

43. Are you quite satisfied that you can make a living off this section of land with your industry?—Yes. In the industry in which I am engaged—beekeeping—the size of the section does not apply: it is the locality.

44. Is this a good locality for bees?—It is a good locality. With bees you can only keep a certain number of colonies in one place. You must have out-apiaries, which generally take a very small piece of land. You generally arrange leases with farmers.

45. What provision have you now for a home: have you got a piece of land for a home?—No, I am simply renting a place.

46. You are very anxious to get a permanent home?—Yes.

47. In your opinion the putting of this section up to auction will mean that a very much higher price will be given for it than the upset placed upon it?—I think so.

48. What is your experience in respect to similar small areas of land of equal quality in that vicinity that have been opened for public competition?—There was one section down there that I know of, 200 acres or less in area. It is not so good as this. It was put up for tender, and the present tenant is paying £1 10s. an acre for it.

49. That would be equal to £30 an acre?—Yes. The man is still down there.

50. If there is similar competition for this piece of land it will place it beyond your power to touch it?—Yes, too high.

51. So that in your opinion you would have a very much better chance of getting it even by going to the ballot than you will have at auction if there is similar competition for this section to that which there has been for other sections down there?—I do not expect to get it if some of these men are going to compete who say they are.

52. Will putting the section up by public auction bring a larger number of competitors than offering it under renewable lease?—Yes, I think so.

53. You anticipate that a far larger number will bid for this section on account of its not having any residence conditions, and so on, than would be the case if it were put up under renewable lease?—Yes, I think so. There are people in the locality who would take it up for addition to their places for grazing, &c. There have been good prices offered. There is a section of 5 acres that an adjoining farmer has been offering £25 an acre for, and it is not so good as this.

54. If the section brought £20 an acre that would be £75 that you would have to put down, and the balance you would have at interest: would that not be a greater handicap upon you in making improvements on that section than if you had the section on renewable lease, under the terms of which you would only need to pay the rental?—Yes, it would make building on the section more difficult for the time being.

55. If you had to pay that sum would you be able to put up the sort of house that you would put up under renewable lease?—Not immediately.

56. Is there much beekeeping done at Cheviot?—Yes, a pretty considerable amount now.

57. Are you the only one engaged in it?—No. There are about seven or eight members of the Canterbury Association there. They are men who are engaged in it to a fair extent.

58. Are any of them altogether dependent on beekeeping?—No, only myself at present.

59. These others are doing it in connection with their other pursuits?—Yes, farming.

60. Is Cheviot a good district for beekeeping?—I have found it so.

61. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] You know that this small section was almost necessary to the man who occupied it for a great many years on account of its giving access to his land?—I would not like to admit that. I know the section very well. Access could be given him through a small portion of the lower end of it that would not interfere with the section. The only access that he uses through it now is a bridle-track over the terrace.

62. You know that the Land Board admitted this by making arrangements to put a road through it in the event of its being taken from him?—I understood so.

63. Who is occupying the section now? Is it occupied at all?—Mr. Holton, I suppose, is still occupying it.

64. *Mr. Forbes.*] In connection with the alteration of the Land Board's decision to let the section on renewable lease, have you heard any comment at Cheviot about it?—It has been considerably discussed.

65. There is a good deal of interest taken in this inquiry, is there not?—Oh, yes. The matter has been discussed, and I have heard various opinions expressed about it.

EDWARD RICHARD HOLTON examined. (No. 5.)

1. *Mr. Guthrie (Acting-Chairman).*] You are a farmer?—A small sheep-farmer.

2. At?—Cheviot.

3. You know what this inquiry is about: have you any statement to make in connection with it?—Yes. I should like to say this: I have had the occupation of this small section of 8½ acres for about seventeen or eighteen years. It was granted to me in the first instance by the Land Board, on the ground that I had no access to my land on the north side of the Buckstone Creek. There was no other means of getting on top of that land. I applied for lease in perpetuity, but they told me at the time that the section was reserved in case it should be required for the future development of the Port Robinson landing-service, and that I should not be interfered with in the occupation of that section unless it was required for that purpose. In the meantime the Port Robinson landing-service has been abolished and the roads broken up and everything cleared away. It is at an end since the railway has come up to Cheviot. This small section is a most useful one to me for the reason I have mentioned. It gives me the means of