

2. If there are any sections remaining after the first ballot, those in the next grade shall form the second ballot and proceed in the same manner as in the first, and continuing in the same order down the grades as long as any sections are unallotted. Should it so happen that an applicant finds his name drawn, and the particular section he wanted is disposed of, he need not make a selection unless he wishes. If he does not select he shall be considered an unsuccessful applicant. Married women living with their husbands are not eligible as applicants, but married women who have obtained a decree of judicial separation from their husbands shall be eligible. A husband who has a section, but whose wife has no land, can apply for a section and take the usual chance for his wife, but his choice if her name is drawn can only be for a section which adjoins his holding to be held in her own name and right in trust by her for her children, and not exceeding 320 acres first-class or 1,000 acres second-class lands.

Widowers or widows with no family shall as far as this Act is concerned be considered as single men and women. A widow with a family shall be entitled to all the privileges the Act confers on male applicants. Youths—male or female—under the age of seventeen years shall not be eligible as applicants.

PROPOSED SUBSTITUTION FOR THE PRESENT BALLOT REGULATIONS.

1. Deposits not compulsory.
2. Every applicant who has not paid a deposit shall make a declaration on his application agreeing to pay, upon his being declared successful at the ballot, the amount of the deposit required, together with one guinea for lease and registration fee.
3. If the deposits of the applicants whose numbers are drawn from the ballot-box are not at once paid, the Commissioner of Crown Lands or his appointee shall proceed to draw fresh numbers from the ballot-box till the persons whose numbers are drawn comply with the conditions of sale.
4. The deposit so paid shall be used for the payment of the first half-year's rent thereon in advance, computed from the 1st day of January or the 1st day of July, as the case may be, first following the date of the ballot, or in the case of small grazing-runs from the 1st of March or the 1st of September, as the case may be.

The present law reads as follows: "Every application shall be accompanied by a deposit of one half-year's rent of the land applied for, together with the sum of one guinea to defray cost of lease: Provided, where the application comprises more allotments than one, it shall be sufficient if the deposit is equal to the half-year's rent of the allotment whose rent is highest. If the applicant is successful in obtaining an allotment, such deposit, or a sufficient portion thereof, shall be retained as the first half-year's rent thereon in advance, computed from the first of January or July, as the case may be, first following the date of the application, and the residue shall be returned to the applicant. If the applicant is unsuccessful, or the application is rejected, such deposit shall be returned."

NELSON.

Report from W. G. MURRAY, Esq., Commissioner of Crown Lands, Nelson.

Department of Lands and Surveys,

District Office, Nelson, 23rd July, 1903.

Ballot System.

REFERRING to your circular of the 9th instant, enclosing copy of letter from the Right Hon. the Premier referring to the inequality of the ballot system under the Land Act, and requesting that suggestions for improving the present system might be submitted, I may say that I have great diffidence in making any suggestions, as my experience of the ballot system is limited to the Westland and Nelson Land Districts, in both of which districts the lands offered to selectors have not been of such value as to cause any considerable number of applicants to compete for them. I feel sure that the suggestions of the Commissioners of Crown Lands of other districts, who have had great experience in conducting ballots, would be of much greater value than any I can offer.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

W. G. MURRAY,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

WESTLAND.

REPORT from G. J. ROBERTS, Esq., Commissioner of Crown Lands, Westland.

Department of Lands and Survey,

District Office, Hokitika, 29th August, 1903.

I HAVE the honour, in reply to your circular of the 9th July, to forward herewith eight suggestions with regard to the disposal of lands by ballot.

I am especially diffident in sending you any personal views on this most important subject, as I am certain that I am simply reiterating a few of the many valuable suggestions which many of the other Commissioners, as the fruit of their much more varied and extensive experience, will forward.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

(Signed) G. J. ROBERTS,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

1. THAT in the case of any lands being thrown open for sale or selection under the optional system, or in the case of any Land for Settlements estate, the Land Board shall define the district from within which only applicants shall be eligible for the first ballot, always provided that such applicants shall have been resident in the said district for a period of five years.