

very little energy displayed during two particular years in throwing the land open, that is responsible for the present very difficult position.

256. *Mr. Larnach.*] Was it in 1879 that the Board first participated in the land sales?—Possibly. I do not remember myself.

257. There were no deferred-payment lands sold during that year?—No; I do not think there were; but, if there were, the amount would be small, and not a factor in the question at all, as it was deferred payment pure and simple.

258. The question of deferred payment did not crop up till after two or three years?—In 1881 was the first year it came into prominence.

[*Mr. Samuel* was here permitted to make a statement to explain what fell from *Mr. Marchant*: I wish to show how the district suffered by the change in the land tenure. Since 1880 69,000 acres have been sold for cash, which realised £243,000; 84,000 acres have been sold on deferred payment, upon which £21,000 has been paid. From 1884 to 1887 15,000 acres have been disposed of on perpetual lease, for which £2,300 has been paid. It will be seen that this makes £243,000 from 69,000 acres sold for cash; while only £21,000 has come from 84,000 acres—a much larger amount—of deferred-payment. As against this has to be taken the fact that, no doubt, the land disposed of for cash was much superior to that disposed of on deferred payment. But this tends to show how settlers have been misled in thinking that the land revenue would continue as it was at the time they settled in the district. I have some more information for the Committee, which the Committee requested me to obtain, as to the exports and imports in the last three years. In 1885 the imports were 8,592 tons, and the exports 2,993 tons (I cannot get the relative values, as they are most of them transshipments from other ports); in 1886 the imports were 9,619 tons, and the exports were 3,071 tons; in 1887 (eleven months) the imports were 7,921 tons, and the exports were 3,559 tons;—adding one month's proportion to the latter, would make 8,641 tons of imports, and 3,882 tons of exports. This would show that the amounts of imports do not vary very much, but that the exports are steadily increasing every year.]

259. *Mr. Tanner* (to *Mr. Samuel*).] Could you give any information as to what the exports consist of?—I am sorry to say that the Board can only give a number of different headings, without any particulars or any relative amounts. The exports consist chiefly of butter and cheese, wool, fungus, hides and cattle, horses, and sheep. We send a lot of the latter away to the west coast of the South Island, and also to Orehunga and Auckland.

260. But the cattle, sheep, and horses are not included in the tonnage you gave?—No.

261. Do I understand that the tonnage you gave only refers to these exports that you have mentioned?—Yes; and grass-seed.

262. Are there any exports of roots, potatoes, &c.?—I do not think so; at any rate it would be small.

263. Have you anything to show how many bales of wool are exported annually?—No; I have nothing to show that. I have no doubt that it could be obtained, but it would take some little time.

264. Is the wool-export increasing?—I think that it is increasing.

265. *Mr. Tanner* (to *Mr. Marchant*).] Is there any anticipation of a much larger increase of the wool-export?—Undoubtedly, as the clearings become more adapted for sheep. There will soon be large flocks of sheep depastured there. I would like to emphasize what has been said about the depression of the settlers, and the serious loss there will be to the district and the colony also if some means are not derived for relieving the settlers from payment of some portion, if not the whole, of the rate. An immense quantity of land has been taken up and is in course of improvement, all of which will lie unimproved for years, and yield little taxation to the colony, and support but few settlers if the full rate is cast upon it. I feel very strongly that the welfare of the district demands some means by which settlers may be relieved from at least a part of the rate. I wish to lay particular stress on the point that the imposition of this rate will strangle future settlement. People will not be found willing to come and settle in the district with this 1s. 3d. rate on it if they can go elsewhere and get fair land exempt from such a rate; and the effect will be that there will be no prospect of the rate ever getting smaller. One point has not been mentioned with regard to the amount of rates at present levied on the country districts; and that is this: in several parts there are special rates imposed for special purposes. Money has been borrowed from the Government for purposes of road-formation and metalling for the benefit of special communities, who have rendered themselves liable to special rates. In some instances these amount to as much as 2d. on the capital value, which is equal to about 3s. 6d. in the pound on the annual value of the land. That is in addition to the burdens alluded to before.

APPROXIMATE RETURN of EXPORTS from the PORT of NEW PLYMOUTH. (Information subsequently supplied by *Mr. Samuel*, M.H.R.)

	1885.	1886.	1887.*
Wool	£3,060	£3,000	£3,000
Fungus	5,122	5,480	7,663
Butter	30,396	25,239	30,417
Leather	350	675	1,400
Flax	306	72	450
Hides	2,062	3,186	4,465
Grass-seed	2,198	2,446	5,366
Horses	1,008	720	340
Sheep	906	1,855	2,168
Cattle	3,386	3,055	3,974
Pigs	6	...	78
Tallow	1,615	1,080	1,080
Total	£50,355	£46,808	£60,401

* Eleven months to the 30th November, 1887.