

The WITNESS: (To Major Bell) Would the answer to Sir Henry's (Drayton) question be the latter part of April?

Major BELL: The latter part of April or the first part of May—about that time.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: So then, do I understand it that the details about the syndicate were arranged the latter part of April? That is, in New York.

The WITNESS: Only in a general way. The details were perfected in Europe, and that was one of the things for which Major Bell went over.

*By Sir Henry Drayton:*

Q. We were told during the last session of the House that a syndicate had been formed, the details had been arranged, and that a gentleman was going to leave very shortly from New York for the purpose of putting the matter through or something to that effect. Is that correct? Had the details been arranged on June 7th, or before June 7th?—A. The principal details had been arranged. There were some subsequent details which were left open, as to how the property was to be transferred.

Q. Had it been reduced to writing?—A. Had the details of the syndicate been reduced to writing?

Q. Yes?—A. No. It had been discussed and the principal outlines had been determined.

Q. So there was nothing reduced to writing at that time?—A. (No response).

Q. And you had your understanding, and were relying on your understanding, I suppose?—A. Precisely.

Q. That this syndicate would go through?—A. Precisely.

Q. So you were in that position on the 30th of April, that this arrangement, which was more or less definite, but not reduced to writing— —A. That is correct.

Q. —would go through?—A. Yes.

Q. Then, I take it, your knowledge of the merits of the transaction was entirely confined to what you have already told us. Can you think to-day of any further information you got as to values, or anything of that kind?—A. Nothing other than I have given you.

Q. You told us there were responsible parties in connection with the syndicate? In your statement here you said the syndicate was to take it over, and you had assurances from responsible people. Do you object to giving the names of these people?—A. Yes, I do, because the syndicate did not come off. I think I can say to you—and I would ask this to be treated with reasonable confidence; I suppose you would have no objection to that, Sir Henry, if I made a statement to that effect—

Q. I don't know if we should have anything confidential in looking into a matter of this kind?—A. No, except that the syndicate did not come off. It was with a banking firm in New York who were acting for us, and the name of the banking firm was Whitewells and Company.

Q. Can you produce any correspondence with them?—A. No, it was handled entirely by conversation.

Q. Did they come up here or did you go down there?—A. I went down there.

Q. So you cannot produce any records of any kind about that?—A. No.

Q. You have already told me as to the Board. When was it you first advised the Government, or any member of the Government as to your action?—A. What was the date, Sir Henry, of the signing of the letter there to which you referred, about sinking fund, and payments and so on?

Q. That letter of contract is the 30th of April.—A. The 30th of April?

Q. Yes?—A. Well, speaking approximately, I should think it would be about a week or so in advance of that. (To Major Bell): Am I right in that statement, Major? Is that approximately right?

[Sir Henry Thornton.]