

172. Under the renewable lease a man is compelled to go on the land and remain there?—No, he is not. He must make it his home, but can work away as much as he likes if his wife and family are there, if he has a wife.

173. If it is sold, then you are barring that man to a certain degree, because he must have the opportunity to purchase—you are barring the small man?—I am barring no man. I give every man a fair show.

174. You are giving an advantage to the man who is wealthy?—You say so.

175. Do you as Under-Secretary know whether a man is allowed to sell the lime off his renewable-lease land?—On the spur of the moment, I could not say whether it would be classed as a mineral or not.

176. I think he can use it for his own purposes?—He can use it for his own purposes.

177. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] The Cheviot Estate Disposition Act is still the law of the land?—Yes.

178. You referred to the terms under which lands are disposed of. Are these the terms under which this section would have been disposed of?—I am now going to quote the Act: "Rural lands sold for cash may be paid for as follows: One-fourth part of the purchase-money shall be paid in cash immediately on the close of the sale, one-fourth part thereof within thirty days next after the date of sale, and one-half part thereof in five years from the date of sale, such part to bear interest at the rate of five pounds per centum per annum until payment, such interest to be paid by the purchaser at the expiration of every half-year following the date of sale." Are these the terms?—Yes.

179. There has been a good deal said about renewable lease, and a suggestion put forward from the Canterbury Land Board to the effect that this land should have been disposed of under renewable lease. Do you know whether it is possible under the Cheviot Estate Disposition Act to dispose of land under renewable lease?—To tell you the truth, I have never had much to do with Cheviot lands.

180. Do you recollect this section of the Act: "Subject as aforesaid the residue of the Cheviot Estate shall be deemed to be rural land, and shall be sold or leased under this Act in the following proportions: One-third part thereof shall be sold for cash by public auction; one-third part thereof shall be disposed of upon lease in perpetuity; and one-third part thereof shall be disposed of upon lease for grazing-farms. The proportions of land before mentioned may be varied or altered by the Minister from time to time if he is satisfied that the public needs so require"? If those are the provisions in the Act with regard to the tenure under which lands on the Cheviot Estate may be disposed of, is it possible for land there to be disposed of under renewable lease, as suggested?—There is no mention of renewable lease there; in fact, when that Act was passed there were no renewable leases.

181. There is no mention in the section I have read of renewable lease?—None.

182. *Mr. Coates.*] Supposing a man could take this land up under renewable lease, would it be possible for him to sell his interest; and, if so, when?—With the consent of the Land Board he could transfer it after a couple of years.

183. To whom would the goodwill go in that case?—The man who had taken up the selection: he would get the goodwill from the incomer.

184. In your opinion the State, by offering at auction a small section like that, would reap the benefit of anything of the kind?—Yes.

185. *Hon. Mr. Buddo.*] You have had long experience in connection with the disposal of Crown lands in the country?—Yes.

186. In disposing of land such as the Cheviot Estate land, would you consider that it stood on a different basis from land that came under the Land for Settlements Act?—It is under a special Act and has to be dealt with under that Act.

187. Having in view the retention of the Cheviot Estate in small holdings, is it wise to offer too much on the freehold system, for cash?—We have only offered the one small section.

188. *Mr. Forbes.*] You stated, in answer to a question of Mr. Witty's, that you had no practical knowledge of fruitgrowing or bee-keeping?—I have no practical knowledge of bee-keeping, nor, on an extensive scale, of fruitgrowing either.

189. You do not know what it is possible to do on an area of $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres with either of those industries?—At fruitgrowing I should think that a man with $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres and working outside could manage all right.

190. You do not think a man could make a living off $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land?—Not on limestone land with fruit. He would not make a big living. He might make an existence.

191. You say that that section is too small. You gave the Minister that information—that it is too small to make a living from. You know that one of the applicants is a beekeeper?—I have seen it on the papers. I do not know whether I had the letter at the time: probably I had.

192. You know that it is possible for a man with a very small area of land to make a living from bee-keeping?—Yes; I have already said so.

193. You do not know anything about bee-keeping, yet you say that you have authority to deal with a matter of this sort—to say how the land should be disposed of?—I consider it comes fairly within my province as head of the Department.

194. Yet you have no practical knowledge of what can be done with these smaller industries?—I am not an expert in bee-farming. I have had bees and I have had fruit, but I do not call myself an expert.

195. Is this a common thing to do, to go against the decision of the Land Board and the recommendation of two Rangers?—No. As a rule, if I think it is a sensible decision, I accept it.

196. In the report of the Crown Lands Rangers they instance a section adjoining on which a man has given £300 to get in for the purpose of fruitgrowing?—I do not remember that. It should be on the file. Was the £300 for goodwill?