

229. Who was the secretary to the company?—I am.
230. But who was?—I have always been.
231. Have you always, yourself, received the secretarial fees of the No Town No. 2 Company?—While I was manager for Cook and Gray the fees were paid into their account.
232. You received a stated salary from Cook and Gray, and paid the whole of the secretarial fees from the company into the account of Cook and Gray?—Yes.
233. You handed over the cash?—Yes.
234. The registered office of the company was at Cook and Gray's office?—Yes, at Cook and Gray's office.
235. Then, to your knowledge, Mr. Cook had profits as a vendor, commission as broker, fees as secretary, and fees as director, all going on at one and the same time?—The firm of Cook and Gray had.
236. How many shares did Mr. Cook originally hold in this Company?—500 contributing shares.
237. How many vendors' shares did he hold?—1,000.
238. How many of those 500 contributing shares does he hold now?—All of them; he has sold none.
239. Has he sold any vendors' shares?—Yes. seventy-five.
240. Mr. Cook sold seventy-five vendors' shares: can you give the Committee the date he sold them?—The date of transfer is 19th March of this year.
- Mr. Cook*: Before you proceed any further in that connection, Mr. Easton, I may explain that I gave the shares away, not sold them.
241. *Mr. Easton.*] Very well; how many contributing shares in the company does Mrs. Cook hold?—500.
242. How many contributing shares does Mr. Cook's employé, Edward Mace, hold?—1,350.
243. And what sum is owing at present from Edward Mace on those shares?—Some £1,147.
244. Can you tell the Committee how many contributing shares Mr. Howes holds in the company?—100.
245. And how much does he owe on them?—£90.
246. How much of the capital has been called up?—18s. per share.
247. Then, he has only paid application- and allotment-money?—He has not paid that.
248. Would you tell the Committee how much Mr. Cook owes to-day on his shares?—£150—three calls.
249. Would you tell the Committee how much Mrs. Cook owes on her contributing shares?—A similar amount—£150.
250. You must be aware, then, that at a time when Cook and his employés were owing those hundreds of pounds to the company the small shareholders were being sued for their arrears?—No. All those in arrears were being sued; a number of summonses were issued up to a certain stage.
251. Was Cook summoned at any time?—No; every one more than two calls in arrear was to be sued.
252. Was Mrs. Cook sued?—No.
253. Was Howes?—Yes; and he confessed judgment.
254. Has Edward Mace been summoned?—A writ has been issued against him.
255. Were those summonses and writs issued against Cook and his employés before these other nineteen small shareholders were summoned?—No; at the same time; the whole thing took place at the same time.
256. At what time were they summoned?—I think the minutes will show when the instruction was given to the solicitor. The summonses would probably be issued in the latter part of April or May. The minute-book shows that the instruction to hand the accounts to the solicitor was given on the 23rd April, but I cannot say when the summonses were issued.
257. I will hand in this letter, Mr. Chairman, from one of the shareholders in the No Town No. 2 Company.
- The Chairman*: This letter is from Mr. Somerville to Mr. Easton. It says: "Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th, and note the contents. I went to the Resident Magistrate's office, and found that on 19th April nineteen summonses had been issued in the No Town No. 2 Company, but when I called at the office I was informed that the secretary had the books of the No Town No. 2 Company in Wellington. I have wired you to that effect, and trust that you will receive the same in good time."
- Witness*: I dare say that is correct. In regard to Mace, for instance, the solicitor would have to issue a writ.
258. *Mr. Easton.*] Is it not a fact that the share register shows that on the 30th April, 1901, there was due from Mr. and Mrs. Cook, Howes, and Mace no less a sum than £1,937 10s. to this company, and yet on the 19th April, 1901, nineteen shareholders had been summoned?—I cannot gainsay that; it is a point I could not speak about. I know instructions were issued to the solicitor, but whether he issued the summonses in one batch or not I am not in a position to say.
259. Do you admit that the books show that on the 30th April, 1901, there was £1,937 10s. owing to the company from these people?—Yes.
260. Can you tell us who received £400 in cash for the sale of this property—the balance-sheet states that £400 was paid to the vendors?—Yes; that would be to Parfitt and this man Mullins, I think; Mullins received £200, and I think Clement Parfitt received the other £200.
261. Do you happen to know how much in cash Mr. Cook paid for the claim?—That is a matter that is not within my knowledge.
262. How much per share has been called up to date in this company?—18s.