

To meet the somewhat different requirements of this class of land, I would suggest that the Land Board be given power, in the case of all sectionised blocks offered for the first time, where there is reason to anticipate competition, to apply the principle of the prevention of multiplication of an individual applicant's chances at a ballot, in the manner already outlined, as well as the style of ballot itself—i.e., by order of choice.

After the first day, in the event of there being any sections left unselected, they would be open for selection to be applied for as individual sections or allotments, and should more than two persons apply for the same section on the same day a similar test should be applied to ascertain whether there had been an attempt at any unfair multiplication of chances. The method of ballot in these cases would be that the representative of the first number drawn should be declared the successful applicant.

The procedure set out in the last paragraph, strengthened by power being given to the Land Board to closely examine applicants, and others if necessary, so as to investigate cases where there is doubt of the genuineness of the application, coupled with the power to disallow those applications whose *bona fides* has not been proved to the complete satisfaction of the Board, would, I think, be found suitable, on account of its simplicity, to the bulk of the rural Crown lands in the colony yet remaining to be dealt with, for there can be no question that, provided there are reasonable safeguards against unfair competition and other undesirable elements, the less complex and roundabout the process of applying for and securing land the better will it be for all parties concerned.

THOS. HUMPHRIES,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Department of Lands and Survey,
District Office, Christchurch, 7th August, 1903.

System of Ballot.

IN continuation of my report of the 21st ultimo, on the present ballot system, &c., the following analysis that I have made of the seven ballots that have taken place in this district since the 1st January, 1902, will not be devoid of interest.

North Canterbury.—Three ballots—Lyndon No. 2, Mead, and View Hill Plains. Total applications at first ballot, 468. Of these, there were from North Canterbury, 459; South Canterbury, 8; North Island, 1; total, 468. The successful applicants at ballot were—North Canterbury, 52; South Canterbury, 2; other land districts, nil.

South Canterbury.—Four ballots—Maytown, Eccleston, part Waikakahi, and Chamberlain. Total applications at first ballot, 368. Of these, there were from South Canterbury, 263; North Canterbury, 95; other land districts (South Island), 8; other land districts (North Island), 2; total, 368. The successful applicants at ballot were—South Canterbury, 36; North Canterbury, 11; Marlborough, 1; Hawke's Bay, 1.

The Surveyor-General, Wellington.

THOS. HUMPHRIES,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

OTAGO.

REPORT from D. BARRON, Esq., Commissioner of Crown Lands, Otago.

Department of Lands and Survey,
District Office, Dunedin, 14th August, 1903.

The Ballot System.

REFERRING to your circular of the 9th July last, forwarding copy of a memorandum from the Right Hon. the Premier, in which Mr. Seddon asks for suggestions for improving the present system of allotment of Crown lands and lands under the Land for Settlements Act, I have now the honour to submit my reply.

So far as experience in this office goes, there is little or no evidence that wealthy people have taken unfair advantage in applying for land under the present systems. Of course, whether in respect of ordinary Crown lands or lands under the Land for Settlements Act, it has become customary for applicants of all classes and conditions to command as many applications through different members of their families as possible, in order to secure a greater number of chances at the ballot. This practice undoubtedly works in an uneven manner as between large and small families or no families at all, although it may be said, perhaps with some show of reason, that the larger the families the more deserving are they of a larger number of chances. Even then it does not follow as a matter of course that those who obtain the greatest number of chances are always the most successful. Quite a number of instances to the contrary might be adduced.

With regard to deposits under the Land for Settlements Act, where a family require only one section or allotment they can usually arrange without much difficulty for the deposits, knowing that only the successful one will be needed, the others being returned. An undertaking in the case of husband and wife, and sometimes in the case of families, is usually given or demanded that in the event of one being successful the others will stand out. For ordinary Crown lands no deposit is required to be lodged, an agreement on the back of the application to pay if successful being