

to enable him to trace it elsewhere. Mr. Fisher had pressed him for information; had stated the payment was in June for an amount of £76, and witness therefore gave him what little information he could, saying: "This is *probably* the voucher to which you refer; can you not find further information elsewhere." Witness naturally thought Mr. Fisher would obtain further information through the Treasury Department.

(To the Board): At the time he searched the book it was to find record of a voucher to correspond with particulars Mr. Fisher had given him. He did not search the book to "corroborate his recollection": the record was defective. He merely sent the particulars because Mr. Fisher said the voucher he was after was for £76 in June. First, Mr. Fisher asked for information regarding *any* payments, later for information regarding a *particular* payment. He would swear that, from the conversations he had with Mr. Fisher, he came to the conclusion that Mr. Fisher had had some information about a voucher. He had not preserved letters passing between himself and Mr. Fisher. It was quite true that when the Sneddon voucher cropped up, and Mr. Fisher thought of apologizing, witness had said to him (in effect), "Don't do that, there is a Seddon voucher to support the charge." This was at 5 o'clock on Monday, after the debate on the Imprest Supply Bill, in Mr. Fisher's office. Witness had called there and waited Mr. Fisher's arrival. On coming in Mr. Fisher said, "Well, Willis, there's nothing else for it, apparently my information was wrong, and I have decided to give an *amende honorable* to the Premier and his son." Witness asked him what he was doing that for, and said there certainly was a Seddon and a Sneddon voucher, and that Larcombe and West had that morning reminded him (witness) of the former. Mr. Fisher asked if he thought they would swear to this. Witness said he thought so, and suggested seeing them. He searched the books in response to Mr. Fisher's request, and came across voucher 15819, not knowing that it was the Sneddon voucher. He did not think it was the Seddon voucher; he thought the date was wrong. Witness sent forward the number, &c., not thinking it might be the right one, but as Mr. Fisher had quoted the date. After the Sneddon voucher had been brought out, Mr. Fisher came to Christchurch. During this visit he saw witness. Mr. Fisher did not say he had "fallen into a hole." On the morning of Mr. Fisher's return to Christchurch, witness had seen him pass the window in Cathedral Square, and had gone out to him, and spoke to him just outside the door in the Square. Mr. Fisher said, "Was that the Sneddon voucher?" Witness replied, in a jocular way, with a smile, that he believed it was, and that the coincidence was amusing. Then Mr. Fisher said, "You had better get inside or else you'll lose your billet, because there are people watching from one end of the building to the other." That was all the conversation. The other conversation with regard to the apology took place at 5 o'clock the same day, at Mr. Fisher's office. He had seen dozens of Sneddon vouchers, but this was not the explanation of his uncertainty as to the date of the Seddon voucher; mistake was impossible. Mr. Larcombe was a clerk in the same office; there was no other relationship between them; only the fact that he was often working in the same room made Mr. Larcombe bring him the voucher and show it to him, and his connection with volunteering. There was no "feeling" between witness and Captain Seddon, although he knew Captain Seddon. During the Seddon-Taylor case he knew that Mr. Fisher was aiding Mr. Taylor, and that his sympathies were with Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Joynt asked if the Board would indicate to him, for the benefit of his clients, the nature of their report.

The Board said it would be a breach of confidence for them to do so: their duty was simply to send the report to the Governor in Council.

FRIDAY, 13TH OCTOBER, 1905.

Telegram from Mr. Fisher read: "Am leaving for South; will see you to-morrow."

Examination of Mr. WILLIS continued.

Witness (to the Board): He sent the number and the amount of the Anderson voucher to Mr. Fisher. He would swear he did not send him any other number. That was the only information he had ever given Mr. Fisher with regard to the number of a voucher. He knew that Captain Seddon had made a declaration, and sworn on oath before the Auditor-General, that there never was such a voucher nor such a payment. All witness said was that he saw a voucher for a certain amount for certain services. He swore absolutely that it was a genuine voucher, signed "R. J. S. Seddon." He had seen Captain Seddon's signature since. He was absolutely certain no mistake had been made. He would swear that.

(To Mr. Stringer): Witness had never, at any time, told anybody that he had told Mr. Fisher about this voucher prior to Mr. Fisher's being a member of the House.

Mr. Willis said that he wished to state that at no time had Mr. Joynt appeared for him. That, referring to page 19 of his evidence, he had said "£76," without the 4s. 9d.; not "£76 4s. 9d.," as quoted in the passage, "He had simply quoted Mr. Fisher details of the only voucher for £76 4s. 9d."

Subpœna issued for Mr. Fisher to appear before the Board to give evidence at 2 p.m., Friday, 13th October. This summons was not served, Mr. Fisher refusing to receive it, claiming privilege as a member of Parliament. He waited on the Board, and agreed to appear before the Board at 11 a.m., Saturday, 14th October, in accordance with the telegraphed request of the Board.