

62. Did not Major Smith tell you shortly after that that it would not be paid?—No.

63. Then, how did you come to see me, and how did you find out that I declined to pay?—Major Smith said there was a difficulty about the matter of my captaincy—he as much as hinted that perhaps if I saw you the thing might be put through.

64. You say that you got no notice that I declined to pay, but you could come to me and tell me that I declined to do it and ask me why?—Major Smith has access to the whole of the minutes. I have, since submitting the voucher, had no direct communication from the military section of the Department with regard to my claims—not one communication. Major Smith has access to the whole of the minutes—to your replies. He may be in possession of the information, and may not give it to me, but he can give me very good hints.

65. Then, you think you got the hint from Major Smith that I had declined to pay your claim?—No, sir. I got the hint from him that you were raising difficulties about it, and that I had better interview you.

66. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] Did you get no written reply to your claim, only what you picked up from Major Smith?—Yes.

67. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] Instead of giving a written reply Major Smith hinted that Captain Clark had better come and see me. That is the trouble?—While speaking like that, I might say with regard to the civil portion of the Department I did get the replies. The difference-in-pay question came under the civil department. In any communications that I had with Mr. Grey I got each reply two or three days after sending the letter.

68. Although your vouchers had been sent through the Commandant, and I had refused to pay them, the Commandant's office never gave you any official reply?—No, sir, none whatever.

69. Beyond the interview you had with Major Smith?—Quite so.

70. You have made rather a serious statement, as you will recognise, though, of course, the reply was practically forced from you by the Committee—that Mr. Simpson and Mr. Williams advised you to claim the gratuity for the time that you were in the office—five months?—Quite so!

71. Did you yourself state that you did not think it was a proper thing?—I did not say so.

72. Was this the only interview that you had with Mr. Simpson and Mr. Williams?—With regard to that amount of £191 13s. 4d.?

73. Yes, or in connection with those vouchers. Have you had several interviews?—Yes, certainly, with regard to one or other of the vouchers—with Mr. Williams and Mr. Simpson.

74. Did you ever see these vouchers with Mr. Williams and Mr. Simpson [vouchers for sundries handed to witness]?—I cannot say that I have, with Mr. Williams.

75. Or with Mr. Simpson?—Nor with Mr. Simpson—at least, not to my knowledge.

76. You made a very serious statement—probably unintended or without reflecting—that Colonel Porter was oftener off column than on. Was he sick or on duty in connection with the column when he was off, or what do you wish to be inferred from that statement?—That he was off on duty, I presume.

77. At all events, he took away the imprest money with him?—Quite so.

78. Would not that infer that he was not going to be away very long?—I do not know. At one time, when we were round about Vryheid, we were in a very weak state. A lot of men were without horses, and only about half the regiment at that time were on column. About 161, if my recollection serves me, were attached to another body, and were sent into Dundee for blockhouse duty. That was at the time of Botha's second threatened invasion of Natal, and Colonel Porter took charge of these men. The remainder of the men remained on column under Major Abbott.

79. The New-Zealanders had been reduced to 161?—About 161, being without horses, went in under Colonel Porter at that time, and did not rejoin us till, if my recollection serves me right, in March. From about the 20th November till about March we were on our own; Colonel Porter did not rejoin us till then. Of course, he was on duty for that period, but he had the imprest account with him for that time.

80. You said that you had several interviews with Major Smith, and he told you that this authority had been discovered and that you had better put in the claim for £4 a week?—He did not tell me I had better do so; he suggested that it might be possible that I should get that money if I put in the claim for that amount.

81. You had previously altered the voucher from captain to lieutenant?—Without prejudice.

82. You said that you looked upon it as a bad debt, and that you meant to take the £4 a week offered and get the balance later on: what do you mean by that?—I think that at that time a portion of my claim—the £50 2s., the £5 2s., and the £9 5s. 5d.—had then been submitted to the Department for nine or ten months. The balance had then been under consideration by the Department for five months. During the whole of that time I was absolutely requiring the money to open up a business for myself, and here was a chance of getting some of the money. Major Smith suggested that I might get the £88 in cash, which it amounted to, right away if I amended the voucher; and I could then use my best endeavours to get the balance. Here was a chance, at any rate, of getting £88. I took the chance of getting that £88.

83. Is the Committee to infer that, although you put in a claim for the £4 a week—the voucher for £102 13s. 4d.—if you had been paid that money you were going to take it, and at the same time you meant to come back for the balance?—Yes. I added on the foot of the voucher, "The question of my rank of captain being still under discussion, the lower rank is hereby claimed for, without prejudice to any subsequent claim for difference in rank for period marked 'A.'"

84. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] What is the period marked "A"?—"September 12 to October 7, 1902.—To making out discharge-certificates of Seventh New Zealand Contingent, both days inclusive; 26 days at lieutenant's rates, 15s. per day, £19 10s."

85. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] Will you look at the bottom of that voucher, where it says, "The sum of one hundred and two pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence sterling, in full payment of the above account"? [Voucher handed to witness.] Do you find those words there?—Yes.