

219. Is that the best explanation you can give?—He was the petitioner, and not Mr Durie.

220. Is that the best reason you can give for the words in that letter I have just read?—It was owing to a dispute between Mr Hutchison and Mr Durie that it was wise Mr Hutchison should leave the matter alone.

221. That is the best explanation you can give?—Yes.

222. *Right Hon. Sir J G Ward.*] Mr Symes, were you ever appointed or did you ever act in the position of Government Whip?—Never

223. Were you at any time employed by the Government to purchase or secure estates for the country?—No.

224. Have you ever received at any time any payment from the Government or from the Land Purchase Department in connection with land-sales to the Government?—Never

225. Did you at any time inform any member of the then Government or present Government, or any member of the Land Purchase Board, or any Government officer, that you were being paid or expected to be paid for the services you were rendering to the lessees?—No, never

226. The £2,000 that was put upon the estimates to pay the award of the petitioners—was that the full amount of the expenses incurred by the lessees under that award in connection with the first petition?—No. The Government must have added more, because that did not pay the sixteen or seventeen petitioners.

227. The £2,000 did not pay them?—No.

228. When that vote was put upon the estimates and passed through the House, as the question of political influence has been introduced, was any exception taken to the vote by any member of the Opposition?—No, there was no exception taken by any member in the House.

229. *Mr Massey.*] That was in 1906?—I think it was. I have no recollection of any one even speaking about it.

230. *Right Hon. Sir J G Ward.*] Would you be good enough to state what you meant to convey in your letter of the 28th July, 1906, to Mr Lysaght, when you used the words, "I hold the key of the position"?—Simply that I had all the information in connection with the matter. If they had had it they would not have asked me to help them.

231. Did you mean that in any way to imply that you could exercise any control or influence over the expenditure of any part of the vote of £2,000 that was authorized on the estimates?—Most certainly not.

232. Do you think you could have exercised any influence in preventing the Government making payments out of that vote?—Certainly not.

233. Had you ever tried upon any other vote to stop a payment?—No.

234. Now, in reference to Hutchison and Haddow's matter, I understand from the correspondence that you received authority from Hutchison and Haddow to make representations to have payment of the £134 in connection with the award of the lessees made to Mr George Hutchison, and also a claim of £125 for law-costs?—Yes.

235. Were both amounts paid?—I think not—only the £134, so far as I know

236. Now, the suggestion is made that you were able to exercise political influence to obtain payment of the £134 for Mr Hutchison. I assume if that were correct that similar influence would succeed in obtaining payment of the £125 for law-costs?—Certainly it would.

Mr Skerrett And it had the favourable recommendation of the Committee in its favour

237. *Right Hon. Sir J G Ward.*] And the claim of £125 had the favourable recommendation of the Committee in its favour?—Yes, I think Mr Hutchison was entitled to the £125.

238. *Mr Fraser*] The Committee did not say so?—Yes, they did—they gave a favourable recommendation.

239. *Right Hon. Sir J G Ward.*] Both items were recommended to the Government for favourable consideration—the £134 and the £125?—Yes.

240. As a matter of fact, the £125 has not been paid by the Government yet?—Not so far as I am aware. At any rate, they have not paid me my commission, if the Government has paid it.

241. Did you receive any payment from the Government or from any Government officer in connection with the amount that you obtained for Mr Hutchison?—No, never

242. Did you acquaint the Government or any member of the Government with the fact that you had an arrangement with Messrs. Hutchison and Haddow that you were to receive a sum of money for the services you were rendering in collecting Mr Hutchison's account?—No, never

243. Now, I want to ask you a question in connection with the promissory note for £300 that you received from Mr Alfred Bayly: you say that you did not act as his agent?—That is so.

244. In connection with the promissory note for £300, did you at any time intimate to any one connected with the Government or any Government officer that you had after the sale of that land accepted a present in the shape of a promissory note for £300?—I never mentioned it to any one.

245. If you had acted in the capacity of agent for Mr Alfred Bayly upon the sale in connection with the £21,000-odd, what rate of commission to a private person as his agent would you have charged?—I should have charged $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which would amount to about £700. No agent would have taken it up under £500 or £700 to sell it.

246. The commission upon that at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would have amounted to £525?—I do not know what the amount was, but I should have charged $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

247. If that promissory note for £300 you received from Mr Bayly had been $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. commission, it ought to have been for £525?—That is so.

248. With regard to the suggested presents to members which have been referred to during the cross-examination, did you make any personal intimation to any members of Parliament that you intended to make them presents?—No, never