

*Mr. Hardy:* We naturally thought after what occurred last session that you would have carried out the Committee's wishes equitably.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* I wish to tell you that I did so, and agreed to pay the £4 a week for the time—of which there is no specified agreement—and when I made that minute and ordered it to be paid, I found that the Paymaster rightly stepped in and deducted certain amounts which he claimed, and Captain Clark refused to agree to the deductions. As far as I am concerned, I acted according to what I felt and could ascertain to be the wishes of the Committee, and it is no fault of mine that Captain Clark has not got the money. When I get hold of the papers I shall be able to point that out to you. I think there has been some correspondence sent to the Imperial Government about it.

*The Chairman:* The point that struck the Committee was this, that the Committee's recommendation was given last year, and yet the papers had not gone to the Imperial Paymaster until the 6th June of this year, and we are anxious to know the cause of the delay. No one so far can give us any reason for the delay.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* We came to the conclusion that Clark should be offered £4 a week for the full time, and he was offered that.

*Captain Clark:* I have not been offered that sum complete.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* Where is what you were offered?

*Captain Clark:* It is embodied in the petition.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* What was the date of the offer made?

*Captain Clark:* The 12th March.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* It was before March that the matter came before me and I ordered the sum to be paid in accordance with the wish of the Committee. As there were faults on both sides, and it was the wish of the Committee that he should be paid £4 a week, I thought it was a reasonable thing that he should be paid, and I ordered that he should be notified to that effect. Then the Paymaster stepped in and made certain reductions of £56 12s. 2d., and from that stage forward it was entirely out of my hands. The Committee's idea was that he should receive £4 a week for the full time he had been engaged, and I offered him the £4 a week.

*Mr. Hardy:* I do not think we mentioned any amount.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* I took that to be the general idea. The £4 a week was offered to him, and the stoppage of payment is due to his refusal to acknowledge the reduction of certain items set out in the correspondence. What I wanted to make clear to the Committee was that it was not correct to hold that no action had been taken before June. The minuted voucher is here showing that he agreed to take the £4 a week and actually sent in the voucher, which bears his signature. He went back to Major Smith and withdrew his first voucher and put in a second one for £102 13s. 4d., and I ordered payment in accordance with that.

*Mr. Hardy:* But we have no evidence that that £4 a week was offered him.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* Yes; here is the voucher itself for £102 13s. 4d. It is sent in by Captain Clark and signed by Major Smith. That I ordered him to receive. [Voucher referred to and explained.] This is the voucher which Captain Clark sent in and agreed to take—the £102 13s. 4d.

*Mr. Taylor:* That is, without prejudice.

*The Hon. the Minister of Defence:* You may put it that way if you like. That is the item Mr. Grey referred to when he said it was put before the Imperial Government. The pay I authorised was on the 23rd March last.

*Mr. Hardy:* That never came out in evidence.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* Why the amount is reduced is shown by a letter here which was sent to the petitioner by the Paymaster-General, showing the items of reduction. All I can say is that I ordered the £102 13s. 4d. to be paid in accordance with the voucher. The question of adjusting the account is a matter entirely for the Paymaster-General. If an amount is due he is held responsible for it by the Imperial Government. Although I ordered the £102 13s. 4d. to be paid I have no authority beyond that. He says that so much is due on account of certain items, and he makes the reduction.

*Mr. Hardy:* You have placed it on evidence that Clark was told he was to get £4 a week.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* Yes.

*Mr. Hardy:* This Committee last year had no evidence that he was told he was to get that amount.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* He put in his own voucher for it. The facts are these: When he put in what I term that exorbitant claim—Major Smith told you about that—I said to Major Smith that the Government would never pay that, and according to the evidence you got last session it was communicated to Clark that if he put in a reasonable claim in all probability the voucher would be passed. Major Smith gave him the hint, and he then put this voucher in for £4 a week. Having done that, it appeared to me from what had occurred before the Committee last year that it was a reasonable thing to pay the £4 a week, and I ordered him to be paid that in accordance with his own voucher, which was certified to by Major Smith. These deductions which have been made are matters between the Department and Clark. I do not know whether they should be deducted or not. That is a matter for the Paymaster, and not for me.

*Mr. Hardy:* But the £4 a week, with the deductions made by the Treasury, leaves him in a worse position than the Committee, after going through the evidence, felt justified in asking the Government to place him in.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* You would not recommend the Government to pay a man moneys which he had already been paid? Is it not better to go into the matter as to whether these deductions are reasonable? You ought to get Mr. Heywood and the military experts to come here and give evidence upon the deductions. As far as I can recollect, I believe the question of some of these deductions has gone Home to the Imperial Government in order to ascertain