

1903.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE LAND BALLOT SYSTEM:

REPORTS AND SUGGESTIONS BY THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL AND THE SEVERAL COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The Right Hon. the PREMIER to the SURVEYOR-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 6th July, 1903.

During the time you occupied the position of Commissioner of Crown Lands you must have been struck by the inequality, unevenness, and sometimes unfairness, with which the ballot system worked, opening the door as it does to people who are well-to-do and who can find the deposits and a sufficient number of friends to put in applications, and thus by this means increase their chance of success against *bond fide* settlers who have not the means to find the deposits.

I want you to write to each Commissioner of Crown Lands, and ask him to submit to you suggestions for improving the present system, reducing to a minimum the inequalities now existing, and giving the *bond fide* settler a chance to obtain a section of land. It is my intention to give a substantial bonus to the one who solves this problem. In all probability the suggestions made will be submitted to a Parliamentary Committee.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

Yours, &c.,

R. J. SEDDON.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL to the Right Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 9th July, 1903.

In compliance with your letter of the 6th instant, I have written to all the Commissioners of Crown Lands requesting them to forward, at earliest possible date, suggestions as the result of their experience in the administration of the present Acts relating to all classes of settlement, and to make suggestions as to the best manner in which Crown lands should be allotted in the future so as to secure *bond fide* settlement by those who are best qualified and entitled to be placed on the lands.

You have very correctly divined that this subject has for many years received my earnest attention, and it will afford me great pleasure to place at your disposal all information and assistance in my power. My opinion, shortly stated, is this: that the true solution will be found in setting up strong and capable boards to examine all applicants for land, and after classifying them according to their need, suitability, capability, and experience, then to allot the lands without balloting to the most deserving and suitable persons. Many years ago I advocated this method.

As soon as I have completed some important and urgent work which I have on hand at present I will go further into this matter and give it my careful consideration.

The Right Hon. the Premier.

J. W. A. MARCHANT, Surveyor-General.