

119. Was there any understanding by which you were to receive a commission from Mr Bayly if the property was sold?—No; I never spoke to him about it, and never acted as his agent—I never saw him in connection with it. The only thing I did with him was done through the telephone.

120. And I understand, all that you did as far as you have got up to the present was to write one letter enclosing the petition, and you had no interviews with any Minister or head of the Department?—None whatever I never saw one of them.

121. Now, what was the next step in the matter?—The next thing, I think, was that I received a telegram from Mr Barron saying that on a certain night the Land Purchase Board would be in Stratford, that they were proceeding next morning to Toko to inspect Mr A. Bayly's property, and would be very glad if I could make it convenient to accompany them. I believe I replied to Mr Barron accepting their invitation, and saying that I would be very pleased to drive him out in my trap. I did not meet them on their arrival, I think, but next morning I drove up to the hotel where they were staying, and saw them. They were just getting ready to start, so I said,

'Surely some of you will drive with me', and Mr Barron said, 'Oh, yes! you invited me,' and I drove him out to Mr Charles Bayly's homestead. He never mentioned the estate to me, nor did I mention it to him. We never spoke about it, in fact, he was giving me the history of his New Zealand life, I think, pretty well all the way out. When we got to Mr Charles Bayly's homestead we were met by Mr Jackson, Mr Alfred Bayly's manager. Neither Mr Charles Bayly nor Mr Alfred Bayly were present—they were both away from Toko. They gave us horses, and we rode round a portion of the estate, and we got to Mr Alfred Bayly's homestead near Maungaehu about lunch-time.

*The Chairman* Is it necessary to go into all these details?

122. *Mr Skerrett.*] Hardly necessary After lunch you inspected the balance of the property?—Yes.

123. Did you see anything of Alfred Bayly?—We met Alfred Bayly just as we were getting back to Charles Bayly's homestead. He had come up from Wanganui or from somewhere, but no mention was ever made of the property either by the members of the Land Purchase Board or by Mr Bayly or myself in my hearing. I drove Mr Barron back to town, and that is the last I heard of the matter.

124. Now, you say that there never was any arrangement for the payment of a commission by Mr Alfred Bayly to yourself, and neither were you his agent?—No, I was never his agent.

125. What would be the ordinary commission?—Two and a half per cent.

126. And we know the purchase-price of this property was some £21,000-odd?—Yes.

127. When did you first hear that the property had been purchased by the Government?—Some time after. One morning I was going to interview my bank-manager, and I met Mr Alfred Bayly also going into the Bank of Australasia. We met at the door. We were personal friends, Mr Bayly and myself, and we had not seen each other for a good long while. We went into the bank, and he said, 'Oh! the Government have taken my place.' I said, 'Yes! The first I have heard of it. Did you sell it well?' He said, 'Well, they did not give me all that I asked for it. As you know, I asked £11 10s., and they gave me £11, and I have accepted it.' He said, 'I have to thank you for the sale of it, and it has come at the very opportune moment, because I have just purchased, or am just about completing the purchase of, a property at Maungamaheu, near Wanganui, and I want every shilling I can get to complete it.' He thanked me, and I said, 'That is all right. I am very pleased if it has done you a turn.' He said, 'Yes, but I should like to show you that I appreciate it—I want to pay you something for your trouble.' I said, 'I did not act for you, I was not your agent, and I therefore decline to take any payment from you by way of commission or anything else in connection with the sale of the estate.' He said, 'Well, I do not like people doing something for me for nothing.' I said, 'I did not work for you.' He said, 'It does not matter how you put it—it is through your exertions the sale has been brought about.' I said, 'That may be: I only acted for the petitioners.' We were inside the bank at this time, and he walked away from where I was over to the counter, and said something to the teller. He then came back and said, 'Walter, I want to give you a promissory note for £300.' I said, 'What for?' He said, 'Well, you are not my agent—you won't take money as my agent,' and I said, 'No, I will not.' He said, 'Will you accept £300 from me towards your election expenses?' I said, 'No, I cannot even take that.' He said, 'Well, I should be very pained and very hurt indeed. We have known each other all our lives, and if you do not accept it I shall be very hurt and think that you won't accept it for the reason that I have offered you a promissory note in place of the cash.' I said, 'My dear fellow, such a thing never entered my head.' He said, 'Well, I ask you to accept this as a present from me towards your election expenses, and if you do not take it I shall be very hurt.' I finally accepted it from him, and thanked him for it. I considered it a very handsome present—something I had never expected or looked for. After I had said that I would accept it he walked over to the counter with the promissory note, and asked the teller what the amount of stamp duty was, and he paid the amount, and I believe he put the stamps on, and then handed me the promissory note.

128. In whose handwriting is the promissory note?—I should certainly say in Mr Bayly's own writing.

129. I understand you to say that this was a present voluntarily given by Mr Bayly to you to assist you in connection with your election and other expenses in the matter?—Yes.

130. It was volunteered by him, and not suggested by you?—No, I never made a suggestion about it.

131. I understand that your sole interference in connection with the sale of the property to the Government consisted in the forwarding of the petition and accompanying the Board over the property?—That is the only thing I had to do with it.