

- 191 Was that proper?—Mr George Johnston and others.
 192 And you were a petitioner?—My firm.
 193. But you were interested in the petition?—Yes.
 194. Was it proper for you to present the petition?—I think so.
 195. Was it?—I think so.
 196. Do you not know that the Standing Orders prohibit it?—No.
 197 That a member cannot present a petition from himself—do you not know of that Standing Order?—No.
 198. You do not know of the existence of that, after being twelve years in Parliament?—No.
 199 And you also spoke in the House, and moved that the petition be referred back to the Committee?—I did.
 200. A petition in which you were personally pecuniarily interested?—Well, if you put it that way, I suppose so, yes. I was not thinking of myself at the time I did that. I was presenting the petition for others.
 201 In one of your letters to Mr Gower you say, 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 the names.' What were their names?—
Mr Skerrett I object.
The Chairman I hardly think it is right. It is dealing with the same question as regards Mr Bollard, and I want to keep clear of that.
 202. *Mr Myers*] Well, I will not press it. I submit I can ask this Do you think it is proper that presents should be given in this way to members of Parliament, as was suggested in that letter to Mr Gower?—It was not suggested in the letter to Mr Gower
 203 You say in your letter to Mr Gower that it had been previously suggested?—I think there is nothing wrong in doing so. I should think nothing of giving my fellow-member a present. In fact, I have had even a present of a walking-stick.
 204. But presents for helping and getting petitions through Parliament?—It was not intended for anything of the sort—certainly not.
 205. But you say in your letter, 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 the names, who had prominently helped to get the matter through' ?—That is, those who had helped me to get the matter referred back.
 206. Just what I thought. I ask you, do you think it proper that members of Parliament should accept presents for helping to get matters through, as you put it?—I think there was nothing improper in what I stated there.
 207 May I take it then that you see nothing improper in giving presents to members, or members taking them, for services rendered by members who have prominently helped to get a matter through Parliament?—But Mr Gower understood that was a different thing.
 208. May I take it that you see no harm in that?—It was not intended for helping or anything of the sort. I could see no harm whatever or any wrong whatever in what the lessees suggested to me—nothing whatever.
 209 Well, I will leave it at that. I think you said before that you were a land agent?—Yes.
 210 Were you a land agent in 1905?—Yes.
 211 Do you know that you are on the Patea roll for that year as a farmer?—Very likely I have been on the roll for a great number of years, and have not been altered.
 212. With regard to the lessees, do you know that Messrs. Samuel Gower, W Gower, and George Gower were in the Patea electorate, and were so in 1905?—Yes.
 213 You say there was no arrangement with any of the petitioners, express or implied, as to remuneration: do you dispute that you charged or accepted money from some of those people for doing work in Parliament?—Yes, I do.
 214. Then, will you explain the meaning of your bill to the executors of Lysaght's estate, when you say, "The above commission includes stamps, telegrams, stationery, and time devoted in hunting up documents and evidence, preparing petition, and attending before the Petitions Committee and giving evidence at length on two occasions." Will you explain what you meant by that?—I have already explained to the Committee that that was to show Mr Lysaght, who understood this matter thoroughly, that all that was given them for nothing, and that on the previous occasions that had to be paid for by the lessees.
 215. But you do not show that you say that that commission includes time devoted in hunting up documents and evidence, preparing petitions, and attending before the Petitions Committee and giving evidence at length on two occasions?—It may be a bad way of putting it.
 216. We were talking about political influence and about the reasons for your saying that it was a difficult job for Mr Hutchison to get his money Would you mind explaining your letter of the 8th November, 1907 to Mr. Haddow, in which you say, "I quite agree with you it will be quite useless Mr Hutchison taking any steps on his own account—in fact, in my opinion he will do well to keep out of it until the vote is passed by the House." What did you mean by that?—I understood the vote was passed.
 217 Oh, no! that will not do me. What did you mean by what I read just now?—There was a dispute between Hutchison and Durie about this matter. Mr Durie was claiming this refund—they were both claiming—and Durie had employed a firm of solicitors in Wellington to intercept it for him, and I thought it would be wise that Mr Hutchison should not appear in the matter as I had represented Mr Hutchison, as he was the petitioner, and not Mr Durie at all.
 218. Then you did represent Mr Hutchison as a petitioner?—Yes, I did, because he was the petitioner,