

applied for 10,475 acres; the second three applied for 10,054 acres: it is all the same land applied for over and over again, to increase the chances of getting the applications granted. The last four applied for 9,389 acres—all the same land, one or two sections being left out—but they did not get it all: they only got about 3,227 acres.

179. *Mr. McKenzie.*] Suspecting as you did that these men were servants of the company, did you think it likely that the company would, if the applications were granted and the land in occupation of their servants, having obtained it in this way, allow them to cultivate the property on their own account?—That is evident to every one—that they would not. But that is a matter of question: I think not. But the whole thing turns upon what a Judge of the Supreme Court might decide as to the meaning of the words “applying for his own use and benefit.” That is where the point comes in. There is no power given in the Act to inquire beforehand. Even suppose the man, after getting the land, sold it in the room, there would be no power to interfere with him. If he has purchased under a false declaration, and he gets £10 out of it, he can still say that he bought it “for his own use and benefit.”

180. *The Chairman.*] Were these all for cash?—All for cash.

181. *Mr. McKenzie.*] You felt some suspicion that these were not *bond fide* applications?—I had reason to believe that the company was going to apply. I went to Timaru to see how the applications were put in.

182. You say you read out the clauses which provide the penalty for false declaration?—Yes; I read the clause relating to the penalty for false declaration.

183. That was not usual?—No; it was not a usual thing to do, but I felt it my duty to do it. The application by ballot only came into use this year in Canterbury.

184. Do you know of any other applicants for land?—Yes.

184A. Do you know E. Rutherford, W. H. Hargreaves, F. J. Kimbell, T. Bullick?—Yes.

185. Had you any suspicion in regard to these people?—With regard to the first—Rutherford—an application was put in by Mr., also by Mrs., Rutherford. Mrs. Rutherford obtained the land. The ballot went in her favour.

186. Rutherford was a large landowner before was he not?—Yes; but he could apply for 2,000 acres of second-class land; so could his wife; there is nothing to upset the application. As to Bullick and Hargreaves, Bullick, I believe, is an auctioneer in Ashburton, but I am not certain about that. About Hargreaves I do not know. I do know a gentleman of that name in Christchurch: he is a coal merchant, I believe, but I am not certain.

187. I understand that Bullick and Hargreaves have got land in South Canterbury?—They applied at the Christchurch office, and they drew in the ballot two blocks of land on a station called Albury. One may possibly surmise, but I do not see how it is possible at a sale to know who the men are that have put in applications for land. They got two sections. Mr. Kimbell put in an application, but he did not get a section.

188. As Crown Lands Commissioner for Canterbury, you would have a general knowledge of what percentage of people have taken up land during the last twelve months, and gone upon it to settle?—The bulk of this land has been sold between March and now.

189. There is hardly time, I suppose, to obtain an accurate knowledge?—There is not time yet.

190. Can you speak as to the percentage of land purchased by original owners, or by people who had no land?—I think, on what we call “The Plains” there have been about 50,000 acres of plain-land opened within the last twelve months—this year in fact. I think, about 19,000 acres have been purchased by or for adjoining owners; but for the bulk of this land there was no competition at all by intending settlers; in fact, I think, over the whole of the above area, there were not more than half a dozen purchasers on settlement conditions.

191. Were these all cash purchases?—Yes; to show that there is no demand for that kind of land, there are from 17,000 to 20,000 acres of the land still open: it is the remainder of the stony plains that have been selected over any time these thirty years.

192. *Mr. Cowan.*] First or second class?—We made it first class so that large men might not take more than 640 acres.

193. *Mr. McKenzie.*] So that it means that all the good bits of land have been taken up, and the refuse is still there?—Over the Plains about 7,700 acres have gone on settlement conditions. Do you wish me to speak about the hill-land? if so, there are about 51,000 acres (roughly speaking), and about 31,000 acres of this have, as far as I know, been taken up on settlement conditions; about 16,000 acres have gone for cash. I might remark that about 5,000 acres out of this 16,000 are not, in my opinion, fit for settlement.

194. I suppose some of it was bought to round up estates?—Two of the sections were the two which Hargreaves and Bullick got. The freehold land on the ranges is purchased so high that it not fit for a man to erect a homestead on; that is why we classed this portion as second-class land.

195. It was stated in the House that a large area was reserved from sale for settlement: is this the land you are referring to?—We (the Run Classification Commissioners) classed these hills as fit for grazing only. It was withdrawn under direction of the Minister; it was withdrawn for settlement.

196. It was also represented in the House that this land was rock-faces, landslips, and shingle-beds?—The shingle, I suppose, applies to Canterbury Plains, which is very stony. It was picked over any time for the last thirty years. The hill-land is fair grazing-country: some of it is very rough.

197. The hill-country is land that, if cut up into 2,000- or 3,000-acre blocks, a man could make a living on?—Yes; that is how it is taken up; the bulk of this 31,000 acres has gone into blocks of 2,000 acres to men who will settle on it.

198. I suppose that on most of the 2,000-acre blocks you would get a bit for cultivation?—The