

327. *Mr. Hurst.*] They do not want it as a leasehold?—No.

328. But you think it would satisfy them, if you gave them the option, either of having the time for payment extended, or of taking up the land on lease?—I do not see that they could object if you gave them the option. What I wish to point out is, that the people of Tuapeka are worse off than any other deferred-payment settlers in Otago, inasmuch as they had to take the worst land in the district, being the remnants of prior selections.

329. *The Chairman.*] Did not Messrs. Reeves and Bathgate report favorably on this land?—No; the land they reported on is on the other side of the Tuapeka river, run 106, land of much better quality.

330. *Mr. Pearson.*] Do you not think that Mr. Connell's Bill would meet the case?—No; I think that what would really satisfy them would be the extension of time during which payments should be made. A separate petition was to have been sent from Tuapeka, but it has not yet come to hand.

331. *Mr. Hurst.*] Are these men suffering at the present time?—Yes; they cannot afford to pay their rent. There are nine or ten people in the same condition.

332. But outside of these cases the deferred-payment system has been a success in the same district?—Yes.

333. We have been told that only small parts of the Dalhousie Hundred were worth anything; is that a fact?—Yes; the people who have the good land are doing well, while those who have the inferior portions cannot pay their instalments at the rate of £3 per acre. If the payments were extended to twenty years they would be paying 3s. per acre a year, instead of 6s. per acre, which would give them a moderate relief.

334. *Mr. Green.*] Did not a deputation of the people themselves express a different opinion from that of Mr. Arthur about this land?—I have no recollection of their having done so.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

MR. HUGH FRASER to MR. JOHN MCKENZIE, M.H.R.

DEAR SIR,—

Flat Hill, Waihemo, 19th July, 1882.

I trust that Parliament will do something this session towards relieving deferred-payment settlers that have taken their land up at £3 per acre. A brother of mine took up a section at the Waihemo, four years ago. His crop was a failure the last two years. Last year all that he got off the place was £40. This year he will not make one sixpence, unless he will make a few shillings of rabbits' skins. His crop the last season was not worth thrashing, owing to the wind and rabbits. When he started on the land, he had about £800 in cash, besides some horses. He has laid all that money out on the place, besides his own hard labour. In this case, it is impossible for him to pay the rent; and it is very hard to turn a man out after spending so much money and labor on the place. Trusting that you will bring these facts before the House.

I remain, &c.,
HUGH FRASER.

No. 2.

MR. W. H. BAYLEY to MR. JOHN MCKENZIE, M.H.R.

SIR,—

Waihemo, Green Valley, Palmerston.

I write about a subject of great importance to deferred-payment settlers. I hope you will use your influence to obtain some other relief for us than the scheme proposed by the Minister of Lands in his Land Act 1877 Amendment. It will be hard, indeed, if we are to lose our sections, after the way others who have got off who promised to pay £15, and £17 per acre, and got it eventually, as you are aware, a year ago, for 35s. to 37s. cash. Could we not get ours at somewhat similar terms. Are we to be so hardly dealt with as to convert our chance of a freehold into a leasehold, because we tried for a year longer to keep to our bargain. As it has been said by a writer in the *Witness*, "If it is clear that purchasers bought from Government on fair and reasonable terms, it would not be well, when the land has been sold, to annul or alter the stipulations of sale; and purchasers should be bound to strictly observe the conditions of sale. It is idle work making laws only for them to be broken."

I think, however, where the purchasers are able to offer any reason for relief at all plausible, it would be well to favorably consider the same, and grant relief, if there be any reasonable excuse for doing so. The settlement of the country is of such great importance, that *bonâ fide* settlers should be treated as liberally and indulgently as circumstances will admit of: and I think the Board should not be backward to seize upon any at all plausible pretext to grant or advise Government to grant relief. It is most desirable that no industrious *bonâ fide* settler should be ousted from his holdings, and turned adrift, if the slightest excuse can reasonably be discovered for avoiding such a painful,—and in the interests of settlement,—injurious course."