

the *bonâ fide* man to buy in larger blocks?—Yes; but under present Land Act you could not shut out adjacent owners.

248. *Mr. Smith.*] The majority of persons taking up land: are they persons who have already owned land?—The grazing land that we have sold, the bulk of it, has gone to people who are *bonâ fide* settlers; plain-land there was no demand for; only a portion of that—a small portion—has gone to men who are *bonâ fide* settlers.

249. Has not a quantity of it gone to persons who already owned land?—A good deal; but the law allows it.

250. *Mr. Cowan.*] You stated that under the system of ballot a good deal of dummyism is possible?—Yes; in drafting amendments to the Act with the Surveyor-General, I suggested that a person should be allowed to apply on the same day only for the quantity of land he is allowed to hold under the Act. As the Act stands now, suppose a man himself, his wife, and eight children: he can put in ten applications. If there are fifteen sections open he can put in ten applications for each section; so that he would have a hundred and fifty chances in the ballot.

251. You have fully considered the question?—Yes; I think that a man, on the one day only, should put in his application for land which he can hold under the Act; then a man for himself and wife could only put in two applications for himself and family for two sections.

252. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] Do I understand from your remarks that the instances of what is called dummyism (which is in many cases are but duplicate applications)—these purchases for cash to which you refer—do I understand you to say that this trouble has arisen through the cash purchases, along with the settlement and deferred-payment purchases, being put through the ballot?—Yes.

253. But for the attempted restriction in the sale of cash land provided by the Act of 1887 these lands would have gone in a similar way?—Yes.

254. Then, the attempt at restricting the sale of land for cash provided in the Act of 1887 is not sufficiently stringent. In the Act of 1885 the powers of inquiry applies only to licenses and leases, not to cash purchases: you say it should be extended to cash purchases?—Yes.

255. That is how you think the Act should be amended at the present time?—Yes; but we must remember that in purchases both under settlement conditions and under the deferred-payment system, as well as for cash, people will equally try to increase their portions. As long as the ballot lasts you may lessen this; but I do not see how you are to deal with it altogether effectually. This case was found out because it was so apparent that it could not help being found out. But suppose he (*Mr. Brydone*) had brought up ten men from Otago, and each man put in his own application, and paid with money or by cheques on the different banks, you could not have detected it or even suspected it.

256. *Mr. Reeves.*] How far do you think all this might be checked if residence were insisted on, or immediate residence on the lands put up?—That would mean withdrawing them from cash purchase altogether. My own impression is, if I had the ordering of it, I would leave deferred-payment lands and those under settlement conditions to the ballot. I would open land for cash purchase, and if there were more than one application on the same day I would put the land up to competition among the applicants.

257. *Major Steward.* The Minister of Lands has put it this way: Whether the difficulty might not be solved by requiring a similar declaration in regard to cash purchase as to others.

*Hon. Mr. Richardson.* There is a penalty in one case, not in the other.

*Witness.* There is a penalty now, but we cannot enforce it without going to the Supreme Court.

258. *Major Steward.*] There is an objectionable system—a duplicate system, that is, according to some: others say there is actual “legitimate” dummyism; as in the case you have mentioned the land company were really the persons applying; these, at all events, were the persons who contemplated the appropriation of the land: do you not think that some discretionary power should be given to the Waste Lands Board to shut out such an application as this?—I have pointed out what, in my opinion, would be one remedy—namely, the power of inquiry and forfeiture of the land if the result of the inquiry were not satisfactory. At present we cannot inquire without having to go to the Supreme Court. In regard to what you call “legitimate” dummyism, the declaration is as false in one case as in the other.

259. Do you believe there are many cases of dummyism?—There have been some.

260. *Mr. Kerr.*] Can you prove they were cases of dummyism?—No.

261. How do you know they were not legitimate settlers?—You could only know that by going to the Supreme Court.

262. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] You were asked by *Mr. McKenzie* as to whether much of this land was not steep hill-faces or landslips: in answering that question, you spoke of part of it being good pastoral land and the slopes towards the plain: with regard to the inferior land, were there not a good many small pieces mere fringes of the larger areas within existing freeholds, or surrounded by existing freeholds? They were shown on the printed map and described: were they not described as steep hill-faces, and practically valueless land?—Yes.

FRIDAY, 25TH JULY, 1890. (*Mr. J. FULTON, Chairman.*)

*Mr. J. W. A. MARCHANT*, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Chief Surveyor, Wellington, examined.

263. *The Chairman.*] You appear here, *Mr. Marchant*, on summons of the Committee, to give evidence on the question of dummyism in this district?—Yes.

264. You furnished a Committee, through the Government, with a report on this question?—I did.

265. Can you tell us what the nature of that report was—we have not got it here?—As well