

Q. So far as you know have these people any office in London?

A. Not that I know of.

Q. Have you or the old Auditor General, at any time, corresponded with Mr. Preston as to who these people are.

A. No.

Q. You never asked the question even of Mr. Preston?

A. Well, we never correspond with Mr. Preston. We correspond through the department.

Q. You can correspond with anybody under the provisions of the Audit Act. You have never corresponded with Mr. Preston to find out who these people are?

A. No, we have not.

Q. With whom did you correspond on the subject of this company? Or, with whom did the department correspond, if not with Mr. Preston?

A. We corresponded with the department.

Q. What department?

A. The Interior Department.

Q. What did you want to know about them?

A. We made inquiries with reference to these contracts. I think if you will look up the reports of the Auditor General for 1901-02, you will find a number of letters and also a copy of the contract then in force.

Q. Yes, but do you recall any—was that inquiry as to who these people were?

A. I do not know that it was an inquiry in those terms. It inquired in reference to the contract and what the provisions of the contract were.

Q. But nothing more than that?

A. I think not.

Q. You do not want to know anything about the company, as to who constituted it, or their ability to do this work?

A. No.

Q. Do you know whether any such inquiry was made at any time by your department from the Interior Department?

A. I think not.

Q. Was that a subject of discussion among the departments or between Mr. Preston and the Interior Department, so far as you know, when Mr. Preston was here a short time ago?

A. That is something which I know nothing about.

Q. You do not know? Would not that have been a good opportunity for you, having paid these very large sums of money, to ascertain who these people were that were getting all this money, and you did not know whether they were spending that \$15,000 a year.

A. I think had we made those inquiries we would have gotten no information.

Q. Why do you think that?

A. Well, because there was not at that time a pertinent question between the Interior Department and our office.

Q. This was a standing question with you. I have just read to you the provision under which one side had to spend \$15,000 a year, and the other side had to pay for each head, and you are the people who were to check the payments made on behalf of the Dominion. It was your business at any time to find out who these people were, especially in regard to the question of their ability to get immigrants, which was the whole question of value to the country—the whole value of their contract?

A. I think not in that case. The government evidently satisfied themselves that these people were capable because they put up a cash deposit to prove themselves capable.

Q. A cash deposit of £1,000?

A. Yes.

Q. And they agreed also to pay £3,000 a year?