

consideration of the Government, and, as to the first portion, claims on precisely the same footing have already been paid. We are willing, however, to take the responsibility of paying 5 per cent. on the larger amount, and 15 per cent. on the smaller (£125).—Yours truly, (Signed) HUTCHISON AND HADDOW ' What happened after that?—Well, after that I got a letter from Mr Symes, in which he said he thought the matter was practically shelved. [Letter handed in—Exhibit J.]

24. There is first a letter from Mr McNab to Mr Symes, "Office of the Minister of Lands, Wellington, 9th May, 1907.—Walter Symes, Esq., M.H.R., Stratford.—DEAR SIR,—*Re* claims under West Coast Settlement Reserves Act. I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of date the 7th instant. I find now that the whole question comes under the department of the Public Trustee, and in the meantime Cabinet has referred your correspondence to the Public Trustee for report.—Yours faithfully, (Signed) ROBERT McNAB.' And on that Mr Symes writes, "Private.—Copy, the original of which just received. I consider the matter is now shelved by the Cabinet. I am tired of the whole subject, having done a lot of work and had all the worry over this matter, and expended a good deal of money and time. I do not intend going any further without some guarantee of being recouped if successful. Nothing under the amount mentioned in my last.—WALTER SYMES, Stratford. 18 5/07 ' What happened then?—I think my letter of the 9th crossed that one. I have a letter in reply to mine of the 9th. [Letter handed in—Exhibit K.]

25 The reply reads, "Private.—Stratford, 15th May, 1907.—Messrs. Hutchison and Haddow, Barristers and Solicitors, Auckland.—DEAR SIRS,—*Re* Mr Hutchison's claims under West Coast Settlement Act. I am just in receipt of your letter of the 9th instant *in re* the above claims. In reply, I decline your offer absolutely, it being below your previous one. You say that you do not anticipate any difficulty. Well, I do, and you will find my anticipations correct before it is over. Who got the Committee's favourable recommendation? If you do not know, I will tell you. It was myself, not Mr Hutchison who had tried for years and failed. The whole working of the case has been done by myself unaided. The claims that have been paid were during the Seddon Government. This Administration can easily say as they have already done, that they are not bound by the acts of their predecessors. I know that I can get these claims settled or otherwise, but if all the petitioners are going to treat me the same as your firm propose, well, it will be otherwise. I am not using this as a threat, but in common fairness and justice to myself I will not lift a finger to help the above claims under £20 each. If you agree to this I will then go to work vigorously.—Yours truly, WALTER SYMES.' Was there any more correspondence?—That seemed to me to put a different aspect on the matter. Up to that time I had looked upon Mr Symes as a land jobber or agent. There were other claims to this same refund in the field. I did not know whether he referred to those or not, so I consulted with Mr Hutchison's former manager, and he seemed to think it referred to the other claims, but he was of opinion that without Mr. Symes's assistance we should not get the money

26. What happened then?—I still rather objected to it, and I wrote to Mr Symes.

27. Have you got the letter?—No, I do not think I have. I have a draft of the letter [Draft of letter handed in—Exhibit L.]

28. The draft of the letter reads, "Supreme Court Library, Auckland, 25th May, 1907.—Private.—Walter Symes, Esq., M.H.R., Stratford.—DEAR SIR,—*Re* west coast leases. Referring to my firm's correspondence with you in this matter, I may say that it is in my hands for settlement. The position is this: Mr Hutchison has earmarked this money for specific purposes. Anything over 5 per cent. of the first claim (£134-odd) I shall have to pay myself, whereas the case is quite different with the other fund. I can, however, meet you in the matter if you will agree to allocate your remuneration accordingly—*i.e.*, take £40 for getting the two sums, but of this amount allot 5 per cent. of £134 to the larger claim and the whole of the balance to the smaller. I shall be glad to hear if this will meet your requirements. If so, please lose no time in pushing the matter.—Yours truly, J. G. HADDOW. What happened then?—Mr Symes wrote and accepted that.

29. Have you got his letter?—Yes, I think so. [Letter, Exhibit M, handed in.]

30. The letter in reply reads, 'Stratford, 12th June, 1907.—Private.—J. G. Haddow, Esq., Barrister and Solicitor, Auckland.—DEAR SIR,—*Re* claims under west coast leases. I am duly in receipt of yours of the 25th ultimo *re* the above matter and my terms. Your explanation has decided me to accept terms as quoted in your letter. I have put the matter in motion, but, of course, the money will have to be voted by Parliament, but you may rest assured I shall do all in my power to get that done this session.—Yours truly, WALTER SYMES ' Up to that point had you seen Mr Symes personally?—I have not, to my knowledge, seen Mr Symes yet. I presume he is in this room.

31. Is that all the correspondence?—That was all the correspondence that touches upon this question of commission. The other correspondence were merely letters saying the matter is in order and payment looked for. Up to this point I should like to say that I did not know but that the money was immediately available—not until I got that letter from Mr. Symes asking for a larger amount. I thought the whole thing was ready and did not have to be passed by Parliament. When I got that letter I presumed there was some other difficulty in the way, and as a matter of fact later on I had correspondence from Messrs. Skerrett and Wylie concerning another claimant they were acting for

32. Have you got the letter here?—Yes. My first communication, I think, was from the Department, which sent me a copy of Messrs. Skerrett and Wylie's letter to them. [Letter, Exhibit N, handed in.]

33. The letter from the Department reads, "Office of the Minister of Internal Affairs, Wellington, New Zealand, 10th February, 1908.—SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt