

31. And you got your brother's and Frere's money?—Yes.
32. How did you receive that money?—From the Government, I suppose.
33. Was there any intermediary between you and the Government, or did you apply direct?—I applied direct, as far as I recollect.
34. Do you remember to whom you applied, or to what Department?—No.
35. Did Mr Symes or anybody else, as far as you can recollect, intervene?—Not that I am aware of
36. Did you make any payment to anybody in connection with this transaction?—I did.
37. To whom?—To Mr Walter Symes.
38. When?—On the 24th March, 1906.
39. He was still a member of the House at the time?—Yes.
40. How did you come to pay him that amount?—By cheque.
41. How did you come to pay it to him?—I got a letter from him demanding it.
42. Have you got that letter?—Oh, no!
43. What has become of it?—Oh! Lord knows.
44. But you got a letter from him demanding it?—I did.
45. Did you see him before paying it?—No; I sent the cheque.
46. *Mr Skerrett.*] You were interested in the petition, I understand, Mr Wilson, first on your own account, and secondly as attorney for this firm of Wilson and Frere?—Yes.
47. Wilson and Frere were both out of the colony at the time of this petition of 1905?—Yes.
48. But they, with the other lessees, had for many years been pressing upon Parliament the justice of their claim for a refund?—That is true.
49. And Mr Hutchison at one time presented a petition?—I believe so.
50. And do you know that counsel were engaged in support of that petition?—I did not know that.
51. Now, this petition was brought about for signature in the usual way?—Yes.
52. You cannot recollect who the person was who was promoting the second petition?—No, I could not say who got it up
53. At any rate you know that there was a favourable recommendation by Parliament to the Government?—Yes.
54. Now, after you paid your money, do you not recollect that you sent whatever information you had to a Mr George Johnston—information as to the amount you paid, and information as to the amount which Wilson and Frere paid in respect of those arbitration fees?—Yes, probably
55. The matter was an old-standing matter, was it not? I think the payments were made in 1889?—The refund?
56. No, the payments in respect of the award?—I could not give you the date of that.
57. Was it about 1889?—It might have been 1888 or 1889
58. It was years before this petition?—Yes.
59. You would understand that the Government would require proof of each claimant having paid the amount which he claimed to have refunded?—I suppose so.
60. Now, do you remember whether you had the receipts or anything in your possession in connection with the moneys you paid in respect to the arbitration?—Any documents I had connected with Frere's and Wilson's affairs when Mr Frere came out I handed over to him.
61. But I suppose you do not recollect whether you had the vouchers?—Yes; I suppose so.
62. You say it is quite probable you sent all the papers you had in connection with the matter to Mr Johnston?—If I showed them to him. I do not recollect.
63. I do not suppose you recollect signing the voucher which goes to the Government before you got the cheque?—No, I do not.
64. Was any claim made by Mr Symes on you personally with respect to the amount you have received for your own private matter?—No.
65. What was the amount of your own refund?—I do not quite remember—somewhere about £50
66. And you were personally a constituent of Mr Symes?—Yes.
67. I want to put this question to you: Mr Symes says that after Parliament had recommended the reimbursement of the moneys paid, and the Government had determined to pay them, he arranged with Mr Johnston that he should collect all those moneys from the Government as agent, and charge those who were not his constituents 5 per cent. for the collection?—I know nothing at all about that.
68. But you knew that Mr Johnston was pretty active in managing the thing on behalf of the lessees?—Probably I took no interest in it myself except to sign the petition. My brother got up the first petition in a great measure, and Mr Johnston got up the other petition.
69. I understand you people say that there was no arrangement or understanding, express or implied, between you or between Wilson and Frere and Mr Symes that he should get a commission in respect of the amount the reimbursement of which was applied for?—There was no arrangement as far as I know
70. All that happened was that you got an account in the ordinary way after you received a cheque from the Treasury?—I got a letter
71. And you paid the amount?—Yes.
72. That is the whole thing?—Yes, as far as that is concerned.
73. *Right Hon. Sir J G Ward.*] Mr Wilson, you say that you got a request from Mr Symes for the payment to him of an amount in connection with an amount that you as attorney for Frere and your brother Percival had received from the Government?—You mean, an account for commission?