

therefore to recommend that it be sold for cash by public auction instead of on renewable lease, as suggested by the Canterbury Land Board, and that Mr. Forbes be informed accordingly." Do you know of that letter?—No.

52. Did you know of the recommendation?—No, I had left the Board then.

53. You mentioned just now that land was being cut up into smaller sections than 7 acres?—Yes.

54. Was that on Cheviot?—There were lots of sections of less than that on Cheviot.

55. Originally?—There are still.

56. Do you know of any land being subdivided into lots of 7 acres or less on Cheviot within recent years?—There has been no subdivision. The land was all surveyed right from the beginning. Some small sections have been amalgamated.

57. Do you know of a settler within the last few months being allowed by the Land Board to double the size of his section on Cheviot?—Yes.

58. What was the reason that was given?—His place was not big enough for farming, and originally these sections were intended for workmen's homes, and were not wanted for that purpose.

59. What was the size of the section?—The one you are referring to, I think, would be about 10 or 11 acres.

60. Was it not 25 acres?—Can you give me the name?

61. No?—I cannot be sure.

62. Was it not 25 acres?—I could not say from memory. In my mind there is one section that was debated for a long time as to whether the transfer should be given, but the circumstances of the old man who held it were peculiar, or else it would never have been transferred. His brother in Christchurch offered that if he could get out of the section at Cheviot he would build him a little place near him and look after him, and we took that into consideration and stretched a point. Otherwise I do not think the transfer would have been granted.

63. I think you have missed the point. I am speaking of the man who was allowed to have his holding doubled?—Quite so. He had claims too. He had a big family and his little section adjoined. He is a hardworking man and was trying to make a living. Putting the two things together we stretched a point.

64. What is the area which he was allowed to add to his holding?—I should not like to say from memory.

65. What is the value per acre?—It is pretty valuable land—I suppose £25 or £30 an acre.

66. So that the man to whom you are referring now was allowed to double his holding, although it was 25 acres in the first place and had a value of £30 an acre?—Yes; but I have told you that we did not do it readily. It was after a considerable amount of discussion and in view of the peculiar circumstances of the case.

67. Do you want the Committee to understand that though this man on 25 acres of £30 an acre land could not make a living, another man could make a living on 7 acres of very much inferior land?—But he was wanting it for a special purpose—beekeeping.

68. Who?—The man who applied.

69. And you intended it for him?—Not necessarily.

70. He applied for it?—Yes. I think the Land Board were perfectly justified. They are there to find land for settlers.

71. They are there to do what is right?—And we were doing what was right.

72. You are in the habit of corresponding with the papers, are you not?—Yes, I have written a few times to newspapers.

73. Any particular paper?—I have written to both the *Lyttelton Times* and the *Christchurch Press*.

74. There are other papers in Canterbury besides those?

75. *Mr. Forbes.*] The *Cheviot News*?—Yes, I have written to that. There is no particular crime in writing to a newspaper.

76. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] No, so long as you write the truth?—I never wrote anything but the truth.

77. I am going to ask you if this is the truth. Do you remember a letter appearing in the *Lyttelton Times* of the 7th July over the signature of Joseph Gibson?—Yes. That was about this very matter.

78. Do you remember this paragraph: "The real reason for this instruction to the Board was without doubt that Mr. Massey's supporters had approached him to allow the section to remain in possession of the previous tenant, who farms the adjoining land"?—Yes; that is the natural inference, I think.

79. In your mind?—Yes. I was only writing for myself, not for any one else.

80. But do you think it would be the natural inference in the case of any right-thinking person?—I think so, certainly.

81. You do not stop there: "The parties who had sent in the application then wrote to Mr. Massey, and apparently in order to get him out of an awkward position it has now been decided to sell by public auction"?—Yes.

82. What grounds had you for thinking that?—I have tried to explain what grounds.

83. Had you any direct information?—No.

84. Do you suggest that some one wrote to me with regard to this matter to induce the Canterbury Land Board to reconsider?—That is what it looks like.

85. But do you know as a fact whether any one did?—No, I do not.

86. Then do you think it was a proper thing to put this in print?—Yes. I do not think there is anything wrong about it.