

*Mr. Reid.*

7th August, 1872.

37. Was it not sold under the provisions of the Gold Fields Act?—No.
38. Had you any correspondence with the purchaser prior to the sale?—Yes.
39. Did you make a suggestion to him about the purchase of the land?—I certainly did not suggest to him to purchase the land.
40. Have you got the correspondence with you?—No, I have not.
41. When did he surrender the lease?—Before the application was made for the purchase.
42. How long after the surrender of the lease was the purchase made?—The purchase has not been completed yet.
43. *Mr. J. C. Brown.*] But the deposit has been paid?—Yes.
44. *The Chairman.*] Have the Waste Lands Board sufficient power to cancel the sale?—Yes, if valid and substantial reasons for such a course are shown; it would require very strong reasons before they would be likely to adopt such a course.
45. If substantial reasons were shown?—I can't say what the Board may do.
46. Who are the members of the Waste Lands Board of Otago?—Messrs. Thomson, Hughes, Duncan, Cullen, Allen, and myself; I think that is all.
47. *Mr. J. C. Brown.*] That is, the members of the Board at the present time?—Yes; Mr. Allen was not a member of the Board when the application was received.
48. *The Chairman.*] Was it quite possible for any other person to have purchased this land?—Quite possible, if they had been able to pay the price.
49. Before the land was sold, was there any public advertisement or public intimation made by the Waste Lands Board that the land was open for application?—There was no advertisement, but there was public intimation at the Waste Lands Board that applications would be received, and I believe the proceedings of the Board were published. Its meetings are open to the public.
50. Did you take any evidence as to the nature of the country before agreeing to sell it?—We took no evidence; we took the report of the Surveyor, copies of which I now produce, together with a plan of the ground.
- (The report, together with the plan, was deposited with the Committee.—Appendix D.)
51. Cargill and Anderson's lease of 64,000 acres accrues from the Crown?—You will find that information by referring to the Blue Books.
52. In reply to other questions put by the Chairman, the witness said,—I think that Cargill and Anderson have got two runs, but I am not sure. The only evidence we had respecting the ground was the report furnished by the Surveyor. He received instructions to report. These instructions are before the Committee. I know the Traquair Hundred. I do not know that they are much rougher than this land is; I do not think they are. On the contrary, I know that they are much better adapted for occupation than this land is.
53. What is your reason for saying that they are much better adapted for occupation than this land?—Because the Traquair Hundreds are well supplied with bush, and the valleys there are not a succession of rock-bound gorges. Moreover, they are very convenient to Dunedin and the fertile district of Taieri.
54. Are you aware that there is a great conflict of opinion in Otago as to what is agricultural and what is pastoral land; and that the subject has been warmly discussed in the Provincial Council of Otago for the last four or five years?—I can't say that I am aware of any such conflict.
55. Has the question as to what constitutes purely agricultural and purely pastoral land not been warmly discussed?—It has.
56. Is not this the second case of large blocks of land having been sold without competition?—I don't know how many cases of the kind have taken place.
57. How many, to your knowledge?—I can instance the sales of the two hundreds proclaimed in 1870, comprising some of the best unsold agricultural lands in the Province. These lands, although all agricultural, and surveyed into small allotments of from 50 to 200 acres each, at a considerable expense to the Province, were purchased in large blocks, and went into the hands of the pastoral tenant. These were cases long ago before Southland became a separate Province. Large blocks were sold in that part of the Province.

Examination being resumed, the witness said that there was no clause in the Act to prevent the Waste Lands Board selling any area of land, provided the Board could agree with the pastoral tenant.

58. *The Chairman.*] Do you think that the pastoral tenants would have agreed to the suspension of their lease, unless they had been sure they would become the purchasers?—I do not think they would have permitted the suspension of the lease unless they were likely to become the purchasers. If they did, they would have been very foolish.

59. Are you acquainted with the gold fields of the Province?—I cannot say I am acquainted with the gold fields. I have passed through them.

60. Have you not observed that auriferous country is, for the most part, rough pastoral country?—My experience went to show that the valleys were usually, as instance Gabriel's Gully, Tuapeka, and Waitahuna Flats, and other alluvial workings.

61. Take the Wakatipu district for example: Have you seen the mining there; can you say whether it is the rougher description of pastoral lands that is used for mining there?—So far as I have seen, and as far as my information goes, it is in the valleys and plains that the mining is chiefly carried on.

62. To what valleys do you refer?—I refer to Blacks, Tuapeka Mouth, and gullies close by the Taieri, where I reside.

63. Do you not consider that the sale of land in large blocks on the gold fields is prejudicial to agricultural settlement?—It depends altogether upon what kind of land it is.

64. Do you not think the sale of a 20,000-acre block in a mining district is injurious to the interests of the place?—I cannot express an opinion on that point; it depends altogether upon the surrounding circumstances of the case.