

78. No. Are you aware whether, after Parliament had recommended that your claims be paid and the Government had determined to pay, it was necessary for the petitioners in the ordinary course to fill in a voucher, and send it to the proper office, accompanied by such proofs as might be necessary of the payments made in connection with the arbitration?—I do not quite understand your question.

79. It is very simple. There was a general recommendation in favour of certain petitioners who said in their claims that they had paid arbitration fees?—Yes.

80. And the Government determined to adopt the recommendation?—Yes.

81. Each lessee would then have to prove that he made those payments, and to put his claim in proper form, would he not?—Yes, that is so.

82. Do you not know that most of those claimants had lost their vouchers and memoranda connected with the amounts which they had paid in respect of the arbitration fees?—No, I did not know that.

83. Can you say that even you had yours?—No. Do you mean my own?

84. No; I am speaking of the executors first?—That I cannot remember.

85. Did you have your own?—No. I may say that I have not paid that myself. It was paid for me by my father when I was a young fellow.

86. You had not the vouchers even in your own claim?—No.

87. Do you know that Mr Johnston, on your behalf and on behalf of those people who were not constituents of Mr Symes, and who were entitled to claim the amount from the Government, arranged with Mr Symes to collect the amount for them at a charge of 5 per cent.?—No, I am not aware of that.

88. Had Mr Johnston made that arrangement, would you not have considered it a perfectly fair and reasonable arrangement?—I think, before he made any arrangement of that sort he should have consulted the other lessees.

89. But supposing he had consulted the other lessees, would you not have regarded it as a perfectly fair and reasonable arrangement?—No.

90. Why not?—Because I should not have considered he was entitled to do it.

91. Why not? You had a right to your money. Parliament had given you its recommendation, and the Government had decided to grant it long before there was any suggestion of any payment to Mr Symes, and because Mr Symes happened to be in possession of data he was asked to collect the money from the Government. Why should he not receive a reasonable remuneration for his services? I know some people object to pay, but that is not the point. Supposing you wanted the service done, was 5 per cent. an unreasonable amount to charge?—I do not consider that he was entitled to the commission.

92. That is not an answer to my question. Supposing an arrangement was made on behalf of some of the lessees—leave yourself out of the question—to pay him 5 per cent. for collecting the amount which was waiting in the Treasury for them upon the requisite proof, was that an unreasonable amount to charge?—Yes.

93. Why?—Because I do not consider he was entitled to it.

94. I am not asking you to decide that question at all. I am asking you as to the mere quantum of the charge?—I do not consider he was entitled to a commission of any kind.

95. Were you a constituent of Mr Symes?—No.

96. Why should he collect your moneys for you? Why should he not have said, ' You go to your lawyer or get your agent to collect it for you ' ? You would have had to pay it then, would you not?—I do not think it would have been necessary to pay. It might not have been necessary to pay your lawyer.

97. Would it not have been necessary for you, in order to get your money, to go to your lawyers and instruct them to obtain the amount?—No, I do not think so.

98. Will you swear that Mr Moore, your coexecutor, did not go to Mr Caplin and instruct him to take the necessary proceedings to obtain this money from the Treasury on your behalf and as solicitor for the estate?—I have no recollection of that.

99. Do you not know that Mr Caplin had not got sufficient information, and referred the matter to Mr Johnston?—Well, he may have done so.

100. And that Mr Johnston then asked Mr Symes to collect the amount?—I do not know that.

101. Now, if you had known that, you would not have been quite so hot about this matter, would you? If you had had the fullest information about this matter, you would not have been quite so angry as you appear to be about this matter?—I do not know that I exhibited any anger.

102. I will come to that in a minute. You felt pained at the suggestion that you should pay 5 per cent. for the collection of the money?—I do not know that I was pained.

103. That is one fact that stands out clearly, that you did not mean to pay and did not pay?—I was acting as trustee for my father's estate, and in that capacity you have to be careful in the moneys you pay out.

104. But you do not know that Mr Moore applied to Mr Caplin to prepare the necessary papers?—I have no recollection of it.

105. And you do not know that Mr Moore had thereupon applied to Mr Johnston, and asked him to get the necessary material put through?—No, I do not.

106. Now, all those letters were given by you to Mr Hine during last election, were they not?—Yes.

107. How did you come to give them to him—out of pure affection for Mr Symes?—Affection, did you say?

108. Yes?—Not exactly.

109. What caused you to give the letters to Mr Hine—how did it come about?—Well, I thought he was trying to obtain a commission from me which he was not entitled to, and I handed the letters over to Mr Hine.