

you ask for is rather lengthy, and does not come within my parliamentary duties, but is a matter of business, and can only be furnished upon payment of my fee of £20 for commission and charges. Upon receipt of your cheque for amount, particulars and information supplied.—Yours faithfully, WALTER SYMES.—P S. I am preparing a petition for signatures of those who were not included in last petition.—W.S.” Then there is a cheque enclosed, and on the 13th November, 1908, during the election campaign, Mr Symes writes to Mr S Gower, “Stratford, 13th November, 1908.—S. Gower, Esq, Whenuakura.—DEAR SIR,—I was very much surprised to see a letter from yourself to Mr Hemingway, of the 2nd instant, published in the *Stratford Evening Post* yesterday, the 12th instant, in which you say I demanded from you £5 for commission for recovery of money paid on confiscated leases. This statement is contrary to fact, and so is your whole letter. I never called at your homestead at Mangamingi in my life, but on the 2nd November, 1905—not three weeks, but four days, prior to last election—in company with Mr J Granville and Mr James Sexton, on our way to Omona, when passing your shed, where shearing was in full swing, you came to the door, and we got out of the buggy and went into the shed. You kindly showed me your oil-engine and general working of the shearing-machines, and in the course of conversation I asked you if your brother William had told you the result of the lessees’ petition. You said ‘No.’ I then told you that I had been successful in establishing a case and claim, and that a sum of £2,000 had been placed upon the supplementary estimates in consequence. You said it was the first you had heard of it, and that you were pleased to hear of the good result, and asked me if there were any expenses incurred. I said ‘No,’ but that three or four of the lessees had suggested that we should make little surprise presents to a few of the members—and I mentioned their names—who had prominently helped to get the matter through. You at once acquiesced, and said you would be pleased to join. I said, ‘It will not cost us more than a fiver each.’ Nothing further was done in the matter, as I was too busy to attend to it, until I met you at the Patea races on the 20th April last, when I mentioned your brother William’s death and asked you the cause, and you told me it was carelessness on his part—that he had caught cold after an attack of measles. You then said, ‘Did my brother ever give you that cheque?’ I said, ‘What for?’ You then said, ‘For the presents you mentioned for helping to get the arbitration money refunded.’ I told you that he had not done so, and that as a matter of fact I had never seen your brother nor had I mentioned the matter to him. You said, ‘I will send you a cheque.’ I heard nothing further from you, nor did I do anything, until some time in the early part of last June I met one of the lessees, who reminded me of our conversation *re* the surprise presents, and asked me if I had done anything in the matter. I said no, beyond mentioning the fact to one or two, yourself included, and that you had mentioned the matter at the last Patea races by asking if William had ever given me a cheque. I told the lessee in question that I would get the matter going and fix it up before the close of the session, and wrote you accordingly, but never mentioned any amount, as no amount was mentioned at Patea. The matter was one entirely for your own consideration, and whatever the amount of your cheque was, I would supplement with a like amount, as would all the others, and so far the only blamable thing about it, so far as I am concerned, is that I have not had time to see the others; and since it is sought to make political capital out of the matter I decline to do anything further in the matter (beyond paying my quota of £5 at any time towards the suggested project). It was not even my own suggestion, but that of others who wished to show their appreciation of a spontaneous and kindly act, but which my political opponents want to misconstrue; and in order that no further misconception can be placed upon my action I now return you the amount of your cheque, £5, and shall, so soon as possible, see those who asked me to undertake the matter, when I shall give them my reason for declining to act further and for the steps I have taken. Believe me, yours very truly, WALTER SYMES” [Cheque for £5, drawn by Walter Symes and made payable to Mr Samuel Gower, produced, and put in as Exhibit X.]

*The Chairman* Does that close your evidence?

*Mr Myers* That closes my evidence on this particular case.

*Right Hon. Sir J G Ward:* I want to say that I have no objection whatever to the course followed by counsel in putting in the letters, but the absence of Mr Gower prevents me putting a question to him that I wanted to put in the ordinary course. I therefore want to put it to Mr Myers, as he has put in the letters. I want to ask him—because I may, if I find it necessary, call Mr Gower—whether he can inform the Committee if Mr Gower in any way conveyed to the Government the contents, or the request for payment of £5, or the letters he received from Mr Symes?

*Mr Myers* No. So far as I understand, that is not so. I understand there was some correspondence in the newspaper just prior to the last election, but there was no communication to the Government. I have arranged with Mr Skerrett, and propose to go on with the other charges against Mr Symes now

*Mr Skerrett* My view of the matter is that Mr Myers is entitled to conduct his case as he finds most convenient to him; but I desire it to be distinctly understood that the evidence on the first charge against Mr Symes is now closed, leaving me at the close of the evidence to undertake the task of defence.

*The Chairman* Yes.

WILLIAM DAVID ANDERSON sworn and examined. (No. 6.)

- 1 *Mr Myers.*] You are a solicitor?—Yes.
- 2 Practising where?—Stratford.
- 3 Are you also a director of the Stratford Printing and Publishing Company?—Yes.
4. And is that company proprietor of the newspaper known as the *Stratford Evening Post*?—Yes.
5. Were you a director of that company in September, 1905?—Yes.