

R. H. WILLIAMS examined. (No. 12.)

152. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] Will you have a look at these vouchers, please, Mr. Williams? [Vouchers handed to witness.] Have you ever seen those vouchers before?—Not to my knowledge.

153. Do you see whether they have the stamp of the office there?—Yes.

154. Who stamps the papers when they come in?—This is the Under-Secretary's department stamp, not the Accountant's office.

155. Those vouchers never reached you as Accountant?—No.

156. If they reached you would they be marked?—With the Accountant's branch stamp.

157. Not being marked with the Accountant's branch stamp, they have never been to you?—No, never yet.

158. There is the original voucher and the duplicate?—Yes.

159. I will ask the shorthand-writer to read out to you a portion of Captain Clark's evidence. In his statement here he said that he went to you in reference to a claim which he was about to make for a gratuity, which claim covered the time from his arrival in the colony to the 28th February last, while he was working in the office. But you will hear what his words were. [The shorthand-writer read the following extract from Captain Clark's statement: "I did not think I should obtain the gratuity for the five months, and when I made out the voucher I went down to the pay office and inquired as to what I had better do—whether it would be obtainable up to the 28th February or not. They said, certainly it would. They recommended me to claim for it, and told me to put in the voucher for that amount, which I did. It was solely on the recommendation of the officers of the pay department." Being asked by Mr. Hardy who the officer was, Captain Clark said, "Mr. Williams, and also Mr. Simpson. Both advised me that I was entitled to the gratuity for the time claimed—to the 28th February, 1903."'] What do you say to that?—I say that Captain Clark brought down his voucher for the gratuity covering the whole period and showed it to me, asking me if I thought it was right. I said that in accordance with instructions received from the War Office an officer who was engaged in the office in connection with the pay, &c., of a contingent was entitled to claim for that period.

160. Whilst he was connected with the contingent—in connection with the pay of the contingent. Was that it?—Yes.

161. You say that you did not advise him to put a claim in for the time after he had finished the work in connection with his contingent?—No. Captain Clark brought the voucher for £191 down, I think, and asked if he was entitled to receive the gratuity for that period. I gave him the reply that an officer engaged in connection with the pay, &c., of a contingent was entitled to claim for that period.

162. His statement that you advised him to put in a claim for the period after he had finished his work in connection with the contingent is wrong?—Certainly—after he had finished his work in connection with the contingent.

163. You did not, then, advise him to put in a claim for the gratuity for five months' work after he had finished with his contingent?—I told him that he was entitled to draw the gratuity for the period during which he was engaged in connection with the contingent.

164. What do you mean by "the contingent"—the one he was an officer of?—Yes.

165. You know, I suppose, that he was engaged for only about a month finishing the work of his own contingent, and then went on with medal rolls, and so on? Are you aware of that?—No.

166. If it is so—that he was so engaged—would he be entitled to the gratuity for the period after he had left the contingent?—Not for the period after he had left the contingent.

167. It would be contrary to regulations to pay him for that, would it not? As Accountant would you certify?—No, not for the period after he had left the contingent.

168. *The Chairman.*] What are we to understand by "left the contingent"? Do you consider the whole of this work part of the contingent work, or do you mean by "leaving the contingent" when Captain Clark got his discharge?—Officers do not get discharges. I would say that if Captain Clark was engaged in connection with the Seventh Contingent for that five months he would be entitled to receive the gratuity.

169. Was the work on the medal roll something outside of the contingent, or part of the contingent work?—It was outside; it had no connection with the Seventh Contingent, I should say.

170. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] He was an officer of the Ninth Contingent: when you say the "Seventh" you mean the Ninth?—Yes.

171. *The Chairman.*] What I want to know is, would you call making out the King's Medal rolls part of the contingent work or not? Was it connected with some body outside the contingent altogether?—It would depend on whom he received his instructions from.

172. That is not the question. Was this making-out of the King's Medal rolls contingent work or not?—I am not prepared to say what work that was. I do not know anything about the medal roll.

173. *Mr. E. G. Allen.*] What is your position?—I am Assistant Accountant in the Defence Office.

174. The Under-Secretary's?—Yes.

175. *The Chairman.*] You have regulations for your guidance, I suppose; or do you take instructions from some one else?—I take instructions from my chief.

176. *Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] I want the point cleared up as to whether Captain Clark had the voucher made up when he came down to you. You are positive that he had the voucher made up when he came?—Yes.

177. *The Chairman.*] What impresses it on your memory so that you remember this particular case? Have you had any similar cases, or was it that this was impressed upon your memory by