

18. Did they send in any account or demand payment?—Yes. They were almost demanding he full payment.

19. How much was that?—£1 an acre would come to £112. My agreement with them was that I would pay them inside four days after they finished falling.

20. Was any demand made in writing?—No. I went to meet them several times at the camp, and I paid them at the camp.

21. Who made the demand?—Sherwood was the hardest man, I think, to deal with, although he did not sign the agreement at all. Williams was the man who signed it. He was more reasonable. The way I got rid of them was this: I said, "If you take the sum I offer you I will not stick at that if the Government give me anything that is fair." Under those conditions they took what I offered them.

22. What was the sum you offered them?—This document that I have here is a receipt from one of them [Produced]. I paid each of them separately. This is a letter [Produced]. The way I asked them to settle is shown at the top of the receipt.

23. This reads, "Settlement for contract for bushfelling: Will you take this £21 cash, and I will pay all store accounts?—JOHN WALSH."?—Yes.

24. It is signed, "Joe Sherwood," and dated "11/8/03." How was this money paid?—I thought that I paid it in cash. I paid it in the tent. He tells me that I paid him £10 by cheque, but I do not think so. I cannot trace that I paid him a cheque at all.

25. Have you got your bank pass-book?—Yes; but I have not presented it to the bank for a long time—before that time. This is a bank-book previous to that.

26. You have not got your bank pass-book for this date—11th August, 1903?—No. The last entry in this book [Produced] is dated before the payment of this account altogether. I brought this pass-book merely to let you know that I was not one to put any turns or twists on things.

27. The latest date here is the 19th March, 1902—more than a year before the date of this receipt, which is the 11th August, 1903?—I had not presented it to be made up after the last date there.

28. Would you have an account at the bank for 1903?—Yes, I expect I would.

29. This pass-book is of no use to the Committee?—No; not a bit. It is the last one I have. I keep my account at the bank at Hawera.

30. You have no bank-book covering that time—August, 1903?—No.

31. This is the last pass-book you got?—Yes. I thought that if I did not bring that you might think I had left a later one at home; but you can find out from the bank that that one is the latest.

32. *Hon. Mr. Duncan.*] Did you not know that this question would come up when you brought this pass-book?—I did; but I had very little time to deal with it. I got notice at night to come here, and I had to leave before 6 o'clock in the morning. So I did not have time to make provision for it. In any case, however, if I paid Sherwood in cash the payment would not show in the pass-book.

33. Have you any objection to this book being sent to the bank again to be filled up?—Not a bit. I would like to state this: in case you might be asking me to come here again, that it was very awkward for me to come this time. With regard to the cheques that I have drawn, you will find that a lot of them have been filled up in this way: "Pay self, so-much." I keep my account at Hawera, and I might get accounts from four, five, six, or seven men in Eltham on the one day, and I am not going to give a cheque to each man and pay exchange on each. So I draw a cheque on my own account and pay them in cash. If I got only one account from one storekeeper I would go in and ask that man for a blank cheque out of his own cheque-book.

34. If you got this book filled up to date the cheques would show in it?—Yes. Sherwood says that I paid him a cheque, but I am almost certain it was cash. I would not like to swear to it, however.

35. *Mr. Bennet.*] Did you get a receipt for the money you paid?—Yes. The receipt is there for £21.

36. *Mr. Witty.*] Did that cover all three?—No; that amount was paid to each of them.

37. You have the other two receipts?—No. I had none at all the last time, and it was more by luck than good management that I got that one.

38. *The Chairman.*] This receipt says you will pay all store accounts?—The money I paid my own son was more than that; but, as he is my own son, I am not going to tell you I paid him so-much, for fear you would think I was trying to bolster up a tale to make it appear that I had. But these documents that I have here will show you that there were certain sums I paid that I did not speak of at all, because I thought they did not concern my petition at all. Here is one from Mr. Parrot, a Justice of the Peace at Eltham. He keeps a store. [Document handed in.] Here are others [Handed in]. They are not receipts, but they will do for my purpose as well as receipts. It would appear to you very likely that I made a false statement when I was here before, but I assure you I did not do anything of the kind. I have been twenty-five years in the colony, and I do not think it can be proved against me that I did on one occasion; and this is the first time I have had to defend myself. Here is another of these documents [Produced]. I have plenty of these little accounts that I did not speak of before.

39. It would have been much better if the amount had been certified to in this document?—Yes; but they had not time to look up the books. I got notice on Tuesday night to appear here, and I had to be here on Thursday morning. It was just to oblige me that they did that.

40. *The Chairman.*] Who was the contract let to—Williams or Sherwood?—Each of the three was just as much concerned as the other—except that there was only one man who signed, and that was Williams. I let the contract to them on condition that my own son would be in with them, and they were quite satisfied. This man Sherwood was the hardest man to deal with in the matter of payment. Mr. Major has some of the papers, which would be useful.