

167. Now your wool has to be carted, has it not, from the train to the ship's side?—Not as a rule; if by steamer I take no exception whatever to the charge.

168. You have said that 6d. per bale was sufficient, and you have just said that the ship pays the 6d. Is that a statement of fact? Is it not paid out of this shilling? Do you say, as a fact, that the ship pays the 6d. wharfage? Does the man to whom you pay the shilling out of that shilling pay 6d. wharfage?—Yes, that is so.

169. You say that the 6d. for wharfage and the 2d. for weighing are not paid out of the shilling charged?—The 2d. for weighing is, but not the 6d. wharfage.

170. You are quite sure?—I am certain about that.

171. You have just admitted that you knew these gentlemen who were acting as your agents were agents for the ships: that you saw it in the newspapers. Do you mean to say that you did not know that they were being paid by the ships on freights collected?—I said there were other circumstances.

172. Did you know it?—I have already said I might have guessed.

173. That is not an answer to my question. Did you know it?—I did not know it in any positive way. I never troubled about it.

174. Have you not declared that you have known it all the time—the fact of the payment being made by the ship by commission on the freights to the firm?—I probably did.

175. Have you not been boasting to others of your knowledge of these facts?—Quite probably I did know it.

176. Have you not been boasting that you knew all the time what was unknown to others?—I probably guessed it, but had very good reasons for not saying so.

177. You have told the Committee you have made no charges of impropriety against any one?—Yes.

178. I wish to read you a passage in the letter to which you have been referring: "In 'the good old times,' Robin Hood, Dick Turpin, and others, no doubt actuated by the highest motives, being, in fact, the antitypes of the modern socialists, proceeded to redress the inequalities of fortune by taking from the rich and giving to the poor. Unfortunately for them, the rich objected to their very summary proceedings, and took very efficient steps to stop them. Doubtless, the 'gentlemen of the road' then, as now, thought this a bit of monstrous injustice, and probably convinced themselves that custom had given them a vested right in their 'pickings,' which none but the most mean and ill-conditioned people could seek to deprive them of." I ask you now, as if you were on your oath, did you not intend that to be a direct charge of robbery against these gentlemen?—Certainly not. It was put into the newspaper as a sort of chaff. It was not a charge of personal wrong.

179. Do you not use that word "pickings" with reference to moneys received by these gentlemen?—Yes, exactly; but if you take the context it explains itself.

180. Then, do you really mean to say you did not compare these gentlemen with Dick Turpin and Robin Hood?—The whole sentence was intended to show that these "customs" enabled them to take what they were not entitled to.

181. Do you adhere to your statement that you made no charges of impropriety against them? Yes. I think that sentence reads rather well. I did not think it was so good.

182. You told us about the practice of some agents getting one-eighth off?—Yes.

183. Were they not co-operative societies, and so on, who got that eighth?—Yes.

184. Is it not a fact that it was the co-operative societies alone who claimed the eighth you have spoken of?—You are now going into the question of the half-crown a bale.

185. Was not this eighth claimed by the co-operative societies and no other people?—No.

186. Now, with regard to this letter headed "Primage." You say that your only object in this matter is the public interest or advantage. Is that so?—Yes.

187. You are a public-spirited individual seeking to remedy the wrongs of other individuals?—That is with regard to my particular friends, the producers.

188. And all you suggest is the ventilation of this matter in this Committee?—Yes.

189. This is a copy of your letter headed "Primage." You have reprinted that, and issued it in large numbers?—Yes.

190. Have you issued a circular with it?—No.

191. I am asking you about a circular-letter you have issued to a number of people with this letter. [Produced.] This circular-letter is dated the 2nd August, 1898?—That is not a circular-letter; it is a private memorandum, which was headed "Private and confidential."

192. How many did you issue?—None. I have simply shown it to one or two people.

193. How many did you type?—I think about six or eight were typewritten.

194. Did you not send some out?—I sent two to my friends in England.

195. How many copies?—I think I sent two to England and two here.

196. What became of the other copies?—I think I have four. I can account for all.

197. Is it a correct statement of your objects?—It is essentially a private document. There is nothing in it I am ashamed of in any way.

198. I ask you whether this expresses your reasons for entering into this warfare?—This circular was written to my friends in England to show them my attitude on the question of primage. It is essentially a private comment. It does not seem to me to be at all proper to publish it. There is nothing in it I really object to being made public, but I think one's private correspondence should not be brought up in this way.

Mr. Hogg: Is the letter marked "Private and confidential"?—Yes.

The Chairman ruled that the letter, having been declared by Mr. Pharazyn to be private and confidential, could not be put in evidence, but that Mr. Bell could ask Mr. Pharazyn if he had ever on a former occasion made statements which were inconsistent with his present statements.

199. Mr. H. D. Bell.] I ask you whether, having this circular before you of the 2nd August, you now pretend that you have come forward in the public interest?—I do not pretend anything.