

work that I had been paid for doing in connection with the Ninth, and I do not see why there should be any question about the payment of that portion of it.

28. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] You did not claim for that separately; it was claimed with the other? But if the Department had been willing to pay that they could easily have done so separately. Coming, after the Seventh Contingent work, to the distribution of the clasps and the preparation of the King's Medal roll, let us look at it a little more from a moral point of view. When I had done the Seventh work I was ordered by Major Smith to go on with the distribution of the clasps, and then from this to the preparation of the King's Medal roll. I was not told by Major Smith at any time about any difference in the pay which the Department would give me, and which I was at least fully entitled to. Nor was I told of any stipulated length of service. Instead, I was allowed to proceed with the work, and I completed it, and I had not the faintest idea, nor was I informed till some months afterwards, that an authority existed for the work. That was told me only about three months after the work was completed. I ask the members of the Committee, was that honourable on the part of the Government? They allowed me to go on with the work; they did not say anything about the rate of pay; three months afterwards they told me the rate of pay at which I should have worked, and of the stipulated term of service for it. Was it fair, was it businesslike, was it honourable on the part of the Government? Again, returning to the question of the authority given by the Hon. the Acting Minister of Defence, the Hon. the Minister has said that the authority was given, and it was acted upon by me when I made out the King's Medal roll. Now, I think that is almost impossible. I think I have already said that at the date of the authority being given—the 9th July, 1902—I was still in Africa. Again, to further increase the unlikelihood of such an idea being correct, the authority was given on the 9th July, whereas the conditions of the King's Medals were not publicly announced in London until the 29th September, 1902, and they were not known in New Zealand till the 20th November, 1902—four months after the giving of the authority by the Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones. I tender a copy of the Army Orders in support of my statement. [Document produced.] I ask the Committee very specially to note this point. I say again that when the Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones gave the authority for the employment of somebody at £4 a week for three months the authority, if it had been taken up, would have lapsed, because it was not acted upon till four months afterwards. Even by the wildest stretch of imagination the Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones could not have foreseen when giving the authority that this work would be required, because it was not known in London till nearly three months afterwards—the conditions were not actually evolved till three months afterwards. The Hon. the Minister said, with regard to the vouchers, that I could have stopped all this trouble if I had sent them in monthly. Perhaps I could. I am sorry that the mistake has occurred—very sorry. No one is sorrier than I am that we have had to go to all the trouble; but the trouble was caused simply through my not knowing the regulations. You have heard what Colonel Chaytor said—that he was not aware of the regulations on the subject. Colonel Chaytor was appointed to the staff, and it was his business to find out. I was only casually employed. It certainly might have been my business to find this out also, but I did not find it out. It was not with any object that I kept the vouchers back. Certainly I had a little money when I came back to New Zealand—I had enough money to keep me going. The work had now been completed, the vouchers had been submitted, but they had not been paid. Two or three months afterwards—I think, in April or May—I saw Major Smith. I may say that I saw him almost every other week casually to see if anything had turned up. I knew him very well personally. As I say, I saw him about three months after I had submitted the vouchers—to the best of my recollection, in April or May—and he said that a question had been raised about my rank as captain, and he did not think that the Hon. the Minister would pass my vouchers as a captain, but he said he thought it could not be denied that I was a lieutenant, and that if I cared to amend the vouchers and make them out for pay as a lieutenant they might go through. I did so, agreeing to take the pay and allowance of a lieutenant without prejudice to my rank of captain. The vouchers were signed by Major Smith, and I sent them in again, claiming pay as a lieutenant. There was nothing heard of them till about three months after that. I had seen Major Smith several times, and in June he mentioned that they were still stuck up, and, in fact, he told me then for the first time that an authority existed for the work at £4 a week for three months. That was the first intimation of the authority that I had at any time. That was five months after the work was all completed. Major Smith advised me to amend my vouchers again, and to take the £4 a week which the Government offered. Of course, he did not say that I should claim for the three months; he reckoned there would be no trouble about getting the £4 a week for the five months, and I amended my vouchers accordingly. You may ask, why did I do that? Well, in ordinary business if you have, shall we say, a bad debt, and a man offers you 10s. in the pound, are you going to throw that away? I was prepared to accept the £4 a week without prejudice and fight it out for the balance. I was prepared to accept that at the time. The Government did not see fit to give it to me, and, of course, I have since been put to considerable expense; that is to say, I have been delayed for six months, and, of course, I petition the House for the original amount. I do not petition for the amended amount. I do not see that I should. I have been kept out of the money, put to additional expense, and put to considerable inconvenience through the want of the money, because I could have gone into business in the meantime on my own account. So I petition for the full amount. In summing up I would say that the work was done in a Government office. I do not know whether that is any special point about the matter, but it was done with the knowledge of the Government officers immediately above me—Major Smith, Colonel Chaytor, the General—all knew that I was employed there, and what I was doing. Major Smith, on the completion of the work, gave me a certificate to say that the work had been duly carried out. I hand a copy of it to the Committee. [Document produced and handed in.] I do not know whether the original is obtainable, but it has not been brought to light.