

and it was actually afterwards purchased for £35,500, why should Pym have got a commission? What services did he render entitling him to a commission?—He had brought the matter before us. Mr. Luckie said he had rendered great service. The Premier certified that he did not know that he could not claim the commission by law, and that $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. was a reasonable amount to pay him. I saw no other course to ward off from the House and the Government a claim which, sooner or later, would have to be paid than that I adopted—namely, to say if Pym was entitled to it the vendors must pay it. When, by the vendors paying 1 per cent., it came to be narrowed down to a small amount, not worth while leaving undecided, and as we were handing the institution over to a Board, I authorized the payment of the $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. As to the reduction in price, one would expect, in buying a large property, to get something off the price. I had no knowledge that the property had been offered at a lower price.

402. Were you aware that Pym had anything whatever to do with the reduction of the price below £37,000?—I had no more knowledge of Mr. Pym's services than what was disclosed by the telegrams.

403. *Mr. Levestam.*] Did any communication pass between yourself and Pym about the 26th December?—No; I have no recollection of any.

404. *The Chairman.*] We will now deal with the purchase of the Christchurch property. Was it not on information from Mr. Harper that you first thought of this purchase?—I simply asked Mr. Harper to let me know what he knew of any properties in Christchurch. There were several properties I thought might be had in the Square.

405. When Mr. Luckie went to Christchurch, who did you tell him to put himself in communication with there?—I told him to see Mr. Harper.

406. Was he to take his advice as to negotiations?—The understanding was, Mr. Luckie was not to bind the association at all; it was to be left open to the Board. I suggested Mr. Harper, who, I thought, would give him good advice. I may state that I had no knowledge whatever that Mr. Maling was any connection of Mr. Harper's.

407. Was Mr. Luckie to put himself in communication with anybody else in Christchurch in reference to the purchase?—I do not recollect. I think I mentioned to him that, if he wanted to have a valuation made, I thought Mr. Matson would be a good man to make it.

408. Mr. Luckie did recommend the purchase of the Maling property, did he not?—Yes.

409. At what price, do you remember?—No. I indorsed Mr. Luckie's recommendation to the Board.

410. And you are of opinion that the purchase was a desirable one?—I think the purchase will turn out very well. I think it is a very good investment for the association.

411. *Mr. Montgomery.*] You stated, I think, that you had received information from Mr. Maling, and a photograph of the property, and that the papers would show this?—I received a photograph of the property from some one. My impression is that it was from the owners. I have not the Christchurch papers here. I only brought the Dunedin papers.

412. Prior to Mr. Luckie going down, had you any communication with Mr. Maling?—I received from some one a photograph and description of the building. I cannot say whether it was from Mr. Maling or not.

413. Is that in the papers?—I should think so; but I have not looked over them.

414. How did Mr. Maling come to send you particulars of his property? How did he know that you wanted the property?—I suppose he heard from Mr. Harper that we intended to buy a property: that is the impression on my mind. So far as I can remember, I had spoken only to Mr. Harper and Mr. Richardson. It is possible I may have spoken to others.

415. Can we have those papers?—I shall ask Mr. Luckie to show me the papers if they were filed in the office.

416. *The Chairman.*] We now come to the Auckland property. How was that purchase initiated? Do you remember?—When I was at Waiwera, I think, Mr. Shera intimated to me that he was willing to sell his property.

417. About what time would that be?—I was at Waiwera in January or February, 1885. I telegraphed to the Board, recommending them to inquire into it, as I was impressed with the way Auckland was advancing. They informed me that a Committee, consisting of two or three directors and the Manager, would go to Auckland. I saw those gentlemen. They came to see me when they arrived in Auckland. I explained to them that I could not say what price might be taken, as I knew nothing about the building except having passed the front of it. The site seemed a very good one. I thought that they should inquire into that and other sites. An objection to the site was that it was too narrow; and I thought it would be better to try and arrange for the adjoining building as well, which I understood could be obtained. I then went down to Christchurch and Dunedin. I was not present at any Board meeting before the purchase when the question was brought up. I really took no part in connection with the purchase beyond what I have described.

418. Do you know of the building not having been used since its purchase in 1885?—I am sorry to say, Yes.

419. We have had it in evidence that another place is being used for which rental is paid?—The circumstances are these: For some time we did not get possession—there was another office there. After we got possession something was to be done at once. When I inquired, I was constantly told that the Building Committee, to whom was confided the charge of these matters, could not be got together. Afterwards, when there was so much excitement against our spending money on buildings, the matter was probably not proposed.

420. That is how the building has lain idle?—That is the reason.

421. Do you know what commission, if any, was paid on Shera's purchase?—I do not know of any commission. The Board paid none.

422. *Mr. Stewart.*] Did you take any means to ascertain the value of the property at all? Was