

the average realized last year on that sold at cash was, according to the report of the department, £1 6s. 5d. I would direct the Committee's attention to that. Another gentleman, I think Mr. Hurst, asked me what effect I thought the scheme of capitalization would have upon those who bought for cash: whether they would not make claims. I would desire to say, after carefully considering that question, in my judgment, whilst such claims would probably on the ground of abstract justice be reasonable and be entitled to consideration, yet I do not anticipate that these claims will actually be made. I do not know a single instance of any man who hopes or believes that such a claim would be entertained or granted.

39. *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] You have changed your opinion?—No; the opinion I expressed yesterday was, if you remember, that, if I were in their position, I should probably wish that I had waited a little.

40. I understand you to say that you thought that people who had completed their contract had a fair claim for the reconsideration by the Government of their position?—I still adhere to the opinion as an abstract question of morals and justice, but as a practical question of legislation I do not think it is likely to arise.

41. *Mr. Hurst.*] The people entered into certain covenants, which some have kept; and is it not simply destructive of all government to grant relief to people from certain bargains entered into?—I think the two questions are quite distinct, that is the general and the particular, for this reason: that the particular contract entered into with these settlers is one which is governed by the provisions of the statute. In many cases those provisions are contrary to right and justice, and they have been induced, by the pressure of exceptional circumstances, to enter into contracts under which they do not get fair value for their money.

42. *Mr. Pearson.*] Is it a fact that these deferred-payment selectors have been advised to repudiate their engagements with the Government?—No, not that I am aware of. I did hear, since coming to Wellington, of one case, a member of the House I think, who had advised one deferred-payment settler not to pay. That is the only instance that has come under my notice of anything of the kind.

43. *Mr. J. Green.*] Do you not know of any people who have stated, perhaps I may not say publicly, although I think, probably, I may go so far as to ask you, do you not know that some of the deferred-payment people, at a public meeting, stated it was not their intention to continue their payments, as relief was given to some of the same class two years ago?—No, I may say I have no knowledge of that being the case. I am aware that there is a very strong feeling that the relief granted two years ago to a few should have been extended to all. It was confined to the then defaulters.

44. *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] Are you aware of any number of deferred-payment settlers who are withholding payment pending the consideration of Parliament?—Not that I am aware of. I am aware that there is a very strong feeling in the minds of those who pay very high prices that they were very hardly treated, and some of them have made bitter complaints to me about it.

45. *Mr. Stevens.*] Do you know the case of Sir D. Bell's son; he is a deferred-payment selector, I believe?—Yes.

46. Do you know his reason for not paying: because he is able to pay, I understand?—I do not know of his ability to pay; all I know is that he purchased at a price which, as a matter of fact, was three times the value of his land certainly, but what his reason may be, I cannot go into his inner conscience and tell you his reasons.

47. *Mr. J. Green.*] I think you said yesterday that it was within your knowledge that the forfeiture of land had been enforced in some cases?—Yes, it is within my knowledge that the confiscation clauses have been carried out. I am rather inclined to think in the cases where it was carried out the settler himself, finding he had entered into a contract he could not fulfil, acquiesced in the procedure.

48. How many of the instalments had been paid in these cases?—I cannot tell from my own knowledge. In one case I have an application at present before Mr. Rolleston's department in connection with it; the value amounted to about £250 for improvements, valued by the ranger himself.

49. *Mr. J. B. Whyte.*] It was not found necessary to evict any one?—He was, as a matter of fact, evicted, but I believe he had no objection; it would have been still more harsh if the Crown had insisted on him carrying out his contract, and sued him for the instalments; it might utterly ruin him.

50. *Mr. Stevens.*] Is that a case of one who accepted the relief and did not buy his land at auction sale?—No. Would you allow me to say in reply to what was asked me yesterday: whether the system of revaluation that I had proposed in the Bill that I drafted was in my opinion the best that could be pursued: I would like to modify my remarks in this way; that it has occurred to me since that, if there was anything like a strong feeling in the minds of the Committee, or the House, or the Government, against the giving to settlers a distinct right to a revaluation, that probably cases of hardship: not a great number of them, probably amounting to something like twenty-five cases of great hardship: that it might be advisable, I make the suggestion with some diffidence to the Committee, that a settler might have simply a right to bring his case under the notice of the Board, and that the Board should have power to appoint sworn valuers, who should inspect the land and report to the Board; giving the Board, or the Board with the consent of the Government, if they thought the circumstances of the case required it, power to make some remission if, on the report of the sworn valuers being received, it was deemed fair and expedient so to do. That seems now to me a possible solution of the difficulty as to granting any revaluation.

51. *Mr. Pearson.*] How many cases under this Bill would a revaluation affect?—In the Bill I drafted, it gives any man who believes he paid an unfair value for his land, it gives him a right to apply to have the land revalued.

52. *Mr. Hurst.*] At whose cost does the revaluation take place: at the cost of the Government or the applicant?—I have not made any special provision in my Bill for that, except that I provide that an amount of 10 per cent. should be added to the valuation made by the valuers to cover all these costs. In section 41 I say: "Any selector whose land shall have been valued as aforesaid shall have the right to receive a Crown grant for the land comprised in his license or lease on paying on or before the 31st day of December, 1883, the difference between the price so fixed as aforesaid by the