

846. Did he tell you to do so?—He handed me the application to put in. Of course I asked him to do this.

847. Did he ask you to put in the deposit-money?—No. I had said that I would pay it. I do not think he asked me.

848. Since then there has been some unpleasantness between you?—There has been very little unpleasantness. I have not had much conversation about it.

849. There has been some case in the Court, has there not?—Yes.

850. How has it been decided—in your favour or in his?—It was nothing in connection with me, this action was not.

851. It was not a case in which you were directly interested?—No.

852. *Mr. Smith.*] Was there anybody present when you had the conversation with Mr. Sowry previous to going in for it?—My son was with me. Of course he went in for the same purpose.

853. Do you wish the Committee to understand that Mr. Sowry put in this application solely for you and not for himself?—Yes; I wish them to understand so.

854. And you lodged the deposit-money. Have you received that deposit-money back?—I have not.

855. How much was this deposit-money you lodged with this application of Mr. Sowry's?—I think it was £40 8s. 9d.

856. And you say you have never received it back?—No, I have not received it back.

857. On the drawing for the section, when you found Sowry was successful, did you expect to get the section transferred from him to you?—I certainly did.

858. Did you ask him to do this?—I asked him to transfer as soon as he was able to do so.

859. And what was his reply?—He said he did not go in for the section for me at all.

860. He refused to transfer?—He refused to do anything in the matter. I then told him I would protest against the whole thing.

861. You told him you would protest against the section being allotted to him?—There is a protest going on. Mr. Troop has protested.

862. He was an unsuccessful applicant?—Yes.

863. The Committee wish to get at the bottom of the question of dummyism, Mr. Peebles; that is the reason I am asking you rather straight questions. I would ask you if you are able to tell the Committee positively that Sowry said he did not want and was not going in for this section for himself?—Most decidedly he said so. If he had not said so, I would not have been likely to ask him to go in for the section. I asked him as to whether he was going in or not. He said he was not.

864. It was in the presence of your son you asked that?—Yes.

865. Then you asked him to go in for you?—Yes.

866. With the understanding that he was to transfer to you as soon as possible?—I do not think there was any particular understanding. Of course, I understood I was to get it transferred, though it was not said so in so many words.

867. Surely, when you lodged the money for him and he went in for you, you expected to get the section?—Yes.

868. Is it not general current rumour that you were prepared to pay something to any successful applicant who was willing to transfer this section to you?—It is generally reported so—that I was willing to do so.

869. *Mr. McKenzie.*] Were you prepared to do so?—I believe I would have given a little more than what it was put up for. I could not say any particular sum. No doubt I would have tried to treat with the successful applicant.

870. Did you offer anything to Mr. Sowry?—I did not.

871. You did not say to Mr. Sowry that you would give him a certain sum if he was successful?—I said I would be willing to pay any expenses he might be put to in the way of Court business, transfer, &c.

872. You did not offer him any money to justify him in making a declaration to the effect that it was for his own use and benefit?—No.

873. Have you sued Mr. Sowry for this deposit he made for the section?—I have not.

874. Why?—Simply because I wanted to procure the section. If I sued him for the deposit I would only have the money.

875. You have a prospect of getting the section yet from him?—No.

876. You intend to sue him for the deposit? You say you paid £40 8s. 9d: are you going to let that go, and not take steps to recover it?—I have not taken advice on the subject. I do not know whether I can sue Sowry for it. I really put in the deposit myself.

877. When you had this conversation with Mr. Sowry, what compensation did you offer him for his trouble?—I did not offer him any compensation in particular: I told him I was going to treat him liberally.

878. In a money way?—That was the word I made use of.

879. Just give us an idea of how you meant to treat him?—I intended to give him £20 or £30.

880. For applying for the section in your interest. Has Sowry been occupying this section?—The section is not granted to Sowry yet. I believe not.

881. Has anybody else?—No.

882. *Mr. Kerr.*] Did this gentleman for whom you paid the deposit ever offer to give you the money back again?—No. But he has not got it yet.

883. Does the Waste Lands Board still hold that money?—Yes, as far as I know.

884. Does this man want to hold the section?—He wants to hold the section.

885. He would pay the money back if he did get the section?—He told me he would pay the money back.

886. He did not ask for any more?—No.