

There is a clause—No. 9, I think—which prohibits any person taking up a section within two years of holding a section on deferred payment.

763. You had a section, I understand, in the Wellington District?—That is, we have been paying for it for about four years. It was a special-settlement section.

764. You had not paid up the whole of the deferred-payment money at the time you bought the second section?—I do not think the law requires that.

765. This matter of appeal to the Supreme Court was not whether you had put in an application for somebody else, but as to whether you, as a holder of a deferred-payment section, could legally apply for this section at all?—Yes; that is right enough. And the judgment was that, the section already held being a special-settlement section on deferred payment, it did not come under the definition of a deferred-payment section under clause 9 of the Act—at least, that is what I understood from the report.

766. The Judge did not award you a section?—He allowed the appeal, with costs.

767. The Land Board contend that the judgment is that you were entitled to the section if the question was simply as to whether you were already the holder of a deferred-payment section—that is to say, the law allows you the section if you applied legally?—Yes.

768. But the Land Board, at its last meeting, refused to grant you the section?—I have had no official intimation of any kind. According to the newspaper reports, they decline to grant it for the present. That is as quoted in the *Herald*.

769. Because there is some rumour of dummyism?—Evidently that was the reason; but I have had no communication from Mr. Williams of any kind—not a single word. I looked upon it as a settled thing when the Supreme Court decided in my favour.

770. At present, then, the Land Board not having awarded you the section, it simply stands in abeyance?—I may say that one of my sons had left a situation to go on the section, and I was proceeding to cut down the bush, and everything. I looked upon the thing as settled when the decision of the Court was known.

771. Since you were a successful applicant for the section, has Mr. Peebles spoken to you on the question?—You mean after the drawing took place. Two or three weeks back he came into my office about it. He came in and asked me what arrangements I was going to make about this section. I asked him what he meant, and he told me that of course I had gone in for the section for him. I said that I had done nothing of the sort, and that he had never asked me to do such a thing. He said, “No, I never asked you, but I understood it.” I replied, “Look here: I never was a dummy for any man in my life, and I am never going to be.” I said, “You have never asked me in the last eight months, though again and again you have talked about it.”

772. You say he did nothing in the matter until after the trial: was he in a position to do anything until the Court had decided whether or not the section should be allotted to you?—I may say, with regard to the trial, I gave all the instructions. I never consulted Mr. Peebles in the matter at all. I did not see him to speak to for three weeks after. I ought to have seen him on business of the borough, but he was in such a state that I could not talk with him.

773. Do you not think it rather strange that Mr. Peebles, who was an applicant himself, and, as you say, was very anxious to get the section, having put in seven shots, or applications—do you think it at all likely that he would ask you to go in to be a competitor against him, and also to lodge the money for you with your application?—I did not see anything wrong about it. I have done a tremendous lot of work for them at different times and in different ways. Any amount of other persons asked the same question.

774. I do not think people, as a rule, are ready to advance other people money as a deposit for a section to oppose them?—Well, I suppose the very fact that a man he knew might get it, from whom he might some time buy out, might have had something to do with it. I know I said at the time that I would go and live as a neighbour to him if I got it. That fact might influence him a little: it might help to prevent Horace Baker, and others getting it.

775. Have you heard a rumour in Woodville that Mr. Peebles was prepared to give something to a successful applicant?—I was told yesterday in Wellington.

776. You never heard it before in Woodville?—No. Some one told me last night in these buildings. I think that Mr. Peebles was prepared to give £100, or something like that.

777. Did you not read in a paper what Mr. Rechab Harding stated to the Board, that some one was prepared to give £150?—I understood that was at Waipukurau. I remember reading the report.

778. It was this: Mr. Harding stated that “active canvassing for dummy applicants had been made prior to the balloting. He knew a man who had been asked to apply, although he had no desire to do so, and another was willing to give £150 to whoever should be the successful applicant, when the ballot took place, to acquire the right to the section.” You read that in the paper?—Yes, but I always thought it was a Waipukurau matter.

779. *Mr. McKenzie.*] Did Mr. Peebles at any time tell you that he would pay your expenses in connection with the application for this section, or that he would deal liberally with you?—He did so about a fortnight ago. Since the result of the trial was made known he came and wanted to make some arrangements.

780. Did he make you any definite offer?—When I asked him what he meant, he said, “Of course I expect to pay your expenses, and to pay you for your trouble.”

781. Were you anxious to get this land, Mr. Sowry?—I should like it very much—indeed, I did not think I should be fortunate enough to get it.

782. Were you anxious to get it before you saw Mr. Peebles and applied?—My wife very strongly urged me to go in for it.

783. Why did you not get the necessary papers to put in your application yourself?—As I said before, the only thing that would have any real effect with me was a prejudice against raffling as far as I myself was concerned. I never thought I was capable of winning anything. I did not think