

He is of great value to this Committee, and every other Committee with which he has anything to do. In the petition they ask for the whole of the thirds and interest thereon, or settlement of the claim by arbitration, but from what Mr Kensington said we could not ask for the full amount of thirds, and interest to be added, though something should certainly be done. Mr Kensington says that in Canterbury large areas were bought up in 1879 and the early 'eighties,' but nearly all that land was south of the Waimakariri River, therefore very little land of the district in question was bought at all. Selwyn was bought up fully because it was flat land and it was near the railway. In consequence the local bodies of the Selwyn district got enormous sums from the Land Fund. One Road Board got £14,000 to its credit, whereas the other side of the Waimakariri they got nothing. The roading of the lands on the south side of the Waimakariri was simple—a flee-bite to the difficulties of the other side, where they had to go away into the back gorges. Really good land was lying at the back, the settlers were isolated and crying out for years for roads, though it was impossible to make them out of rates, because it costs thousands of pounds. Whilst they have no legal claim, I think they have a moral claim, and only a short time ago on this Committee it was admitted on a petition which came before it that there was a moral claim but not a legal one, and the petition was recommended to the Government for favourable consideration. Therefore I think the least the Committee can do is to give the same recommendation to this petition. Let the Government thresh out the matter. No doubt they will refer to Mr Kensington, and I have every faith that they will receive every bit of fair play from him. I do not think the Committee can do better than send it to the Government for consideration. Certainly I think the local bodies should have something, seeing the condition of their roads in rough country.

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