

364. I am putting my case from a cash point of view?—I do not think it would be in accordance with the law.

365. You would have no knowledge of such a thing?—No; but I believe it is quite possible.

366. In replying to Mr. Thompson you said that if compulsory residence was provided for after a certain time it would to a certain extent meet these difficulties: would not compulsory residence in every case of bush-land tend to shut out a desirable class from settling on the land of this Island?—It would. I would not be in favour of it on all Crown lands. I would limit compulsory residence to a defined area. I proposed to make provision for that class.

367. *Mr. Rhodes.*] When did you start offering unsurveyed land?—We started in 1888.

368. For two years have not people been going away dissatisfied?—About that.

369. I should like to ask how the Land Boards are composed who examine the applicants in Victoria?—I have no evidence as to that. I am quite satisfied that careful selection should be made before they are intrusted with the powers.

370. Will you supply that information from Victoria or New South Wales?—I will do so. I may say that I believe it consists of one official and two non-official members.

371. *Mr. Reeves.*] I think, in Victoria there is an appeal from the Boards?—Yes, to the Minister always, I believe.

372. Do you not think there might be some danger—now that revaluation Acts have been passed—that a man might be more reckless in bidding at auction?—Yes.

373. *Mr. Whyte.*] With reference to the effects of the auction system I am inclined to agree with your reply; but do you not think the system would have this merit: that it would do away with speculation, because there would be no motive. You could not possibly get it too cheap, and there would be no margin for profit?—If you got it at the upset price there would be a margin for profit.

374. I am referring only to fancy sections, for which there would be a great many applications. My contention is that they must be too cheap. Would not the auction system have the effect of doing away, at all events, with that?—There is no doubt of that.

375. *Mr. Reeves.*] But residence would do so more effectively?—Yes, and would be more in the interests of settlement.

WEDNESDAY, 6TH AUGUST, 1890.

THOMAS BRYDONE examined.

376. *The Chairman.*] What is your official position?—I am Superintendent of the New Zealand and Australian Land Company, and also one of the attorneys for that company.

377. You understand that we have asked you to come here on account of some allegations having been made about dunnyming having taken place somewhere about the Levels, or in South Canterbury, and it was thought that you might be able to give us some information in connection with it. Your name was, at any rate, before the Committee on several occasions, by Mr. Baker, the Commissioner of Crown Lands for Canterbury. [Copy of Mr. Baker's evidence handed to Mr. Brydone.] Have you seen that evidence before?—No.

378. *Mr. Reeves.*] Just to get the story out: there was a land-sale in South Canterbury, Mr. Brydone, early in June last, I think?—Yes.

379. You were an applicant at that sale?—Yes: on behalf of my company.

380. As attorney for the company?—Yes.

381. What acreage did you apply for, can you remember?—I think I applied for nearly all the sections that we were in possession of as tenants. I could not say the exact amount; it was about 6,000 or 7,000 acres. Of course I could only get 2,000 acres of that, had the applications been allowed; that I knew.

382. The Land Board declined to give you the land you got?—I did not get any land.

383. They refused your application?—My applications were never allowed to go to the ballot.

384. Did they give you any reason for that?—I think the only reason they gave was that an attorney could not apply on behalf of his company.

385. A trustee is allowed?—Well, I took advice on the subject from the very best legal practitioner. It was to the effect that, in my position, I was a trustee, and that I was quite justified in applying for land for cash at that sale on behalf of my company.

386. Did you take any steps to object to their action?—I did object on my applications being rejected; but I afterwards withdrew the objections. I objected to one applicant for a section being rejected, as I found afterwards he was a *bonâ fide* settler. I supposed at first that he might probably have been a speculator; a number of applicants were, at least I believe so. Some of them did, I believe, get sections for settlement, and, as I did not know this one was likely to be a *bonâ fide* settler, I objected.

387. With regard to the other sections, do you mind saying why you withdrew, and did not push it?—Simply because this was a section we had been in occupation of, and it was one that was lying between our lands. It was not an outside section; we had lands on both sides of it, and it was very suitable for us to occupy.

388. That was why you applied?—Yes. You ask why I objected to that particular one: that was the reason I objected to it; because it was a section which it would have suited us very well to have held.

389. Did you make any objection to any other sections or applications being refused?—There was only one I made particular objection to. I did not make any formal objection to any other.

390. Now, as regards the land generally: Can you tell us how much land included in that sale was in the occupation or holding of the company as tenants?—I can only speak as to the Levels estate. There were other lands in that sale that I have no particular interest in. I cannot tell you anything particular about the other lands.