

8. And during that time did you hold his power of attorney?—No, I had no power of attorney.

9. Were you acting in any way as his agent?—Yes, I had general instructions to act.

10. Did you know that when Mr Hutchison left he had a claim against the Government for moneys paid on an abortive award?—Yes, he left me a written memo.

11. Did you do anything in consequence of the memo. he left you?—Yes.

12. What did you do?—Well, the action I took, I ought to say, in the first instance, to make it quite clear, did not refer to a petition to be presented, but it referred to a petition that had already been presented.

13. Was that the petition upon which eventually there had been a favourable recommendation?—The favourable recommendation had already been made six months before I came into it. The petition was presented and a favourable recommendation had been made.

14. What was Mr Hutchison's claim?—About £134 15s. It was an amount paid by him to uplift these leases. I have not been one of the lessees, and I might say I know absolutely nothing of the origin of the claim. He also claimed £125 for costs he had been put to in defending the action, which had been abortive.

15. The Supreme Court action?—Yes. I think those items had been included in his petition, which he presented to the House through Mr Symes.

16. Now, what did you do after Mr Hutchison went away?—My instructions were to get Mr. Symes to take the matter in hand. There had been some delay, apparently Mr Hutchison had written to the Government, and I wrote to the Government also in the name of the firm, but nothing was done. My instructions were to write to Mr Symes, and ask him to lend his assistance. I understood at the time that he knew the land, and was familiar with the conditions of the leases, and resided in the district, and I understood was doing land-jobbing and land-agency work there.

17. What did you do?—I wrote to him, asking him to help to collect this money.

18. Have you got copies of your letters?—I have got a copy of that letter, yes. I may say that I had not time to be sure I had copies of all the letters. I only got my telegram to come here on Saturday afternoon, and had to leave on Sunday. I got what I could and crowded them into my bag, but I did not have time to have special copies of any documents.

19. Have you the first letter?—Yes, a copy of it. [Letter handed in—Exhibit G.]

20. This is your letter, which reads, '102 Victoria Arcade, Auckland, 3rd May, 1907.—Walter Symes, Esq., M.H.R. Waverley.—DEAR SIR,—We enclose a copy of a petition presented to Parliament last session by Mr George Hutchison, and on the 29th of October referred by the Petitions Committee to the Government for favourable consideration. Mr Hutchison, who left for England on business on the 28th of March, instructed us to take the necessary steps to obtain payment of the sums referred to, and left authority for Mr Haddow to receive the amount on his behalf. We understand that you are conversant with the history of these awards, and were largely instrumental in obtaining payment of the amounts out of pocket by other leaseholders similarly placed. We shall be glad if we can enlist your valuable assistance in obtaining payment of the amounts expended by Mr. Hutchison. With regard to the sum of £125, that, we understand, was spent by Mr Hutchison in testing the validity of the awards, and by which, had the proceedings been successful, all the leaseholders would have profited. We enclose a copy of Mr Hutchison's letter of 13th November last to the Colonial Secretary, which throws light on this point. This matter, which we recognize may call for the expenditure of some time and trouble, and if both sums are obtained (and both were referred by the Committee for the favourable consideration of the Government) we are empowered to hand you a sum equal to 10 per cent. of the whole in appreciation of your kind assistance.—Yours truly, HUTCHISON AND HADDOW.—P S.: The claim for the return of the £125 is quite as good as that for the amount spent in uplifting the awards. It is dealt with in the petition of Mr G. Johnston and others (292), and in pars. 3 and 4 of Mr Hutchison's petition, and its repayment has been recognized as just and right by two different Ministries. We should take it as a special favour if you would expedite the matter as far as lies in your power.—H. and H.' Did you receive a letter in reply?—Yes. [Letter, Exhibit H, handed in.]

21. The reply states, "Private.—Stratford, 7th May, 1907.—Messrs. Hutchison and Haddow, Barristers and Solicitors, 102 Victoria Arcade, Auckland.—DEAR SIR,—I am duly in receipt of your private letter of the 3rd instant, with enclosures. In reply more particularly to the last paragraph of your letter, where you say this matter you recognize may call for the expenditure of some time and trouble, and if both sums are obtained you are empowered to hand me a sum equal to 10 per cent. of the whole in appreciation of my kind assistance, overlooking the fact that it entails a good deal of expenditure of money as well as time and trouble, an ordinary debt-collection would be 10 per cent. under the extraordinary circumstance, if you appreciate my kind assistance, it should at least be at 20 per cent., as the amounts in question have no doubt been written off Mr Hutchison's books years ago as uncollectible. I value my time for either or both sums at 20 per cent. If this meets with your approval, kindly advise me at your earliest convenience.—Yours truly, WALTER SYMES." Did you have any further correspondence?—Yes. That seemed to me to go beyond what I thought was necessary, and I objected to pay.

22. Have you got the letters?—I do not think I have got that letter—I have a draft of it. I could not say this is word for word of the letter, but it is practically the same. [Letter handed in—Exhibit I.]

23. The letter you wrote in reply, or the draft, reads, "9th May, 1907.—Private.—Walter Symes, Esq., M.H.R., Stratford.—DEAR SIR,—Re G. Hutchison's claim. We regret we have no authority to act on your suggestion. However, we do not anticipate the matter will be one of such difficulty as you suppose. It has been recommended by the Committee for the favourable