Mr. J. C. Brown. 9th August, 1872.

land has been taken up in the district for agricultural settlement. Although all the land may not be fit for ploughing, it is nevertheless good grass land for cattle grazing, such as I consider indispensable for the purposes of successful settlement. To construct water races from the head of the Teviot and tributary streams, it would be necessary to carry them through this particular block of land. There are, to my knowledge, valuable water rights running through the block. I am also aware that, at the present time and for years past, numbers of miners have been profitably engaged in working the banks of the river fronting this block. These river workings are of such a nature that the miners can only work during the winter season, say four or five months, when the river is low. I am also aware that a number of miners in that locality have for years been desirous of taking up land, with the view of not only making a home, but also of providing employment for themselves, and reducing the cost of living during the summer months. Wherever land could be got, this has invariably been done, and has resulted in a good deal of settlement. I have known miners, many with families, being compelled to leave the district from being prevented from taking up land. They were desirous of taking it up under the agricultural leasing system; some of them could not compete with the runholder for it at auction, they went away disgusted. Had the lands been thrown open, the miners would have been induced to settle upon them. The residents in the district have been petitioning the Provincial Council time after time for the last seven years, asking that land might be thrown open for settlement. The only blocks that have been opened are—1st, The Shingle Block, containing about 2,000 acres, and situated on Run No. 199. For that block only two or three applications have been made, on account of its being wholly a bed of gravel, with scarcely any soil upon it. The next block thrown open was upon Run 369, also in the occupation of Cargill and Anderson. It was not, properly speaking, thrown open for settlement. A number of people settled down in the early days on this particular land, and the Government was in a measure forced to give them a title. Arrangements were accordingly made between the Government and the runholder, so that the land could scarcely be said to have been thrown open. I allude to Coal Creek. About 1,000 acres are occupied and cultivated by the miners, who have erected comfortable homesteads on this block. The necessities of the district compelled the people to settle on this land. At Speargrass Flat a settlement has also grown up. This is also on Cargill and Anderson's run. At Speargrass Flat there is something like 1,000 acres of land under occupation and cultivation. A much larger quantity would be taken up if the runholder did not interpose difficulties. I have known instances where parties have resided on land for a number of years, and have requested the Provincial Government to give them a title. The Government expressed their willingness to grant them a lease, subject to the approval of the runholders, Messrs. Cargill and Anderson, who, when applied to by the Government, refused their consent, preferring to purchase it themselves, these parties having resided there several years prior to the date at which their application was made. The last block thrown open (2,000 acres) was done at the urgent request of the inhabitants, supported by their representatives in the Provincial Council. It was surveyed into 50-acre sections, and proclaimed open under the 16th clause of the Gold Fields Act. Cargill and Anderson immediately wrote to the Government, stating their intention of resisting the proposal to throw it open under the 16th clause of the Gold Fields Act, and threatening, unless the Government withdrew the Proclamation, to apply for an injunction restraining them. This occurred eighteen months or two years ago, and since then nothing further has been done towards throwing the land open for settlement. Cargill and Anderson lease two runs in this locality, comprising 99,000 acres, and having a frontage to the river of about thirty-five miles. The main line of road from Tuapeka to Clyde and the Lakes passes through these lands. The people have taken up all the land that has been opened in the district suited for agricultural settlement. The 2,000 acres referred to above would also be taken up, but the Proclamation still remains in abeyance. Out of 6,500 acres opened for settlement, 4,500 acres have been taken up, which, I may state, comprises all the good land within the blocks open for settlement excepting the 2,000 acres previously referred to. On the adjoining run, that of W. J. Clarke, a block of 2,500 acres was thrown open, and I think not more than 200 acres remain unselected. This block is nearly all under cultivation. On both Cargill and Anderson's runs, and Moa Flat, the settlers are not allowed to run cattle except by permission of the runholder. For this permission Clarke charges 20s. per head per annum, and Cargill and Anderson 10s. In my opinion, the absence of depasturing rights prevents land from being taken up, and acts as a bar to settlement. Cargill and Anderson have always refused their consent to have their leases cancelled over any portion of their run except under the 33rd section of the Gold Fields Act, which makes no provision for depasturing rights.

272. *The Chairman.*] Do you know the block of land on McKellar's run, lately declared into a hundred?—Yes.

273. It has been urged that as there was no competition for this land, that that is evidence that no demand for land exists. Can you explain about this sale, how it was that there was no competition for the land?—I can. In cases of this kind when land was thrown open for sale, if only one application were put in, the Government always caused a second application to be put in for the whole block, in order that the land might be put up to auction, and prevent large tracts of country passing into the hands of one purchaser. In the case of McKellar this was not done; so McKellar, being the only applicant was declared the purchaser without competition.

274. If that land had been sold by auction, do you think it would have brought a higher price?—I have no doubt but that a large portion of it would have brought 30s. per acre. At all events I am safe in saying from 25s. to 30s.

275. If that land had been put up to auction, would it have passed into the hands of a number of small purchasers?—Yes. I know a number of small purchasers who would have bought up portions of it.

276. Then, in your opinion, the fact of the land having been all purchased by McKellar is no evidence that a demand for land does not exist?—None whatever. I resided for some time and have property in that district, and am acquainted with the wants and desires of the settlers.

277. Will the sale of these large blocks be injurious to the gold fields or not?—In the gold fields,