

- (p.) Mr Symes formally applied by letter, on Mr Hutchison's behalf, for payment of the above sum of £134 15s., and also for payment of the above sum of £125, both having been recommended by the Public Petitions Committee.
- (q) The Government refunded to Mr Hutchison the sum of £134 15s., representing the arbitration fees in question, but declined to refund the other sum of £125 claimed for costs.
- (r) Mr Symes received from Mr Hutchison for collecting the above-mentioned sum of £134 15s. a 5-per-cent. commission, amounting to £6 15s.

Finding.

7 Although Mr Symes may have considered that he was entitled to charge a commission for his services in connection with the collection of moneys voted by Parliament, nevertheless the Committee is of opinion that the services in respect of which he received such commission were so closely connected with the duties of a member of Parliament as to render the acceptance of any payment or reward therefor improper

Report agreed to down to paragraph (g).

Paragraph (h). On the question being put from the Chair That the words "as has not been disputed" be struck out, the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow:

Ayes, 4.—Mr Allen, Mr Buchanan, Mr Fraser, Mr. Massey

Noes, 6.—Mr Graham, Mr Hanan, Hon Mr Millar, Mr Myers, Mr Reed, and the Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.

So it passed in the negative, and the words were retained.

Mr Buchanan moved to amend the paragraph by striking out the words "as has" in the last line.

On the question being put by the Chairman, it was lost on the voices, and the words were retained.

Paragraph (h) agreed to.

Paragraphs (i) to (p) read and agreed to.

Paragraph (q). *Resolved*, on the motion of the Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward, That paragraph (q) be amended by inserting the word "direct" after the word "refunded," and inserting the words "agent Mr Haddow" after the words "Mr Hutchison" in the first line.

Paragraph as amended agreed to.

Paragraph (r). *Resolved*, on the motion of the Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward, That paragraph (r) be amended by inserting the words 'agent Mr Haddow' after the words "Mr Hutchison," in the first line.

Paragraph as amended agreed to.

Finding Moved by Mr Buchanan, to strike out all the words down to and including the word "nevertheless" in the fourth line.

Mr Buchanan withdrew his amendment.

Paragraph agreed to.

Report as amended agreed to.

Resolved, on the motion of the Chairman, to proceed with allegation No. 4.

The Chairman's draft report, with a statement of the evidence, and his finding as Chairman, reads as follows:—

Third Charge

8. The third charge against Mr Symes is as follows:—

"That the said Walter Symes, in the year 1905, while a Parliamentary election was presently in prospect in which the said Walter Symes intended to become, and subsequently became, a candidate, and being then actually a member of Parliament, did threaten or cause to be threatened a certain newspaper that he would use his influence as a member of Parliament to prevent Government advertisements from being given to the said newspaper unless he received the support of, or was treated to his own satisfaction by, the said newspaper during the said election contest."

9 At the hearing Mr M. Myers appeared as counsel for Mr Hine, and Mr. C. P. Skerrett, K.C., with whom was Mr Sharp, appeared for Mr Symes.

10. The material portions of the evidence are as follows:—

(a.) The Stratford Publishing Company purchased two newspapers circulating in and around Stratford, known as the *Stratford Post* and the *Egmont Settler*. These newspapers, upon their purchase, ceased to exist, and the publishing company commenced a new paper called the *Stratford Evening Post*.

(b.) Of the two extinct newspapers, the *Egmont Settler* alone was included in the departmental list for Government advertisements, and upon that paper ceasing to exist, its name was struck off the list.

(c) In the month of September, 1905, the directors of the *Stratford Evening Post* asked one of their number, Mr McCluggage, J.P., who was on friendly terms with, and a political supporter of, Mr. Symes, to privately use his influence with Mr Symes to induce the latter to procure that newspaper's name to be placed on the list. Mr McCluggage agreed, and thereupon wrote a letter to Mr Symes asking him to do this.