

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."

37. That is Mr. Williams's evidence?—Yes. The next deduction is on account of an error in addition in the voucher of 10s. That is admitted. The next deduction is, "thirty-one days New Zealand furlough at 4s. Should have been thirty-one days at 11s., not 15s.; as charged, £6 4s." That, of course, is a continuation of the question of whether I am a captain or a lieutenant, and entitled to claim the allowance of captain. I pointed out that it was a question of continuation of rank. But, as Mr. Taylor pointed out yesterday, seven days at 15s. has been deducted, and that should not have been deducted. After deducting the seven days at 15s. they wished to deduct the thirty-one days at 4s. I still maintain that the seven days are deducted in error. Those are all the deductions that I have a written acknowledgment of so far. Since the petition came before the House I have heard that there is a further deduction of £8 9s. 11d., also in connection with the gratuity 601B covering the thirty-one days' furlough. That, I understand, will be duly notified to me later on. Now, sir, the whole case practically has resolved itself into this, that a different aspect has been thrown on it since last session. My claim then was for £276 2s. 6d., and that was recommended to the favourable consideration of the Government. The "favourable consideration of the Government" led to the sum of £102 13s. 4d. being offered to me, and it is now proposed to make these deductions from it.

38. Leaving a net amount of what?—Leaving a net amount of £37 11s. 3d. in satisfaction of my claim for £276 2s. 6d. There is a great difference in the balance that will be left, and I think the Committee are apt to forget the main portion of the evidence I submitted last year, and on which I base the chief argument in my case—that is, that I was employed in the Commandant's office in my military capacity under my rank of captain or lieutenant. I was not employed in a civil capacity, but in a military capacity, and the Committee last session could obtain no evidence that I had been advised before taking up that employment that I was put on in a civil capacity. The Committee could not get any evidence that I had been told I was to receive £4 a week during the time I was doing the work, or until four months after the work had been completed. That is a strong point in my case, and should not be overlooked. If the deductions are made by the War Office it means the deductions from the £102 13s. 4d., instead of the £276 2s. 6d. In General Babington's evidence, given last year, he was asked (question 48), "Do you think £4 a week a fair payment for that work?" and he replied, "I think the Imperial authorities would have granted any officer employed up to the rank of captain certainly his pay as a captain for the time he was engaged on the work. The whole of these rolls, discharges, and medal-rolls have to be certified to by a person who is personally acquainted with the services of the men. I could not do it; the War Office would not accept my certificate. Major Smith could not do it; probably they would not accept his. As far as my knowledge of the Imperial service goes, I think that if the charge had been left to the Imperial authorities they would have passed it." That is, a charge of £276 2s. 6d. The "favourable consideration of the Government" of my claim of £276 2s. 6d. has now practically reduced that to £102 13s. 4d., but I do not admit it.

39. You have not agreed to accept it?—No. The Right Hon. R. J. Seddon said yesterday that a letter had gone to the War Office stating the facts of my case, and asking for reconsideration. I think that letter should have been accompanied by a printed copy of the evidence taken before the Committee last year. The letter gives, I admit, a very impartial view of the case, but a printed copy of the evidence should have gone with it so that the authorities could see the arguments on which I rejected their view of the claim.

40. *The Chairman.*] Does that finish your evidence?—Yes.

41. *Mr. Taylor.*] With regard to the rate of pay of £4 a week: do you say positively that the rate of pay had not been fixed until four months after your employment?—Yes.

42. It was not mentioned to you at all?—No.

43. Were you instructed to send in your pay-vouchers at any definite period?—No.

44. When did you render your first pay account?—On the 11th September, 1902.

45. Some time after you had finished the work?—Yes; the first portion of my work.

46. *Mr. Wood.*] How many times were you engaged by the Department—I understand you were engaged twice?—Yes.

47. On the first occasion, when did you put in your pay-sheet?—In the following June.(?)

48. How long were you working?—Twenty-six days.

49. And the second time you were put on, how long after was it when you put in your pay-sheet?—Five months.

50. What is the usual custom in the Department with regard to pay-sheets? Is it not the practice for the pay-sheet to be made up every month?—I do not know.

51. Who put you on the second time?—Major Smith.

52. What was your arrangement with regard to pay?—There was no arrangement whatever.

53. Nothing was stated by you to him or him to you?—No.

54. You went on working for five months and never asked what you were to be paid?—Yes.

55. And you never put in a pay-sheet?—No.

56. *Mr. Hall.*] When you accepted the position to make up these medal-rolls, whom did you consider your employer—the New Zealand Government or the Imperial Government?—The New Zealand Government.