

the pay for difference in rank. That is, of course, the matter affecting the co-petitioners. About a week after submitting the claims to you we got a note saying the matter would be duly considered. I do not think I have a copy of that letter, but it was to that effect. Then, of the next communication on the subject I have a copy: "To the Under-Secretary for Defence. — Difference in pay, &c.—Referring to your letter of the 17th November last *re* the above matter, I would be glad to learn if any decision has yet been arrived at." That is dated the 29th April, 1903, and was signed by me. The letter of the 17th November there referred to was the one from the Under-Secretary acknowledging the receipt of our claims. The reply to that letter of mine which I have just quoted from the Under-Secretary was as follows, dated the 4th May, 1903: "In reply to your letter of the 29th April, I beg to inform you that the question *re* the above (pay and allowances for difference in rank) is still under the consideration of the Hon. the Minister of Defence." My next communication is dated the 20th May: "Pay and allowances for difference in rank.—I have the honour to again bring this matter under your notice. As it has now been under consideration for nine months, I must respectfully request that the decision of the Hon. the Minister be made known as early as possible." That was to the Under-Secretary. His reply, dated May, 1903—the day is not filled in—is as follows: "Pay and allowances for difference in rank.—In reply to your letter of the 20th instant *re* the above, I beg to inform you that no decision has yet been arrived at as regards your claim." My next communication to the Department I do not appear to have a copy of, but I have their next reply, dated the 5th August, 1903: "Referring to your claim against the Imperial Government for services rendered (in the Commandant's office) in assisting to prepare [entirely preparing] 'medal rolls' and 'discharge-certificates' of the Seventh New Zealand Contingent, I have been directed by the Hon. the Defence Minister to inform you he regrets he cannot sanction any payment over and above the amount and period authorised by the Hon. the Acting Defence Minister on the 9th July, 1902—viz., for three months at £4 per week. Please inform me whether you will accept that amount in full satisfaction of your claim in this regard, and, if so, a voucher will be passed. As your 'domicile' was in Wellington prior to your leaving New Zealand with the original contingent you served in and also on your return, you are not, therefore, entitled to claim 'detention allowance' while doing any work in Wellington in connection with the contingents, and therefore any amount paid to you by the paymaster of your regiment (or other officer) must be deducted from any moneys which may be due to you." My reply to that was—dated 21st August: "I am in receipt of memo. 675 of 5th inst. I will not accept the amount mentioned therein in full satisfaction of my claim." My next action was to present the petition to the House. That is the whole of the correspondence that has taken place between the Department and myself.

50. Do you mean to tell the Committee that, although I refused payment on the 15th April, and notified it, this was the first you heard that payment of your claim for £634 was refused?—I think I read you my letter of the 11th March, 1903, asking you to pass the vouchers for £634 0s. 3d. for payment. I do not recollect any reply being sent to that letter.

51. Were you never told by the Under-Secretary or Major Smith? You have just told us that Major Smith did tell you that the vouchers would not be paid. You said that you had several interviews with Major Smith, and he told you that the accounts would not be paid, and that you had better amend them by claiming for the rank of lieutenant. When was that?—That, I think, was in April or May. You will find that out from the voucher which you have there, in which the reduction is shown. It was on the same day that I made out the amended voucher.

52. Do you recollect the date when you got Mr. Barber to interest himself?—It was just about the day before you went to the Islands, Mr. Barber. Do you recollect asking me why I troubled you just before you were going away?

*Mr. Barber:* Yes, I do.

*Captain Clark:* Again, I might say that I interviewed you personally, Mr. Seddon, before I saw Mr. Barber. Perhaps you do not recollect.

53. You finished work on the 28th February. According to your own showing your claim for the £634 0s. 3d. was sent in on the 11th March. It reached me on the 30th March?—No, Sir; you have made a slight mistake. Some of my claims had been in since the 28th February previously—those for £50 2s., £5 2s., and £9 5s. 5d.

54. At all events, that was the first I saw of your claims?—You saw the claim for £50 2s. before, because we presented the claims to you personally at the interview.

55. The one for the difference in pay?—Yes.

56. There were a good many more in the same box?—Yes.

57. I am speaking of the claim for £634?—Quite so. It embraced the one for £50 2s.

58. This is the next one that I received—amended on the 19th March to £442 6s. 11d.?—Quite so; but by that time the gratuity for £191 13s. 4d. had been paid; it was paid on the 18th. The claim was reduced on account of a portion having been paid.

59. You say, Captain Clark, that from the 3rd April you had never heard anything till just before Mr. Barber was going away that your claim had been reduced, either orally or in writing?—No; I had interviewed you once in the meantime.

60. Did I not tell you that I would not pay it, and refused it?—You did not actually say that you would not pay or that you refused it. You said there was a difficulty, and led me to believe there was the difficulty about my position as captain. At any rate, that was the view I took of it, for I may have misunderstood you. I did not take it that you absolutely refused to pay the claim. Of course, you say that Major Smith was in a position to inform me of these things. Quite so; he had the minutes and the whole correspondence.

61. The Under-Secretary would not know anything whatever about that. It is a military question. That refusal went to General Babington, and it is only from General Babington's office that you would get your reply?—I have had no reply from the General's office. The first reply directly bearing on the question in any way was the offer of the £4 a week through Mr. Grey.