

CHARLES HENRY BURGESS sworn and examined.

233. *The Commissioner.*] What are you?—Messenger to the Premier.

234. You are aware, I presume, of the objects of this inquiry?—Yes.

235. Will you give me, in your own way, a statement of anything you know concerning the subject-matter of this inquiry?—I do not know that the letter was ever in my hands; still, I believe a letter that Sir Patrick Buckley gave me was the letter.

236. Will you carry your mind back to the day on which the letter appeared in the *Post*. Do you remember the morning of that day?—Yes.

237. Did you get a confidential letter for the Premier from any Cabinet Minister that day?—I got two letters that day. I think it was Wednesday, 4th April, at 2.30 in the afternoon.

238. How were they addressed?—To the Premier, I think. But Sir Patrick Buckley called me into his room, and unlocked a drawer, and gave me two letters. He told me to give them into Mr. Seddon's own hands. I took them to Mr. Seddon's own room and placed them in another envelope both together, and I wrote on the outside of the envelope, "Letters from Sir Patrick Buckley, to be given to Mr. Seddon himself," and I put the hour and the date on which they were handed to me. I locked them up then in a drawer in the Premier's room, and put the key on my watch-chain. When Mr. Seddon came back I unlocked the drawer while he was present and gave them to him, and pointed out the writing I had put on the envelope, that they were to be given to him alone.

239. Were those the only letters you got from Sir Patrick Buckley that day?—Yes; in fact, they were the only ones I ever got from himself—that is, given with his own hand.

240. Do you remember Sandbrook going into the Premier's room and leaving a letter on the table that morning?—That was while I was away at lunch.

241. Did Sandbrook tell you that day that he had left letters?—Yes. When I came back from lunch I saw Sandbrook, and he told me he had taken a letter to Mr. Seddon's room from Sir Patrick Buckley, and that Sir Patrick had sent him for it again some time afterwards. About half an hour after that I saw Sir Patrick, and he called me into his room and gave me the two letters.

242. Had you any reason for thinking that the letters Sir Patrick Buckley gave you were in any way identical with the one he gave Sandbrook?—I supposed them to be the same. I just guessed it. I think Sandbrook told me he had taken them just before to Mr. Cadman.

243. About what time did you see Sandbrook?—About 2 o'clock.

244. From your conversation with Sandbrook could you form any idea of the time it was made to appear to you that he had put them on the table and taken them off again?—It was between 12 and 2 o'clock.

245. Was it not earlier in the morning than that?—I do not think so.

246. If Mr. Seddon was away would there be any necessity for you to be dodging around his room?—I am generally there, looking through papers, cutting pieces out, and pasting them into books. I am in his room nearly all the time he is away.

247. Would it be possible for Sandbrook to go in and leave a paper, and afterwards take it away again without your seeing him, before 12 o'clock?—Well, I am not positive whether or not I left before 12 that day.

248. Had you any idea of the time at which he left the letter?—No; except that I think it must have been between 12 and 2 o'clock. I might have left a little earlier than 12 that day.

249. Did Sandbrook tell you what the contents of the letter were which he had put on Mr. Seddon's table?—No; I do not know whether he knew at the time.

250. You are quite certain that the letters Sir Patrick Buckley gave you for Mr. Seddon did not go into any one else's hands?—I will swear that it is impossible that it went into any one's hands until it went into Mr. Seddon's hands.

CHARLES BURGESS re-examined.

251. *The Commissioner.*] In my notes of your evidence given some time ago, I notice you state "I got the letters from Sir Patrick Buckley on Wednesday, the 4th, in the afternoon. Both letters addressed to the Premier. I think Sir Patrick called me into his room, and gave me the letters out of a drawer, which was locked," &c. On reconsidering the matter, do you still believe it was on Wednesday, 4th April, or was it Thursday, 5th, to the best of your knowledge?—I believe it must have been Thursday, 5th.

252. At about what time in the day?—About half-past 2 o'clock in the afternoon, I fancy. I remember writing 5th on the envelope, but I could not positively swear to it even.

253. I may tell you that the evidence of the Hon. Mr. Cadman and the Hon. Mr. McKenzie shows that this letter was opened in the Cabinet-room on the Thursday?—Well, I will swear no one could have got it after I locked it in the drawer in Mr. Seddon's room.

254. Then, why cannot you swear positively that it was the Thursday?—Well, it must have been the Thursday.

255. Have you any reasonable doubt that it was the Thursday?—No.

CHARLES BURGESS re-examined.

256. *The Commissioner.*] Have you ever seen this book [produced] before?—Not that I am aware of.

257. Do you know it to be the record-book of letters sent out of the Buildings for delivery by Government messengers?—I have seen Huett and West entering letters in a book; but I do not know whether that is the book, because I have never had anything to do with it.

258. Do you remember, on the 4th April, taking a letter down to the *Evening Post*?—No.

259. Or did any letter to the *Post* pass through your hands, or under your observation about that date?—I am positive it could not have done so.