

170. If it were a renewable lease would not the State, when the lease was renewed, have an opportunity of getting a larger rental?—Exactly.

171. *Mr. Robertson.*] The resolution of the Land Board to let this land on renewable lease was rescinded after you left the Board?—Yes.

172. How long after that was it that it was decided to put the section up to auction?—It had then been decided, I think. It was decided by the Lands Department, and it was their deciding that caused them to ask the Board to rescind.

173. It is not the usual thing for the Lands Department to interfere with decisions of the Land Board?—Not in my experience.

174. It has not occurred before in your experience?—No.

175. That is what gave rise to the idea in your mind that influence had been used?—Yes.

176. *Mr. Forbes.*] You were on the Board when their first decision was returned to them by the Under-Secretary for Lands?—Yes.

177. It is stated on the file that the Board adhered to its previous decision?—I was there—that is, when the proposal came down that we should let the section on short lease.

178. You adhered to your former decision?—Yes.

179. You do not remember in the time you have been on the Board any similar case?—No.

180. Referring to the case that was mentioned by Mr. Massey, where a man was allowed to buy up his neighbour: you remember that I had something to do with that section?—I do not know whether that is the one.

181. He is referring to Barrett's. Do you remember that Barrett applied to be allowed to sell out to his neighbour?—Yes.

182. And brought forward the circumstances of his case?—It was on the boards for a long time.

183. You know that the Minister of Lands was approached to see whether he could do anything in the matter?—Yes.

184. Did the then Acting Minister of Lands, Mr. Buddo, direct the Board to give effect to the wishes of the man who wanted the transfer? Was it he that brought about the decision of the Board?—Oh, no. I do not remember there being any communication with the Minister of Lands on that question.

185. You know that Barrett had got several people to write to the Minister of Lands asking him to see if he could not do something for him?—Yes.

186. Did the Minister of Lands in any way write to the Board or direct what its—?—It did not come before us. We never got it.

187. The Board dealt with the matter entirely on the merits of the case?—Yes.

188. And with no direction from headquarters at all?—No.

189. The reason why you came to the conclusion that something out of the way had taken place in connection with this section was because it was most unusual?—Yes.

190. And you knew, from your own knowledge, of the discussion that had taken place in relation to the section at Cheviot?—Yes. I may tell you too that my colleagues on the Board were just as much surprised as I was. We talked it over after the meeting, and could not understand the reason for it at all—that is, when we sent the thing back.

191. If you had been on the Board would you have acquiesced quietly in the rescinding of your resolution?—No; I would have voted against it.

192. You were asked whether your being put off the Land Board aroused your feeling in this matter. This matter of taking up the section was long prior to the question arising whether you were going to be reappointed or not?—Yes.

193. You had no notion of what was going to happen?—No. I have never connected my not being reappointed with this transaction at all.

194. You have put it down to the fact that another Government having come in, they considered you should be put off?—Yes.

195. Was there another member whose time expired at the same time as yours?—Yes, Mr. Stevenson. His time expired either that month or the following month.

196. Did the same reason prevail then? He was appointed during the Liberal Government's time, was he not?—Yes.

197. Was he reappointed?—Yes.

198. Did you not think you had received some special treatment? Did you not think that, both yourself and Mr. Stevenson having been appointed by a Liberal Government, when the Massey Government came in you would both go out?—I am inclined to think that Mr. Stevenson is no longer a supporter of the Liberal party. That is my opinion.

199. You think that his politics are now acceptable to the party in power?—Yes.

200. Your successor on the Land Board—were his politics in accord with the politics of the present Government?—I think there is no doubt about that. There is no need for suspicion there.

201. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] Did the original tenant, Mr. Holton, get notice of the termination of his tenancy prior to the year having expired?—I am not quite sure about that. I do not remember exactly when the notice was sent.

202. You stated, I think, that in the event of this land being disposed of under renewable lease the new settler, whoever he happened to be, would be compelled to make his home there?—Yes.

203. In the other case, which has been referred to as Barrett's, was the new tenant compelled to reside?—He was residing on the adjoining section.

204. Was he compelled to reside on the section which he acquired?—It is under different circumstances.