

petition asking for its sale. By a return laid before Parliament this session, the number of acres held by the Crown in the County of Tauranga amounts to 98,136 acres, so consequently there is an ample supply to satisfy the demand. We ask for 20,000 acres out of that, which leaves plenty of land for other people. I ask that Government should judge of every case of special settlement on its own merits. I believe, no doubt from past failures in other parts of the colony, there is a feeling on the part of some people against them; but I think the experience of the past in the Tauranga District will give promise of the future. I have referred in my petition to the expense that has been incurred in sending to Great Britain special immigration agents, without any benefit having resulted to the colony in some cases. I have never received any salary or payment of expenses from Government, never asked anything in that way, and I think I have done as much for the colony as, and a great deal more than, some of the gentlemen who have been receiving very high salaries. We have through the New Zealand Land Corporation one of the best offices in London, within two minutes' walk of the Bank of England—an office where every information is given to people, and large sums spent in advertisements. We attract attention to New Zealand, and endeavour to get people with money to join the settlements. In the "Lady Jocelyn" alone there were upwards of 100 souls (90 statute adults) in the saloon.

4. How much capital may she have brought?—I do not know, but the passage-money alone which passed through my hands was upwards of £8,000. The passage-money paid to her owners in 1878 was about the same; for the two trips the "Lady Jocelyn" made with my parties the owners received £16,000 for passages alone. I am prepared to pay for the land, as I have stated in the tenth paragraph of my petition, and I am perfectly satisfied to carry out any arrangement that may be made by the Minister of Lands on the subject. I am perfectly satisfied that any condition imposed by Government will be proposed in a right spirit. The twelfth clause of the petition, in which I refer to the advantages that can be offered to attract a suitable class of special settlers, is one in which the statement of the advantages there mentioned is supported by the requisition from Tauranga.

5. Your observation relative to Mr Rolleston making arrangements—do you make the observation that you would be satisfied with his arrangements from your experience of the conditions of past special settlement?—There is an agreement regularly drawn up in regard to each special settlement. The last agreement was very stringent on behalf of the Government. Of course, I cannot blame the Minister for looking after the interests of the colony. His action was fair, and I should be perfectly willing to bind myself as stringently again. I have always done my best to carry out whatever agreement I have undertaken to perform. I certainly am quite willing that some part of the land in the locality should be reserved for deferred-payment settlers.

6. *The Chairman.*] Probably you will put in the requisition of settlers in support of your petition?—I will. By the Standing Orders of the House I was prevented from embodying it in my petition. The requisition is signed by Mr. G. B. Morris and upwards of 370 others, and is as follows:—"To George Vesey Stewart, Esq., J.P., Mount Stewart, Katikati.—Sir,—We, the undersigned residents and settlers, Stewart's Special Settlement, and settlers on the Government deferred-payment block, in the Bay of Plenty, having seen and experienced the benefit which this district has derived from the settlements which have already sprung up here under your auspices, strongly urge on you that you should, with as little delay as possible, endeavour to secure another block of land for the formation of a No. 4 special settlement. We understand there are lands in this district, in the hands of the Government, available. We view with pleasure the great success of the scheme which has lately been adopted in the carrying-out of the settlement at Te Puke, namely, the combining of your special settlers with settlers on the deferred-payment principle, thereby securing mutual advantages to both classes of settlers. Some of the advantages are these: The deferred-payment settlers, with their colonial experience, take contracts and find work with the special settlers, whereby the new settlers reap the benefit of the experience of the old hands, and the deferred-payment settlers are the better able to carry out the improvements which their tenure under the Government renders compulsory. We need hardly point out that every addition to our population here assists in the settlement of the Native difficulty; and it is a gratifying feature to observe that the new settlers and the Natives are on the most amicable terms: the Natives are anxious for employment, and numbers of them are already engaged in helping to clear the land and other work in the Te Puke Settlement. We venture to hope that, in the event of your obtaining another block for settlement, provision will be made for combining with your settlers a fair number of settlers on the deferred-payment principle. We believe in no other way can the waste lands be so quickly reclaimed and made available for occupation and cultivation." If this application be granted, I repeat that I will endeavour to do my best to carry out any conditions that Mr. Rolleston may think desirable to impose.

7. *Mr. Thomson.*] What is the area of the last block you got?—15,000 acres. I forgot to mention, regarding the block last acquired, No. 3, that there are between 4,000 and 5,000 acres of swamp upon it, and about 4,000 acres of bush. The swamp and bush would absorb 9,000 acres out of 15,000, so until that swamp is drained—which work we are about to arrange for—we cannot get more people on the block. I am getting uneasy at the idea that the company at Home will send me out too many people, and that we shall not have land to put them on. By the last return from London I learn that 5,000 acres have been actually sold, but deposits have been received for a considerable quantity more. Thirty shillings per acre is the amount which we require purchasers to pay down, but they have paid less than that in order to secure their drawings. The land is all drawn by lot.

8. How many people are settled on your third special settlement?—The last census showed 92 or 100. The last census showed 508 at Katikati.

9. Have you complied with the conditions, at all events with the spirit of them?—Yes. The Ranger has reported upon Nos. 1 and 2, and the Government has written to me that they are satisfied with the way in which the conditions have been complied with. Every condition having been performed, the duty of Government has terminated. With No. 3 we have still five years to comply with the arrangements.

10. With respect to the large area of swamp which you say is in the block, do you intend to take steps to drain it at your own expense?—Yes. There has been some official correspondence about it. We have difficulties in the way of getting the drainage-works commenced—the drain has to pass through some other land—but I think they are in the way of being settled.

11. Are the people who have been brought out to the several settlements pretty well contented?—If they were not contented I do not think they would sign that requisition. They have always supported me, and there is a very good feeling between us.