

hand, boastfully told his constituents that he had earned this subsequent to last session. So in mentioning this to you I cannot be said to be divulging confidence. I may say we cared not where the price came from, so long as the debentures were satisfactorily sold. Sold they were; but the price has not yet, I am sorry to say, been forthcoming, nor, consequently, Steward's commission. Do try and get the American import duty on our wool knocked on the head; get woollen factories introduced into China and Japan; and stop the British Government from unduly fostering wheat-growing in India, and

I have, &c.,

JOHN DOUGLAS.

I should like to say here that when my friend said he had heard that Mr. Steward was paid, the Waimate Railway and the Duntroon were mentioned together. [Witness refers to same letter.] I do not think I am doing wrong in handing in a letter of that kind. It does not appear to me to be of a private nature. I hope I have made myself clear to the Committee.

107. *Mr. Pearson.*] This amount was to provide for commission that he was to receive?—I have a very different impression now from that which I had when I received the letter. The man who wrote to me said he knew but little of the matter.

108. *Mr. Barron.*] Who was that man?—Mr. Ritchie.

109. *Mr. Garrick.*] Was the language of the letter—as I gather it was—in regard to the acreage of land you held? Would you be prepared to say that the inquiry made was on the basis of acreage?—There is no question about it. That was my impression.

110. Does it refer in any way to a commission on the sale of debentures?—It referred generally to services. I jumped to a conclusion that it was a service rendered in passing the Bill. I consider now it was a service in connection with something else.

111. Does your recollection enable you to say that the language was “a remuneration for services”?—The words were “claims.”

112. Claims to what?—That he claimed a sum of £300 or £400.

113. For what?—I now imagine that Ritchie wrote to me without having the information.

114. Do I understand you that the services spoken of had reference to the sale of debentures, or were the words distinct as a reference to land. Do I make myself clear to you?—No.

115. Now, you think you drew an erroneous inference. What we want to know is, did the letter refer to a claim of Mr. Steward for services (no matter what for), or did it refer to parties interested in land? Was it on this basis of your being interested in land that the “claim” was referred to, or was there anything that would lead you to think it had reference to the sale of debentures?—The request was, as I understood, whether I would be willing to contribute in proportion to the amount of land I held.

116. So far you are quite clear; but your imagination must have led you to the conclusion you came to from something that was contained in the letter: I understood you to say that it referred to a contribution on the basis of your ownership of land. Now, I ask, with your present information, would you say that there was anything in the letter that would lead you to think that it might have had reference to a sale of debentures?—Yes, decidedly. I thought I had said as much before.

117. Can you give the Committee the language as far as you recollect it?—It was that Mr. Steward made some claim for £300 or £400 for services. It must, I imagine, have referred to services in the sale of debentures. That is borne out by this letter.

118. *Mr. Barron.*] Do you recollect the date?—It was shortly after I went back, but I have no remembrance of the exact date. It is a long time ago.

119. It was shortly after the close of last session—was it?—Yes, shortly after last session.

120. When?—Speaking at random, it might have been two or three months after. Nor do I think I should have heard of the matter, but it was referred to at a public meeting. The writer was Mr. Ritchie, of Mount Royal, who has no official connection with the railway.

121. Was he interested in the sale of the debentures?—No; his only object appeared to be to make an application on behalf of Mr. Douglas. He could have no interest. I imagine he is a paid servant of Mr. Douglas.

122. *Mr. Pearson.*] Can you not fix the date of the letter from Mr. Ritchie at all?—I cannot.

123. Were you away anywhere for a month or two about that time that would enable you to fix the date, or were you at home for some time?—I have not the date. I had such a busy time, both day and night, I was very little at home. I am unable to fix the date. I wish I could do so.

124. Was it about the time that you addressed your constituents?—It must have been after the time I addressed the electors.

125. *Mr. Ormond.*] When was that?—I do not recollect; but I could find out for you presently—that is, in a few minutes. But I am sure it was after that; for Mr. Barron was at my meeting, and I should probably have mentioned it to him if it had been before.

126. What does he mean by saying that his commission is still unpaid?—This letter, I should say, is signed “John Douglas.”

127. Is it proposed now to pay commission by subscription?—I do not think so. I wrote to Ritchie shortly, guarding myself from any part in the business. Now that the thing has come up again, if you would allow me a few minutes I might be able to give you some of the circumstances connected with receiving this letter.

128. How was the commission to be provided?—I know nothing of it. It is a matter that concerns other people, particularly those who are interested in the debentures. I was not interested in any way at all; in fact, I was very much opposed to the railway.

129. *Mr. McMillan.*] You were asked to contribute in proportion to the property you held. Do you hold any debentures?—I am not in any way interested in the railway debentures or anything connected with them. I looked upon it rather as an injury to myself. I petitioned against it. I took a good deal of trouble against that railway. I have no connection with it, nor any knowledge of its affairs.

130. Then, this demand was for a subscription on the amount of property you held?—I suppose it was something of that kind.