

36. What is the effect of this registration?—It has not much effect, seeing that the land has to be submitted to auction before either can get possession of it. The only one who can buy the land at 5s. is the one whose application has been registered.

37. Has Mr. Martin's application been registered?—No, it has not. I concluded that it was better to take no further step in the matter until a decision had been arrived at here. The application has been filed while the matter is under discussion in the House, and no formal act of registration has yet been given effect to in either case.

38. In reply to further questions, witness said that Mr. Martin made one application for the four sections, but Mr. Andrew put in four applications—one for each section.

39. In reply to Mr. Rolleston, witness said that the land had been open for purchase at 10s. for a considerable time.

40. *To the Chairman.*] If there were no other applications, the land would be taken up prior to auction at 7s. 6d., but, as a necessary consequence, when the land goes to auction, it may be run up. The land in question is strictly pastoral country. It is situated at a pretty high elevation. In the most of cases, the land is of a clay subsoil. It is situated some hundreds of feet above sea-level. It is very much the character of other land in the district.

41. *To Mr. Rolleston.*] No land is purchaseable until proclaimed open by the Superintendent.

42. *Mr. Studholme.*] When two applications are received simultaneously, is there any provision made for the Board to arrive at a decision which application is to get the preference?—No, not that I know of.

43. *To Mr. Bluett.*] Although Mr. Martin's application was actually put into the hands of the clerk first, I myself saw both gentlemen together. In fact, they entered with their applications simultaneously.

44. *To Mr. Studholme.*] I believe that my suggestion to draw lots is not without a precedent. My chief clerk, who has had seventeen years' experience in the office, states that it has been done in many cases.

45. *Mr. Bluett.*] Was this dispute heard in open Court?—Yes, it was. After we had heard Mr. Andrew's statement, Mr. Bunny said, "We'll just talk the thing over." Mr. Andrew said "Oh, yes," and walked out into the next room. We then asked him back.

[Reference was made to the minutes of the meeting, which the witness produced. These minutes, he explained, had not yet been approved by the Board, from the fact that another meeting had not yet taken place. Minutes read.]

46. *Mr. Bluett.*] Is there no provision made for drawing lots?—No; not in the case of pastoral land. This is the first case of the kind that has arisen of simultaneous applications being sent in.

47. *The Chairman.*] If the Waste Lands laws provide no solution, does it not authorize the Board to take other circumstances into consideration: for instance, the fact that one of the applicants is lessee?—I think it does.

48. *Mr. Bluett.*] Can you give any reason why Mr. Andrew declined to draw lots?—No other reason but what is set forth in the newspaper paragraph.

49. *The Chairman.*] Was Mr. Martin's object in applying for the land, to make a speculation in it?—I do not know of my own knowledge.

50. You do not know officially, but practically was that his object?—I do not know, of my own knowledge, the reason that influenced Mr. Martin to put in the application.

51. Do you know if Mr. Martin has made other purchases obviously for the purpose of making money out of the runholder?—His last purchase of part of Mr. Riddiford's run, in the East Coast District, is said to have been a purchase of this sort. Out of doors I have heard it said that Riddiford had to pay him handsomely.

52. *Mr. Reynolds.*] How much did he get out of Mr. Riddiford?—I have heard £1,500, but that is one of these things one hears on the Beach.

53. In the absence of any provision, is there no rule about giving the preference to the lessee?—No rule, as a matter of fact. I do not think that this feeling has prevailed in the past, either with the Commissioner or the Board. Occupation of large blocks of country at a small annual payment is not sufficient inducement to weigh with either the Commissioner or the Waste Lands Board, if the land is wanted by others for settlement.

54. *Mr. Rolleston.*] In the minutes I find it stated: "On Mr. Andrew being recalled, and the decision of the Board communicated to him by the Chairman, he declined to accede to the arrangement, and was informed that Mr. Martin's application would be registered; it being at the same time pointed out to Mr. Andrew that Mr. Martin's single application covered the whole four sections, while he (Mr. Andrew) had put in four applications, one for each of the sections, and that this fact had weighed with the Board in arriving at its decision." Will you explain what is that fact which weighed with the Board?—Mr. Martin could only have purchased the whole, whereas Mr. Andrew might only have purchased portions—one piece out of the four.

55. *The Chairman.*] Do you consider that the land in the hands of Mr. Martin would be more likely to be settled than in the hands of Mr. Andrew?—Mr. Andrew has already settled the land with his sheep.

56. *Mr. Rolleston.*] Had there been four applicants, one for each block, and one applicant for the whole four, to whom would you have given the preference? Would you have given the preference to the one applicant for the whole, or would you have given it to the four applicants for the separate blocks?—I think the preference would have been given to the one applicant for the whole, as in the other case, four separate surveys would have to be made, and the cost of survey thereby much increased.

57. *To Mr. Reynolds.*] The decision arrived at by the Board was unanimous. Three members constitute a quorum. The Board consists of four members.

58. I think you stated that the Board was not in the habit of giving any preference to the lessee?—Yes, I said so.