

whether they should be paid or otherwise; but in the meantime the Paymaster would not pay the full amount I ordered because, as he said, the deductions ought to be made. On the question of rank I allowed the voucher to stand, and it still stands. I did not go into the matter of difference in rank. I was rather surprised when I was told that no action was taken until June last, as the matter came to us in December. It was before Cabinet, and was referred to me, and three days after it was before Cabinet I dealt with it. That settles the matter so far as the Private Secretary mentioned by Mr. Grey in his evidence is concerned. These petitions are put all together in charge of the Cabinet, and some are dealt with by way of sums being placed on the estimates, while others that we cannot deal with are held over and are put away altogether. These papers were with the file, and I may have sent the matter to Cabinet in March last. Cabinet came to the decision to leave it to the Minister of Defence, and three days after I ordered the payment of this £102 13s. 4d. The petitions that are not dealt with during the session come up at any time. Some of them have not been touched at all. We simply say in regard to many, which are questionable, "Let them petition again." The interposition and stoppage is entirely a matter for the Paymaster.

*Captain Clark:* You said that when you authorised the payment of the voucher for £102 13s. 4d. you took it, from the opinion of the Committee, that it was a just and reasonable sum for my services during the period I worked.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* Yes; I took it that as you had been told that if you put in a voucher for a reasonable amount it would be paid, and you had withdrawn the first one, under the circumstances it would be the best way of settling the difficulty if you were paid in accordance with your own voucher. Suppose the Government had issued a cheque for £102 13s. 4d., you would have signed the voucher and taken the money.

*Captain Clark:* That is so. But you say that the opinion of the Committee was that £102 13s. 4d. was a just and reasonable sum, and you authorised the payment of it.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* I could not come to any conclusion, speaking for the Committee; but I came to the conclusion that if you had been paid the £102 13s. 4d. referred to in that voucher and again came before the Committee the Committee would say it had no recommendation to make.

*Captain Clark:* When you passed that voucher for payment were you aware that any deductions would be made?

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* I had no personal knowledge of any amounts being overpaid.

*Captain Clark:* Do you think it would have influenced the Committee if they had known of such deductions?

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* Well, if you had been overpaid moneys, and it was subsequently discovered that you had been overpaid, I do certainly think that no officer or member of the Government would be doing his duty to let it pass; and I feel also that the Imperial Government would call upon us to make it up.

*Captain Clark:* You said you thought the feeling of the Committee was that I should be paid £4 a week, and you recommended payment of that sum. Do you think the Committee, if it had known that these deductions were to be made, might have come to the conclusion to recommend an amount which, after the deductions, would have left me a reasonable sum? After the several deductions the amount is reduced to some £30, which is the sum the New Zealand Government tenders me for five months' work.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* You were not working for the New Zealand Government.

*Captain Clark:* I was for the period of the claim.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* The payments are a claim against the Imperial Government. I wish to clear the atmosphere. All the time you were doing this work it was for the Imperial Government. It is the same Paymaster. Now, if you put in a claim, say, to Brown, and Brown says, "I will pay you," and he afterwards finds when your claim is put in that you have been overpaid for other services, he will say, "I will give you the balance." That is simply an adjustment of account between the parties.

*Mr. Hardy:* It was given in evidence last year that the Imperial Government would not employ him at £4 a week, but would pay him according to rank.

*Captain Clark:* The Imperial Government employed me on the authority of Mr. Hall-Jones.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* I simply say this: I should myself—it does not matter who got the pay—only pay in accordance with the value of the work. You draw a distinction as an officer. So long as he was doing the work of the particular Contingent he would be paid according to his rank as an officer; but the moment that work is finished and he goes to other work it is a separate engagement and rank does not apply at all. If a man is offered and values his own work at £4 a week, that is sufficient.

*Mr. Taylor:* He said, subject to the rank being determined.

*Right Hon. the Minister of Defence:* That is only in respect to one item. All I wanted to do was to make it clear that all the papers were not hung up until June of this year. I hope I have cleared it up that that offer was made by himself, and I ordered payment. Let inquiry into the deductions be made, and let the Imperial Government settle the matter. I want the Committee clearly to understand that, so far as I am concerned, a conclusion was arrived at, the payment was ordered in accordance with Clark's own voucher, and there the matter was at an end.

THURSDAY, 11TH AUGUST, 1904.

F. BURTON MABIN, Imperial Pay Branch, examined. (No. 1.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You have the departmental file showing how you arrive at the amounts to be deducted from Captain Clark's voucher?—Yes, I think I can explain satisfactorily to you why