

268. It was charged against them?—Possibly the cheque might never have been passed through and charged, but might have been superseded by payments made by the purchasers themselves immediately.

269. One cheque would be exchanged for another?—Yes; the transaction did not pass through my hands individually.

270. *Mr. J. McKenzie.*] Do you mean that if Smith and Gellibrand went up and paid for the whole of the land your cheque would be withdrawn?—On these occasions the company would deposit a cheque for a number of constituents generally, and the Receiver of Land Revenue would be instructed to send round particulars immediately after the auction, and there would be a withdrawal of the deposited cheque, and a replacement of it by other payments, whether by the company themselves or by the individuals I cannot tell you.

271. *Mr. Stevens.*] Was not a debit entry made in the books of the company when the cheque passed out of your hands to a second party?—I am not able to answer precisely. I cannot tell you whether the marked cheque was first a temporary deposit and then cancelled, or whether it was passed through afterwards. In fact, altogether I am giving you more of what I know to be the general practice than what happened in this particular case, because I did not see the cheque deposited. I did not know the amount, and personally I did not meddle with it, or know anything about it. I knew that, in accordance with the general practice, there was a cheque deposited, which I instructed the Receiver of Land Revenue to debit against any land knocked down to me. Only the cashier could state as to the details of the transaction.

272. *The Chairman.*] Is it possible that the men in whose names you purchased refunded the money to your firm?—It is possible.

273. Is it probable? Who would you hold responsible?—Our own constituents who gave the instructions—Smith and Gellibrand.

THOMAS JOHNSTON, examined on oath.

274. *The Chairman.*]—What are you?—A settler.

275. Where are you settled?—On the land in Strath-Taieri.

276. Have you got possession of it?—No; but I have been at work poisoning rabbits on it since the sale.

277. You have been refused a license by the Board?—Yes.

278. And there has been a lawsuit on the subject.—Yes.

279. Before the sale, what were you doing?—Harvesting round the Taieri.

280. Were you working on the run at all?—At shearing-time I was.

281. Did you purchase land at the sale in Dunedin on the 28th February last?—Yes.

282. Who bought for you?—Mr. Bradshaw bid for me.

283. Did you see him prior to the sale?—No.

284. Whose money paid the first instalment?—Mr. Pogson's.

285. Have you any agreement with Pogson as to terms?—No.

286. Do you propose to pay the money back?—Yes.

287. How, by poisoning rabbits, can you make enough by that?—I expect to get some friends to help me.

288. You have taken up 2,801 acres, at £1 12s. 6d. an acre?—Yes.

289. And do you expect to be able to keep up the half-yearly payments on that for fifteen years?—I am going to try it.

290. Do you expect to borrow the whole?—No; part of it. I was offered money to pay it with.

291. What means have you of living? What do you calculate is your yearly income?—About £100.

292. How do you propose to stock the land?—I shall be able to take in stock to run on terms.

293. Are you going to build a house if you get the land?—Yes, directly.

294. How will you get the money?—Mr. Pogson offered to lend me money to build.

295. Then you depend for payment of the land and the house on Mr. Pogson, and the only stock you can get to run on the land is that you can get from him?—Yes.

296. What about fencing?—Mr. Pogson offered me money for that.

297. Then you have no means of your own to occupy the land?—No.

298. *Mr. J. McKenzie.*] Was it Pogson or Patterson who asked you to become purchaser of this land?—Neither. I asked Mr. Pogson to assist me at the time. I lost a team of bullocks four years ago, and he said he would assist me at any time I was going to take up land.

299. Do you mean the arrangement about going into this was made four years ago?—Not as to this land. He said he would assist me if ever I was going to take up land.

300. Did you ask him previous to the sale to assist you for this section you bought?—No.

301. How, then, did he come to arrange with Mr. Bradshaw to bid for it?—I just told Mr. Pogson I was going in for a section up there.

302. When?—I suppose about six months before.

303. *The Chairman.*] Did you point out the section you wanted?—Yes; the one I got.

304. *Mr. J. McKenzie.*] What led you to believe Pogson would assist you to purchase a section costing £4,500, and to assist you to build a house and fence ground to that extent?—He knew I had plenty of friends to help me, and that it would be as well for me to take it up.

305. You took it up for your own use and benefit?—Yes.

306. How do you expect to get the benefit, seeing you have no means to pay for it, to stock it, or build a house?—I think, if I could get sheep to run on it, I should be able to come round in a year or two, and get my own afterwards.