

TUESDAY, 3RD NOVEMBER, 1903.

Colonel CHAYTOR further examined. (No. 15.)

1. *The Chairman.*] We want all the correspondence which has taken place between your Department—the military branch of the Defence Office—and Captain Clark with regard to his claims?—I can only find one letter. That is the one on the file.

2. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] You remember Captain Clark lodging his voucher for £277?—Yes, sir.

3. Do you know the date of that?—It was a few days after he ceased work in the office.

4. About the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd March?—Yes, it would be.

5. Was that voucher amended at any time?—I think he lodged his vouchers personally.

6. Did he receive an acknowledgment of the receipt of the voucher, or when did you inform him of what had happened with regard to it?—Some time after that. The ordinary routine in our office is, on the receipt of vouchers, to forward them straight away to the Under-Secretary for Defence without acknowledging them. They are forwarded straight off, usually without a covering memorandum.

7. You received that voucher during the first few days of March?—I did receive the vouchers in the office.

8. When was Captain Clark officially informed of the decision of the Department with reference to his claim?—The letter here is dated the 21st March. Captain Clark had written asking what was the position with regard to his vouchers.

9. Is that the original letter or a copy that you have there?—This is a copy in the outward letter-book.

10. Will you kindly read it?—"Captain J. J. Clark.—21st March, 1903.—Your claims.—Your claim for £277 17s. 6d. for pay and detention allowance under orders of C. S. O. has been referred by this office to the Hon. the Minister of Defence for his approval, and you will be informed of his decision when the papers are returned. Claims for £50 2s. difference in pay, £5 2s. extra-duty pay, and £9 5s. 5d. sundries were referred to the Minister by the Under-Secretary for Defence. The two claims for adjutant's gratuity—£50 each—are with our file, but the Under-Secretary for Defence reports that the question of payment of the allowance has been referred to the Chief Paymaster at Cape Town.—By order. E. W. C. CHAYTOR, Lt.-Col., A.A.G."

11. This letter that we have here is the original of that [Letter handed to witness]?—Yes.

12. Can you explain how this original letter is on the file and yet you have a copy in your book?—Not unless it was left in the office by Captain Clark afterwards. He was in to see the General about his pay many times.

13. Is it likely that an officer receiving a letter such as that in reply to an important claim of his would hand the letter back to the sender?—Many letters are minuted back; but this is not minuted back.

14. Are you aware that Captain Clark says he never received this reply?—I was told so.

15. How do you account for this letter being on the file here, other than the suggestion that Captain Clark may have handed it back?—I cannot account for it at all, other than the suggestion that he handed it back when in the office at some time or other, or left it there. The letter was registered out on Saturday, the 21st March.

16. What do you call "registering out"?—That letter is sent to the clerk for "B" duties, who enters it in the book. It is then handed over to the clerk, who takes two press copies and puts it into an envelope and posts it. One copy is kept for our file, unless it is a case of a typed letter. Two copies are taken in this book, except in cases of typed letters, when duplicate copies are typed, and one is left in the book and the other is put on the file.

17. Do you have many letters such as this—original letters—returned to you and put on the file?—With circulars especially a great many originals have been returned with a minute, but they have nearly always had a minute on them.

18. Something to indicate why they were sent back?—Yes.

19. There is a minute on the side in pencil. Will you read it, please?—"Since refused by Imperial Government." I think that is Mr. Grey's handwriting.

20. Would such a minute have any effect in cancelling the sending-on of a letter?—I think that is the Under-Secretary's writing; at any rate, it was not written in our office. No one in our office would have a right to put any mark at all on a letter which I had written. Of course, letters have been brought back to me when extra information has been received before they were posted.

21. Is this a file belonging to the Commandant's office or the Under-Secretary's Department?—That is the Commandant's office file. The letter was written from the Commandant's office, but it may have been left with the Under-Secretary or at the Commandant's office. That is the only explanation I can give for its being on the file. I was not aware that it was on the file. The letter was posted.

22. You can see from the creases that the letter has been folded?—Yes; and the letter is registered out as being posted on the day on which it was written.

23. *Mr. Hardy.*] Who did you say put this marginal note on the letter?—I think the writing is that of the Under-Secretary.

24. Would the Under-Secretary go to your office to put the marginal note on it?—To my knowledge he has never been up in the office.

25. Then, it must have been sent to whoever put the marginal note on it?—Yes.

26. That might account for the folding of the letter. It has been out of the office, that is clear?—Yes.

27. If the letter had gone to the Under-Secretary, who you say put the marginal note on it, would it not have been folded to go to him?—No; as a rule when we send letters to the Under-Secretary they are done up in a large envelope with files.