

Ritchie was at the door as I came out. There are two doors, and I think Mr. Ritchie may have been present at his door, as the interview was finished.

227. And you had no talk with Mr. Ritchie about this at all?—No; I do not think so.

228. You got all your information from Mr. Henderson on the subject?—Yes.

229. Now, was there anything said at this interview as to what you were to get for lending your name?—I do not think there was anything mentioned at this time. I have no recollection of it.

230. But you were to get something?—Yes.

231. That was the understanding?—Yes.

232. But no amount was mentioned?—Yes.

233. And you were prepared to take the risk, or any risk there was, without stipulating the amount you were to be paid?—There was no question of risk mentioned. If that word had been used I think I should have had some recollection of it.

234. Did you understand why the company wanted this run taken up in a name other than their own?—Yes; because—just what was said. I understood that what they said was that the Government would “go for” a company, but would not “go for” a private individual in the matter of rabbits. That is what I understood.

235. Then, was there nothing said to you about the company only wanting the run for a short period?—No; I do not remember anything about what period they wanted it for.

236. They did not tell you that they only wanted it for a short time, in order to give them time to sell some stock?—I have no recollection of it.

237. Never heard about it?—No.

238. Not at any time? It is news to you now?—I never heard of it before. I can see now what they wanted it for.

239. And it was never explained to you at all?—No; there was very little said.

240. Well, now, did you never at any time have an interview with Mr. Ritchie at which this whole matter was explained to you?—No, not that I remember.

241. Did Mr. Ritchie never explain to you that, in consequence of the large area of inaccessible country included within the boundaries of the run, he dared not take it up as the company's, as the cost of rabbiting would be serious?—Never heard of it.

242. Did Mr. Ritchie ever tell you that he only wanted to get a few months in which to muster and sell the stock, and that the Government was sure to exact the fulfilment of every condition from the company to the very end of the lease, if the company bid: that they might do so to you even to making you bankrupt, but that they were certain to do so in the case of a company?—No. Mr. Ritchie never hinted at bankruptcy—never used the word—and I have no recollection of anything either about the run—as to what the Government would do to the company as against a private individual. We had no long interview. Mr. Ritchie made me no long statement at all.

243. From anything he said, you cannot even say whether that reference to what the Government would do to a company and not to an individual was on this occasion or at some other time? (No answer given).

244. Did Mr. Ritchie not say to you that he would not take the responsibility on the company on any consideration, and that he only wanted to get the use of the country for a short time, if they could get it for the rent, and such consideration as you might think fair to yourself without responsibility to the company?—No; he did not say so.

*His Honour*: Will you repeat that, please.

*Mr. Haggitt*: Mr. Ritchie did not say that the company would not take the responsibility on themselves on any consideration; that they only wanted to get the use of the country for a short time, if they could get it for the rent, and such consideration as he (Scott) might think fair to himself, so that the company might not be responsible for the term of the lease or for rabbiting.

245. Then, will you deny, Mr. Scott, that you said to Mr. Ritchie that you were quite willing to bid for it on these terms—that the Government could get nothing out of you, as you had nothing, and they were not likely to push you to extremes?—That reply of mine was just made at the door coming out of the office, alluding to the remark that they might come down on me for the rabbits. Mr. Henderson had previously told me I was to look to them for everything, and I made the jocular remark that they would not get much out of me; but it was not at a time that Mr. Ritchie had made a long explanation like that.

246. You did say it?—I made that remark, and Mr. Ritchie, in reply to that, said, “Oh, but you are doing pretty well,” and I said “Yes, I am doing pretty well now.”

247. Now, when you saw Mr. Ritchie, after you had been fined, what did Mr. Ritchie say to you? You told Mr. Ritchie you had been fined; what did he say to you on that occasion?—What I saw Mr. Ritchie about—I do not think I went to tell him I had been fined; he knew that; but I went to tell him the policeman had called for the money, and he told me at that time to put him off as long as I could. I told him I would do so. I told him I had put the policeman off by telling him I expected some money from Melbourne, which was the truth. I had expected some money from Melbourne, and I put the policeman off for a month.

248. Is that all you recollect Mr. Ritchie saying?—Yes.

249. Put him off, and get as much time as possible; that was all he said?—Yes.

250. Did Mr. Ritchie say to you anything to this effect: that he was sorry he could not interfere, as you had entered upon the venture with your eyes open, and after a full explanation by him?—He never said anything of the sort.

251. Did he say anything to this effect: that if that was the end of it he might go beyond his bargain and pay the fine, so that your remuneration in the matter might not be swept away, but at present he would not?—No; he did not say so.

252. Well, then, you did not know, Mr. Scott, that this run had been bought in your name until some time afterwards?—Well, some day or two afterwards.