

Australian Colonies are doubtless better fields for the wealthy pastoral lords, but they will never compete with New Zealand in raising a substantial yeomanry.

It may not be inappropriate, in closing this report, to descant on the quality of the soil in the district I have inspected.

Taking the land comprised within the watershed of the Mataura, the Waikaka, Waipahi, Chatton, Glenkenich, Greenvale, and Crookston Districts, and the original Province of Southland, an area of some 3,300,000 acres, I do not think a similar block for all-round agriculture can be found—not merely in New Zealand, but in the Australasian Colonies. Every cereal can be grown in perfection. Wheat, from 40 to 60 bushels to the acre; oats, 50 to 80; barley, 50 to 60; and all root crops and grass in profusion. In fact, owing to its capacity for producing turnips for winter feed for stock, it may safely be assumed that the fertility of the land will never be exhausted. Turnips of 16 or 18 pounds weight are not uncommon on any good farm in Southland, while sound roots of 29 pounds weight have been produced by ordinary field cultivation.

There doubtless are patches of country in the Australasian Colonies and in New Zealand possessing a superior capacity for the production of some special cereal, such as wheat, which is a most exhausting crop, the luxuriant growth of which requires an extreme of heat that prevents the recuperation of the soil by growing turnips, or laying down in good pasture to be fed off by sheep. But the permanent settlement by yeoman farmers over an area of large extent cannot be effected when they have to depend for their living on only one or two agricultural staples. They may stay for three or four years and pump out the soil—particularly if it is leasehold—and then move on. It is only an all-round agricultural district which can secure and hold the small agriculturist.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands,  
Wellington.

I have, &c.,

WALTER H. PEARSON,  
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

#### APPENDIX A.

NECESSARY EXPENDITURE on a Deferred-payment Section of 200 Acres for the Three Years of Occupation before a Grant can be issued.

Fencing, say 200 chains ...	...	...	...	...	£150
Cultivation, 20 acres ...	...	...	...	...	20
Clearing, if flax or tussock ...	...	...	...	...	20
House, say ...	...	...	...	...	60
Two horses, dray, plough, harrows, harness, tools, &c. ...	...	...	...	...	120
Six half-yearly payments of 1s. 6d. per acre ...	...	...	...	...	90
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					£460

The fencing and cultivation the selector may do himself; but if he is a man with a family, the money put down as their cost will be expended in living while he does the work. For the first two years his time will be fully occupied in fencing and cultivating, and no return can be expected from the land. The third year he may, by cultivating more of his land, perhaps make his living.

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