality, under the Gold Fields Act, which have never been responded to by the Provincial Government, though they were sent up some months ago.

Mr. James Sloan, being duly sworn, states: I am a dairyman, and have resided over six years at Black's No. 3. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. I am farming 50 acres on my own responsibility, having applied for a lease under the Gold Fields Act, and paid the deposit on application; but the Warden refused the application and returned the deposit. Of the whole 13,000 acres in proposed hundred, I should say about 5,000 acres is available agricultural land. I think it would be preferable to throw open the land under the Gold Fields Act instead of the hundreds system, and believe the greater part of the agricultural land would be taken up under agricultural leases. I do not think much would be sold to *bona fide* settlers under the Hundreds Act.

Mr. Samuel Worth, being duly sworn, states: I have resided in this locality three years, and am farming 150 acres, under the agricultural lease system, on the Tiger Hill Block. I have a knowledge of the country in the proposed hundred, and of the whole 13,000 acres I consider 6,000 to 7,000 acres available agricultural land. Of Black's Block, all the available agricultural land is already taken up in agricultural leases. Of Tiger Hill Block, about 200 or 250 acres—land of average quality—is still open; the depasturing rights of the runholders on this block have not been cancelled. I think it is desirable to throw open the proposed hundred, a good portion of it being land of excellent quality, and to my knowledge there are persons prepared to purchase as soon as the hundred is proclaimed. There are mining operations going on in Black's No. 3 on this hundred; but, if the hundred is proclaimed, I think the miners' interests would be protected under the provisions of the Hundreds Act in connection with the Gold Fields Act.

Mr. David H. Goodwin, being duly sworn, states: I am a miner, and have been residing in this locality about seven years. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. I do not consider it desirable to open up land here under the hundreds system. Land is required for the purposes of settlement, with pasturage rights attached; but it should be open rather under the Gold Fields Act than the hundreds system. There has been a considerable expenditure of capital in water-races to bear upon land within the limits of this hundred. The foregoing statement applies equally to the proposed Tiger Hill hundred.

Clyde, Thursday, 29th December, 1870.

Mr. Vincent Pyke, being duly sworn, states: I am Warden of the Gold Fields, and previously had charge of the whole Department as Secretary for the Gold Fields. My official experience extends over a

period of eight and a half years. I know the country of the proposed hundred. Of the 13,000 acres fully one-third is available agricultural land, and the remainder pastoral country. Land is required for settlement in this locality, and is sought for by a large number of persons ready to take it up. The hundreds system will not answer in any part of the gold fields, that is, wherever gold-mining operations are actually going on, or in the vicinity of such workings. For this reason, the proposed hundred is undesirable. The requirements of the population will be best met by the judicious selection of land, under the Gold Fields Act, for settlement through the agricultural lease system. I consider the hundreds system objectionable, for the following reasons:—

1. There is the danger of large blocks being purchased by individual capitalists, which will defeat the intention of actual settlement by the mining community, who desire to settle on the land with their families.
2. The danger arises of land, which may be highly auriferous, being alienated from the public estate, and also of land required for conducting water for mining purposes—a notable instance of the latter obstruction having recently come before my notice. The case to which I refer, is that of a public sludge channel constructed at the joint expense of the miners and the Provincial Government, which will be rendered useless, unless arrangements can be made to carry a flushing channel through private property, no other line of survey being available.

Agricultural leases without pasturage rights would be insufficient for the purposes of settlement, as most of the leaseholding settlers require to keep a few cattle, principally for dairy purposes. The hundreds system would work well in the gold fields, if the land could be disposed of only in agricultural leases, and not absolutely alienated in the first instance.

The Tiger Hill hundred, as defined on the plan, contains a large proportion of available agricultural land, and it is desirable that it should be thrown open for settlement. There are mining operations going on in this proposed hundred, and the same objection as to it being proclaimed a hundred, applies equally to this as to Campbell's hundred.

Galloway, Wednesday, 4th January, 1871.

Mr. *William Anderson Low*, being duly sworn, states: I am one of the pastoral tenants of Run 244, a portion of which is included in the proposed hundred. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and consider about one-fifth of the whole 13,000 acres good agricultural land. I am lessee of the Ida Valley Water-race, which commands the whole of the proposed hundred. There is another race below the above, which commands the base of the hills and flats within the area of the hundred. The mining operations now going on within the proposed hundred are dependent on these races; and if twenty times more water could be obtained, the whole extent of the ranges through the hundred would be worked. I think it would be a public calamity if this country is alienated under the Hundreds Act, as it is highly auriferous. The flat land in the valley is good for agricultural and pastoral purposes, and might be advantageously opened up for *bona fide* settlement.

REPORT ON TIGER HILL HUNDRED.—PLAN No. 10.

THE general auriferous character of the land comprised within the boundaries of the proposed Tiger Hill hundred, together with the extent of the workings and races already brought to bear upon them, prevent the Commissioners from advising the proclamation of this hundred.

Gold is to be found in all the spurs and terraces within the proposed boundaries; and, according to the evidence, it only requires a larger supply of water to extend the present workings, and to establish mining operations on a very extensive scale in this district. This is in itself sufficient reason, in the opinion of the Commissioners, why the land should not be alienated; and their opinion is strengthened by the expressed feelings and wishes of the whole population in and about the district.

The Commissioners must, however, call attention to the desire of the inhabitants of the district to obtain land for settlement under the agricultural lease system, portions of the land within the proposed hundred being admirably adapted for the purpose.

THOMAS CASS,
FREDK. WAYNE, } Commissioners.
W. CARE YOUNG, }

EVIDENCE.

Black's, 28th December, 1870.

Mr. *William Ulick Burke*, being duly sworn, stated: I am acquainted with the country in this hundred as well as that in the proposed Campbell's hundred, on which I have given evidence. Of the whole 20,000 acres in this hundred fully two-thirds may be considered agricultural land. Mining operations are, to my knowledge, going on within the proposed boundaries, about forty miners being engaged in the workings. The alienation of land under the hundreds system would be as objectionable in this locality as in the proposed Campbell's hundred. The Ida Burn workings are south of the station, as marked in the plan. As far as my knowledge of the country goes, the plan of the proposed hundred is too imperfect to admit of my speaking definitely as to the amount of gold-workings within the boundaries, neither the ridges nor the roads across the hundred being shown on the plan. A road has been laid off through the proposed Campbell's hundred, which would be also available for this hundred.

Mr. *Samuel Worth*, being duly sworn, stated: I know the country in this proposed hundred, and should say there are 6,000 or 7,000 acres of available agricultural land in the whole area of 20,000 acres. The present requirements for land in this locality would, in my opinion, be met by opening either of the two hundreds, Tiger Hill or Campbell's, rather than both. Still, in my opinion, one better hundred could be formed out of the two proposed hundreds, by taking 10,000 acres of the upper portion of Campbell's hundred, and connecting with it another 10,000 acres immediately opposite, on the eastern

side of Pool Burn. There are mining operations in portions of the proposed hundred, but this will not interfere with the proclamation of the hundred, for similar reasons stated in my evidence on Campbell's hundred.

Mr. *Joseph Glass*, being duly sworn, stated: I am well acquainted with the country in this proposed hundred. The whole of it is agricultural land of fair average quality. I know that there are a good many persons ready to take up land in the proposed hundred, under the agricultural lease system, and I believe a good many would purchase it under the hundred system.

Mr. *James Sloan*, being duly sworn, states: I am as well acquainted with this proposed hundred as with Campbell's, on which I have given evidence. I should say three-fourths of the whole 20,000 acres is good agricultural country. The same remarks apply to this as to Campbell's hundred.

Ida Burn Station, Thursday, 5th January, 1871.

Mr. *Donald Stronach*, being duly sworn, states: I am manager of *Ida Valley Run*, No. 261, and have resided there over three years and a half. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, the whole of it being a portion of the above run. Of the whole 20,000 acres I consider not more than 3,000 acres good agricultural land. A larger proportion of available agricultural land may be obtained by extending the proposed northern boundary. More than 3,000 acres, probably more than one half of the whole hundred, is ploughable, but is of a gravelly character, perfectly unfitted, in my opinion, for agricultural purposes. Mining operations are being carried on in the proposed hundred all along the eastern boundary, and a large amount of capital has been expended in water-races in connection with the present workings. Under these circumstances I consider it undesirable to alienate the land as proposed under the Hundreds Act. I believe more land is required in the district for the purposes of *bona fide* settlement; but if opened under the Gold Fields Act in agricultural leases it would better meet the requirements of the mining population, who are most interested in acquiring property in the vicinity of their operations.

Mr. *Hugh Linnamon*, being duly sworn, states: I hold a publican's and carrier's license, and am proprietor of the *Ida Valley Hotel*. I have been acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred seven years. The principal part of the good land extends along the Pool Burn, which I should estimate about 4,000 acres. In addition to which there are some patches of good land within the proposed boundaries, say to the extent of 1,000 acres, and more good land outside the northern boundary. If the land is thrown open for sale, in my opinion, it would be taken up readily to the extent of the good land, but might not be occupied by *bona fide* settlers, at 20s. per acre. I do not think it desirable to open up the land under the Hundreds Act, because it would then fall into the hands of the capitalist, and do no good to small settlers, who are anxious to occupy and cultivate the land. It would be better to open it under the Gold Fields Act in agricultural leases, which will be much more in accordance with the wishes of the people. Mining operations are being now carried on within the boundaries of the proposed hundred, which I think renders it undesirable to alienate the land at once. If the hundred should be proclaimed it had better be styled *Ida Valley Hundred*, instead of *Tiger Hill Hundred*; *Tiger Hill* being distant from the nearest boundary of the hundred at least ten miles.

Mr. *Thomas Wilson*, being duly sworn, states: I hold a publican's license, and have resided in *Ida Valley* eight years. I also hold a miner's license, and have been engaged for the last two years in forming a water-race for mining operations within the limits of the proposed hundred. I believe land is wanted in this district for settlement, but in opening it up care should be taken not to interfere with the gold workings and water-races in connection therewith. As an old miner here and in *Victoria*, I can confidently state that the country in the proposed hundred is highly auriferous, and the present workings will be continued for years to come, the extent of which will be limited only in proportion to the supply of water. The alienation of the land under the Hundreds Act would be very undesirable, because it would pass from the hands of the mining population, and not promote *bona fide* settlement and occupation by those most interested in acquiring homes and property of their own in the vicinity of their operations.

Mr. *Duncan McLachlan*, being duly sworn, states: I hold a miner's license, and have been working in this district nearly four years. Three of us were engaged twelve months of that time in making a water-race, of about 6 miles long, at an estimated cost of £600, for mining operations, on land within the limits of the proposed hundred. The proclamation of this hundred would interfere with their interests, and therefore is undesirable. To the best of my knowledge a very large proportion of the proposed hundred is auriferous; the workings in which I and others are engaged will last for our lifetime; and I believe there is any quantity of equally good ground within the limits of the proposed hundred.

REPORT ON LOWER HAWEA HUNDRED.—PLAN No. 9.

THE requirements of the Act, as regards want of land for settlement in this district, and the proportion of agricultural area in the proposed hundred, are complied with; but the wishes of the settlers in the vicinity, as well as the evidence of the Warden of the District, are so strongly opposed to the land being thrown open under the Hundreds Act, that the Commissioners cannot recommend the proclamation of this hundred. If, however, land is to be opened up in agricultural leases under the Gold Fields Act, in accordance with the strongly expressed wishes of the people who are living in the vicinity of the proposed hundred and in the neighbourhood of *Cromwell*, the Commissioners would recommend a block including land outside the eastern and south-eastern boundary of the proposed hundred, as suggested in the evidence. This extension is desirable in order to include more available agricultural land (that which is along the river frontage being of a poor gravelly nature and wholly unfit for agriculture), and also to secure water supply, which can be more readily obtained at the base of the *Eastern Ranges*.

THOMAS CASS,
FREDK. WAYNE,
WM. CARE YOUNG, } Commissioners.

EVIDENCE.

Clyde, 29th December, 1870.

Mr. *Vincent Pyke*, being duly sworn, states: I am acquainted with this country in this proposed hundred, and am of opinion that the whole of it is available agricultural land. There is no land open for selection in the vicinity, nor in any part of the valley of the upper Clutha. Nor is there any other extensive block of land suitable for agriculture in the valley, although there are small isolated patches in the terraces and bends of the river. It is certainly not desirable to proclaim the block into a hundred. The people desirous of settling there are very strongly opposed to it being so proclaimed, as they fear it may be bought up by the runholder, in which case the object of *bona fide* settlement would be altogether defeated. Moreover the fact of it being the only agricultural land, as already stated, renders it very desirable that small farmers should have a chance of locating themselves thereon under the agricultural lease system. There are mining operations and water-races on the borders of the proposed hundred, which is another reason why the land should not be absolutely alienated under the hundreds system.

Newcastle, Monday, 2nd January, 1871.

Mr. *Henry Norman*, being duly sworn, states: I hold a publican's license in Newcastle, and have been living in this district eleven years. I am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. Of the whole 10,000 acres, I consider two-thirds good agricultural land. I think it desirable to open up the country, but believe that if opened in agricultural leases under the Gold Fields Act it would tend more to *bona fide* settlement than under the hundreds system. I think the country would sell readily if proclaimed a hundred, but not to *bona fide* settlers. It would be occupied by settlers in the district and in the neighbourhood of Cromwell if opened in agricultural leases. Timber for building, fuel, and fencing, is plentiful on the lakes, and is easily obtained. If the hundred were extended to the eastward and south-eastward as far as the foot of the ranges, it would be advantageous, as there is good land and more water obtainable. Crops here thrive well and I have no reason to believe cereals will not ripen.

Mr. *James Johnson* being duly sworn, states: I have resided in the district over ten years, and am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. The greater portion of it is good agricultural land. I think it desirable to open up the country, but if proclaimed in a hundred it will, in my opinion, fall into the hands of the capitalist, and not give a *bona fide* settler a chance of purchasing. I believe it would meet the wishes of the people in this locality best if the country was opened up in agricultural leases.

Cromwell, Tuesday, 2nd January, 1871.

Mr. *William Smitham*, being duly sworn, states: I hold a publican's license, and am Mayor of Cromwell. I have been in this district about nine years, and am well acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred. I do not think it desirable to proclaim it, because, in my opinion, it will not fulfil the requirements of *bona fide* settlement, as the land would fall into the hands of speculators, if opened under the hundreds system. The boundaries are also, in my opinion, objectionable, and would be improved by extending the east and south-eastern boundaries from a mile to two miles towards the ridges. A block of land is certainly required for settlement, but under the provisions of the Gold Fields Act, and not under the hundreds system. There is no land open for selection anywhere in this district. Of the whole 10,000 acres, one-half is good agricultural land. If the proposed hundred is proclaimed, I believe the land would sell, but it would not fall into the hands of the *bona fide* farmer; but if thrown open in agricultural leases, it would be taken up and occupied at once.

Mr. *Robert E. Dagg*, being duly sworn, states: I hold a publican's license, and have been resident in this district over six years. I am acquainted with the country in the proposed hundred, and consider one-third of the whole 10,000 acres really good agricultural land. The eastern and south-eastern boundary, as laid down in the plan, might be advantageously extended towards the ranges, so as to include more agricultural land, and make the whole better by including water supply, which is cut off by the present proposed boundary line. Land is much wanted in the district, but I do not think it desirable to open it up under the Hundreds Act. It would meet the wishes of the people better if opened in agricultural leases under the provisions of the Gold Fields Act. It might sell under the Hundreds Act, but would in that case be bought up by the capitalist, whereas under the leasing system, it would promote *bona fide* settlement, and the land would be occupied at once and cultivated.

No. 3.

Mr. D. REID to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

Province of Otago, N.Z., Superintendent's Office,
Dunedin, 6th July, 1871.

SIR,— I have the honor to acquaint you that it is desirable to proclaim 5,800 acres of land, being part of Run 67, the license over which has recently expired, into a hundred, to be called the Waiarika Hundred.

I enclose tracings and description. As it is urgently required that this land should be open to settlement with as little delay as possible, I have respectfully to request that the necessary Proclamation may be issued at once.

I have, &c.,

D. REID,

Provincial Secretary,

(In the absence of His Honor the Superintendent).

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary,
Wellington.

REPORT BY COMMISSIONERS

Enclosure in No. 2.

Mr. J. T. THOMSON to the SECRETARY, Lands and Works.

Description of proposed Waiarika Hundred.

ALL that area in the Province of Otago, containing by estimation 5,800 acres more or less, situate in the South-eastern Pastoral District, being part of original Run numbered 67 on the map of the said District; bounded towards the North by Run 131, 21,000 links; towards the East by Run 132, 25,000 links; towards the South by Runs numbered respectively 132 and 66, 27,000 links; and towards the West by the Tukurau Hundred, 36,000 links, be all the aforesaid linkages more or less.

The Secretary, Lands and Works.

J. T. THOMSON,
Chief Surveyor.

No. 4.

MEMORANDUM by Mr. J. T. THOMSON for Mr. McKERROW.

WOULD you be so good as give what information you have in the Waiarika hundred (proposed), in answer to the following questions:—

1. Are you acquainted with the country affected?
2. What is the character of the land?
3. What is the general elevation above the sea?
4. How much of the whole is fit for agriculture?
5. Is it likely to be settled upon by *bona fide* farmers?
6. How is the proposed hundred situated with reference to roads, coal, and timber?
7. What extent of land is open for selection near thereto?
8. Any other remarks you may have.

Department of Lands and Survey,
Otago, Dunedin, 20th July, 1871.J. T. THOMSON,
Commissioner under the Otago Hundreds
Regulation Acts, 1869 and 1870.

No. 5.

Mr. J. T. THOMSON to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Crown Lands Office, Dunedin, 21st July, 1871.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a telegram from Mr. Cooper, stating that I am appointed a Commissioner under the Otago Hundreds Regulation Acts, 1870–71, to report on the proposed Waiarika hundred; and as the telegram states that the Government are anxious to have my report at once, I have acted immediately.

I could have obtained abundance of evidence, *pro* and *con.*, as to the propriety of proclaiming the hundred, but I have deemed it the best and shortest course to take only the evidence of Mr. J. McKerrow, the principal assistant in the Survey Department; and who, being a public officer, unprejudiced and well acquainted with the country, was best able to advise. I am also personally well acquainted with the district, and with the evidence of Mr. McKerrow (enclosed) I generally agree.

It appears that the proposed hundred is in conformity with clause 3 of "The Otago Hundreds Regulation Act 1869 Amendment Act 1870," in having more than one-third of its area available for agricultural purposes; but my opinion is that, as the adjacent hundreds are more fertile, that the land will be but slowly disposed of. The area, however, is now open for sale, as the pastoral license under which it was held had lapsed on the 18th of February last. There can therefore be no objection to the declaration of a hundred on the part of a tenant of the Crown; and the principal reason for doing so appears to me to be in the necessity for putting the grazing rights under the rules and regulations of the Waste Land Board and their Ranger, who looks after the cattle and assessments thereon.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

J. T. THOMSON,
Commissioner.

Enclosure in No. 5.

MEMORANDUM by Mr. J. McKERROW for the CHIEF SURVEYOR.

THE following are the replies to your questions (Memorandum attached) regarding the proposed Waiarika hundred:—

1. Yes.
2. The land consists of a succession of ridges and intervening flat valleys. It is naturally fertile, being covered with a close sole of grass. In the flats and slopes of the valleys there is a good depth of soil, on which oats would certainly grow well.
3. The altitude of the valleys will be from 500 to 800 feet above sea level; and from these altitudes the ridges rise to a summit level of 1,000, 1,300, and at one point, of 1,540 feet.
4. Of the whole 5,800 acres, there are about 2,500 acres easily ploughable.
5. I think so.
6. The main road from Dunedin to Invercargill passes through the middle of the proposed hundred. The distance to Mataura bridge on this road is seven to eight miles. The nearest available bush of any consequence is in Blocks 3 and 4, Tukurau, where there are about 750 acres of valuable bush reserves. The distance by made road will be ten to twelve miles, by sledge track seven to eight miles. In the Waikaka district, at a distance of three or four miles, good peats can be dug from the mosses.

7. In the Tukurau Hundred, which adjoins the proposed hundred, there are 37,760 acres. This was opened in 1865. Since then, 17,500 acres have been sold and settled on. There are also 2,800 acres of Education, Bush, Maori, and Township Reserves, the greater part of which is held under lease or license. The remaining 17,460 acres is still open for application, and consists of the higher parts of the ridges, and generally the back-lying parts of the hundred. It offers no great inducements to intending settlers from other parts of the country. Judging from the history of the older hundreds, it will all be taken up gradually by the settlers who are now in possession of the road and river frontages.

8. Although I have stated under No. 5 that the proposed hundred would likely be occupied by *bona fide* farmers, I do not imply that the settlers would at once betake themselves to growing crops. The first selectors would most likely take up just sufficient land to secure grazing rights. It was so in the Tukurau Hundred; and for the first two or three years it appeared as though one large grazier was superseded by a few smaller graziers. But since the settlers became more numerous, they have been fencing in and cultivating their freeholds. There are now numerous substantial homesteads over the district, and it is rapidly progressing in real and permanent improvements. A flour-mill has been recently erected on the banks of the Mimiha, a distance of about seventeen miles by the road from the proposed hundred.

So far as I have had the opportunity of observing, *bona fide* settlement on the land is a slow and gradual process; and to ensure its extension there must always be large areas open for selection.

JAMES MCKERROW,

Survey Office, Dunedin, 21st July, 1870.

Geological and Inspecting Surveyor.

