

48. What was the date?—I think it was about the end of January. I could not exactly say. My impression is that they stayed until they actually got the land. They left about the 14th February.

49. *Mr. G. Hutchison.*] Are you satisfied that the balance over the £500 limit could be exercised elsewhere?—They told me so.

50. But have you looked into the matter yourself? There is a provision in the Act which says that no land-order, of whatever amount, or whatever the number of persons, shall entitle such person or other persons with him, or for and on his or their behalf, by virtue thereof, or of any transfer, to acquire Crown lands in any part of the colony to any value exceeding £500?—Do you mean that nobody could get more than £500 worth?

*Sir R. Stout:* That was only a substitute section for section 35 in the other Act. It did not deal with land under the Act of 1872.

*Mr. Wright:* I might draw attention to this fact: that one is for £513. The transfer of one scrip for £513, which is over £500, is certified to by two Commissioners.

*Mr. Guinness:* That only shows that the Commissioners did not do their duty.

51. *Sir John Hall.*] A claim of £495 is still hanging over you?—I understand the surcharge has been dropped as far as Mr. Williams is concerned.

52. *Dr. Newman:* Have you any idea why Mr. Williams has not been surcharged for this money?

*Mr. Guinness:* Why, it was disallowed?

*Witness:* I do not know, except that it might be thought unfair to do so; but I have no knowledge on the subject.

53. *Mr. Tanner:* Has no legal proceedings been initiated to recover it?—No.

54. *Mr. Guinness.*—When you got the draft you wished to satisfy yourself that it would be all right?—Yes.

55. Did you see the Chief Commissioner and Mr. Williams together, or separately?—Not together; I saw Mr. Baker first. I do not think I saw Mr. Williams until after I paid the draft, and when I was going to use the scrip. Mr. Williams has, I believe, acknowledged that I did see him; but I do not remember the exact date. It was on Mr. Baker's authority that I paid the draft.

Hon. G. F. RICHARDSON examined.

56. *The Chairman.*] Some of these transactions, Mr. Richardson, occurred while you were in office. You might wish to have some question to ask or some observation to make to the Committee?—No; I have nothing to do with this. I only want to know what you require my attendance for. I should be glad to answer any questions if anything turns up upon which the Committee should wish for such information as I can give them. If you will send me word when you want me I shall be very happy to come.

57. My reason for asking your attendance was because the Administration of which you were a member might have some question to put to the witness.—If there is any matter which you think reflects upon that Administration, or upon myself, about which I can give you information I shall be most happy to appear, in which case I hope you will let me know in time.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2ND, 1893.

ALEXANDER BARRON, Under-Secretary for Lands and Survey Department, attended and gave evidence.

58. *The Chairman.*] Will you place the documents in connection with scrip that were used in Canterbury consecutively before the Committee, giving us the instructions from the Minister of Lands to the various officers, and the communications from the officers at Wellington to the officers at Christchurch; and also any legal opinions that were furnished to the Ministers?—I produce the file. The case, apparently, commences with a statement from the Crown Solicitor of the results of the appeal in the case of Paterson and Fairlie against Humphries, the Commissioner of Crown Lands in Auckland. Mr. G. F. Richardson was then Minister of Lands. The date is the 2nd December, 1889. [The minute upon the covering-paper was read.]

59. Is that the minute?—That is the minute of Mr. G. F. Richardson.

60. *Dr. Newman.*] Have you got Mr. Bell's opinion there?—Yes, his statement of the result of the case. Then, in reply to a communication from the Receiver of Land Revenue, Christchurch, Mr. Elliott first sent a memorandum to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, dated the 2nd December, 1889:—

“2nd December, 1889.

“ADVERTING to previous correspondence relative to accepting scrip in payment for Lake Ellesmere lands, I am instructed by the Hon. the Minister of Lands to state that, having regard to all the circumstances, and to the desirability of ending the matter of the Forest Trees Planting scrip, no objection will be made to its being received as payment for Ellesmere lands, the amount being debited to the Public Works Fund.

“H. J. H. ELLIOTT,

“The Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch.

“Under-Secretary.”

On the same date, the 2nd December, 1889, Mr. Elliott again sent a memorandum, as follows:—

“2nd December, 1889.

“I OMITTED to mention in my memorandum this morning, as to exercise of Forest Trees Planting scrip in acquiring Ellesmere lands, that, by the recent decision of the Court of Appeal, the scrip is exercisable for the full amount stated therein. Further, the scrip is not liable to stamp duty.

“H. J. H. ELLIOTT,

“The Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch.

“Under-Secretary.”