

are made against the conduct of the case, so far as I was concerned, before, during, and after the trial. That is the part I propose to take upon the notice as it has been given to me. If Mr. Jellicoe or if the Committee desire to examine me upon the rest of the petition of course I shall then be treated as an ordinary witness. I desire a distinction to be drawn between the two classes of evidence. I do not volunteer any evidence except upon that part directly touching the conduct of the case, so far as I was concerned. I am prepared to give that evidence now.

*Mr. Gully*: After hearing the statement which Mr. Bell proposes to make affecting his own personal conduct I propose to swear him as a witness, and ask the Committee to hear his evidence on the case. I should have done that in any case; but I understand that, whether I advert to it or not, the Committee has a desire to do so.

*The Chairman*: That is correct. I understood almost from the first that would be the line we would adopt. Mr. Bell can make a statement now, and reserve what he has to say on other points until after he has seen Mr. Richardson's evidence.

*Francis Henry Dillon Bell*, having been sworn, made the following statement: I was Crown Solicitor at the time of the trial of Chemis, and until the end of the year 1890. With regard to the allegation that the prisoner Chemis desired to obtain the advice and assistance of Mr. Jellicoe, and that attempts were made to prevent him having that assistance, I was unaware of any such desire, and certainly took no part in the efforts to prevent his employing Mr. Jellicoe, if any such efforts were made by any persons. There is an allegation in the petition that, while the matter of Chemis's sentence was under the consideration of the Executive, I was "nightly in attendance upon Ministers in the Cabinet-room conferring and advising with them on the matter;" and there is a further allegation that I was "greatly interested in supporting the conviction, and used every influence I possessed with the late Ministry to sustain the same." Both allegations are entirely false. I never was in the Cabinet-room at all during this time, so far as I can remember. Certainly I was not in the Cabinet-room for any purpose connected with Chemis. I never saw any of the exhibits after the trial in the Supreme Court. I understand (I have since heard) that the exhibits were in the Cabinet-room. That is why I am able to speak confidently. I received the usual formal communication from the Cabinet, covering the affidavits filed by Mr. Jellicoe, and asking me if I had any observation to make. I returned the formal answer that I had no observation to make. I never was consulted by any Minister of the Crown except the Hon. Mr. Richardson, who endeavoured, in argument with me, to persuade me of the innocence of Chemis. I had no communication with any other Minister, to the best of my recollection. His Excellency the Governor sent for me to ask me one or two questions, which I answered. I used no argument with His Excellency: I simply answered the questions he put to me, and then retired. There is an allegation that there was certain evidence—distinctly rebutting evidence—on minor points, used by the prosecution as against the accused, of which rebutting evidence the petitioner could prove that they (the prosecution) were aware, and which they purposely refrained from using. That allegation, Sir, was made before. I sued the author of it for libel. The allegation was absolutely disproved. The author apologised, and paid £250. I, Sir, ask permission to put in the Judge's notes of the evidence taken on the trial of the action *Bell versus Jellicoe*.

*Mr. Jellicoe*: I consent in so far as I am concerned.

*Mr. Bell*: The witness Holmes, with reference to whom principally, I presume, this allegation is made, when cross-examined by Sir Robert Stout, said this: That he himself had come to me and represented to me that it was inconvenient that both he and his father should attend; and that, having ascertained what evidence he could give, I said to him that he might go, and that his expenses would not be paid if he did go. That was Holmes's evidence. My evidence further was that after I had let Holmes go, I went into Court, told Mr. Bunny, in the presence of Mr. Maurice Richmond, of what Holmes could say, and of the fact that I was letting him go, and asked Mr. Bunny if he wished him kept. Mr. Maurice Richmond was not called, because the case at that time had ceased. I was called, at my own desire, but before that the plaintiff had withdrawn his allegation. So much with regard to the witness Holmes. With regard to the other witnesses, some women who spoke as to the milk-account, one of these women was called in the Magistrate's Court. When she gave her evidence, I accepted her statement as correct, and, therefore, called no more of the women, who could only corroborate her. I called that same woman again in the Supreme Court, and in the Supreme Court, upon her evidence being given, I stated in open Court that I accepted it. The other women could only have been called to support that statement, which, having been given on oath, I accepted for the prosecution. I am not aware that there is any other evidence which it is suggested that I stifled. On the trial the evidence of Tasker was taken. He had not been called before the Magistrate, and his name was not on the back of the indictment. His evidence was given to the police during the trial, and a copy of it was at once supplied to Mr. Bunny, and he was asked when he would like that witness called. That copy, with a letter covering it, is now in the possession of Mr. Bunny's brother. Further, certain evidence which was tendered to the prosecution with regard to men seen on the hill (this was before the trial), was taken down by the police, and was sent by my instructions to Mr. Bunny, and that evidence is also in the possession of Mr. Bunny's brother.

*The Chairman*: Do you know at that time if the police took any steps to identify either of these men, one of whom was referred to as having quarrelled with Hawkings, and the other of going away from the property carrying a gun?

*Witness*: Yes, Sir, every effort was used. I do not think the police believed it; I certainly did not believe it; but such efforts as could be made were made under my direction.

*The Chairman*: That is all you wish to state now?

*Witness*: I understand that that answers the attack which has been made upon myself personally.

*Mr. Jellicoe*: Do I understand, Mr. Bell, that you will produce a copy of the Judge's notes?

*Witness*: I have ordered them.