

Defence.—Captain Clark appears to have been employed from the 18th August, 1902, to the 28th February, 1903, and has charged—Per No. 1 (paid), £40 12s. 6d.; No. 2, £42 5s.; No. 3, £235 12s. 6d.; total: £318 10s.—since reduced to £275 14s. 6d. The authority is for three months at £4 per week—13 weeks at £4—£52. The claims are in excess of the authority, and cannot be passed.” I do not know whether the last two items have been paid.

*Captain Clark*: The two latter have not been paid.

*Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon*: You received payment of the £40 12s. 6d.

*Captain Clark*: Yes.

*Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon*: Well, then, that makes my first statement correct that the total amount paid, if pay in South Africa is included, is £379 10s. 10d. Mr. Grey's memorandum goes on: “Mr. Clark was promoted to lieutenant on the 31st March, 1901, and it is assumed he drew pay for that rank (15s. per day) from that date until date of arrival in New Zealand. We do not know how officers' accounts stand at all. He is only claiming the difference in pay between the rank of lieutenant and captain—that is, from the 23rd May, 1902, to the 18th August, 1902, end of over-sea period of pay on return to New Zealand. He was promoted to captain on the 13th April, 1902. He has amended (without prejudice) his claim for pay as a captain while working in the Commandant's office. Mr. Clark first sent in his large claim for duty in the Commandant's office on the 2nd March, 1903. On the 5th August, 1903, we offered Mr. Clark three months' pay at the £4 per week, in settlement.” Now, in respect to this rank of captain, there was an army order that those who remained behind were to have promotion.

*The Chairman*: You say that on the 13th April, 1902, Lieutenant Clark was promoted to captain.

*Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon*: Nominated.

*The Chairman*: Although we have it in evidence that it was on the 14th August, 1902, that he was promoted to the rank of captain.

*Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon*: He has never been promoted to captain at all as far as the Imperial force is concerned. You are thinking of this: There was a recommendation made by Colonel Porter for a step in rank, and an adjutant of course would naturally, for the time being, take the rank of captain; but the army orders and the rules were that promotions could only be made on the recommendations of the officers approved by Lord Kitchener. He has been recommended, but the approval or confirmation by Lord Kitchener has never yet been given, as far as I have been able to ascertain.

*The Chairman*: Then, Captain Clark was not gazetted captain in New Zealand on the 14th August, 1902.

*Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon*: Whatever we do here applies to only the New Zealand Militia. It does not affect the position whilst serving in South Africa. Captain Clark, I think, has applied to be captain of militia. The question is, what was his rank with the Imperial forces as far as his pay was concerned. I have had no notice, as Minister of Defence of this colony, from the army authorities in South Africa that Lieutenant Clark has been promoted to the rank of captain. If it were so I should be notified and asked to concur. In all the cases where promotions were made Lord Kitchener sent a communication, and asked the confirmation of the Government of New Zealand. However, I must leave this matter, because I know your time is precious. I asked General Babington certain questions, and I received the following reply, dated the 28th October, 1903: “Referring to the second paragraph of your letter of to-day, I have the honour to inform you that it is usual for each officer to make out and send in his monthly salary abstract. The question of the correctness or otherwise of these is entirely a matter for the Under-Secretary for Defence.”

*The Chairman*: Is that a general instruction issued to all officers?

*Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon*: Yes. The reply goes on: “Lieutenant Clark being an officer, it was concluded that he was submitting vouchers for his pay, and receiving such at the time, and it was not until the work was completed that it became known in this office that he had not done so. Had Lieutenant Clark submitted his vouchers monthly the question in dispute would then and there have been settled.”

*The Chairman*: Each officer sends in his voucher without it being certified by any one?

*Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon*: The voucher goes to the certifying officer, which would be the Chief Staff Officer, Major Smith. This voucher which I produce will show you that when Lieutenant Clark was at work on the Ninth Contingent work he sent in the voucher for £40 12s. 6d. His superior officer at that time was Colonel Frederick William Abbott, and the voucher is certified to by this gentleman. [Voucher handed in.] The other vouchers which I have mentioned and which were sent forward to me were certified to by Major Norman L. Smith. I put in a voucher for £199 7s. as showing the manner which they are certified to. The other vouchers are submitted in the same way, and have Major Smith's certificate attached to them. The ones that I want to show you are those which are certified to by no one. I give this voucher, for the second month, for £42 5s. as a specimen copy. [Vouchers handed in.] The voucher for £42 5s., as will be seen, is written out by Captain Clark, and the word “Major” is put in just after the space left for the signature of the certifying officer; while on the voucher for £277 17s. 6d. Major Smith has forgotten to put his title after his name, Captain Clark not having done so. This voucher which I have here is the one which there would have been trouble about—the one in regard to which you saw my minute to Colonel Porter. It reads: “To gratuity under A. O. 151, of July, 1900, as brigade adjutant Second New Zealand Brigade, £50.” It is certified to by Colonel Porter, and is dated the 28th February, 1903. There is this indorsement on it, “Imperial Government since decided this gratuity did not apply to New Zealand contingents.” I may say that I am simply explaining my action to you and showing that the matter has been carefully considered and reasons given for what has been done. Why there are two gratuities for £50 each claimed I cannot understand, because when I