

The regulations for balloting under the Land for Settlements Amendment Act are found also in practice to be very unsatisfactory. Applicants object very much to having to apply for every section in any one group, because it frequently occurs that the result of the ballot saddles them with allotments they do not wish to occupy, as the allotment may be either too small or too large. This deters applicants from applying, more particularly as the regulations state that they have no right to withdraw an application or claim a refund of their deposit. Under these circumstances I would suggest that the applicant be allowed to simply apply for the allotment he desires. Then, in the case of there being more applicants than there are allotments in a group, the second ballot comes in. This appears to work very unsatisfactorily both to the Department and to the applicants, as it may be conceived that in the process the best and most desirable applicants may be balloted out, and when the final ballot comes the allotment may fall to the most undesirable applicant.

A married woman is compelled to apply for all the allotments in any one group, and after going through the whole process of both ballots she may draw an allotment over 320 acres of first-class or over 1,000 acres of second-class land, and then find that she cannot hold the allotment finally allotted to her by ballot. This seems to me another reason why an applicant should not be compelled to apply for all the allotments in a group. I would therefore suggest that the double or second ballot be abolished, and that the applicant be allowed simply to apply for the allotment he or she may desire.

I cannot see how the ballot can be done away with when there is more than one applicant for a section. So far as the mode of ballot is concerned, I do not think that the present system of ballot under "The Land Act, 1892" (Regulations 13/1/96) can be improved upon, as the opinion that it is perfectly fair has been repeatedly expressed by unsuccessful applicants. I think that there should be but one mode of ballot for all tenures and classes of land, with the following limitations: (1.) Only one member of a family should be allowed to apply for the same section or sections. (2.) Unsuccessful applicants at former ballots, on production of proof of non-success should be given precedence over applicants who had not previously applied for Crown lands.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

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Commissioner of Crown Lands.

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