

could not recall the first communication, but thought it was immediately after the session opened. As evidenced by his statements with regard to the date of obtaining the information, Mr. Fisher's memory was faulty. The sending of the telegram to Wellington had been his (witness's) suggestion. He considered that the position was then critical, as the Auditor-General's report had practically made their statement appear false, and that it was in the interests of all that the matter should be cleared up by a proper inquiry. He had told the other men he intended to telegraph in his own and their names, and they had simply consented. The idea of sending the telegram originated with himself. The others had not all seen it, but had consented verbally to their names being attached to it. He believed Larcombe saw the telegram, but not West or Lundon. He had rung up Lundon, and said he thought they must have a public inquiry to prove the truth of their statements, and that he was wiring to Mr. Taylor to this effect. He had not stopped to choose carefully the words of the telegram, and he had no knowledge that Mr. Taylor was going to use that telegram in the House. He would swear that the telegram was sent to Mr. Taylor without knowing that he would bring it up on the floor of the House. He had sent the telegram simply because he wished Mr. Taylor to press to the utmost his motion for an inquiry. He had had many other communications with Mr. Taylor and Mr. Fisher, most of them were now destroyed in all probability. The affidavits were prepared by Mr. C. E. Salter, solicitor, of Christchurch. They received instructions to wait upon him, and did so—Larcombe, West, and himself. He supposed Mr. Salter had received his instructions from Mr. Taylor and Mr. Fisher. He had been rung up from Mr. Salter's office and told to go there. Mr. Salter got his information from witness and his colleagues as to what to put in the affidavits. On the morning the affidavits were made he had seen Mr. Taylor and Mr. Fisher in Christchurch. They left by the express for Dunedin. He had had a conversation with them about the voucher. Messrs. Taylor and Fisher had asked him if they were prepared to swear affidavits, and he answered affirmatively. He did not remember exactly what was said. He had himself rung up Mr. Taylor and asked him to come round, and then he got word from Mr. Salter's office (by telephone). They had all three gone to Mr. Salter's office that evening, and gave him the information on which he made up the affidavits. Mr. Salter took charge of the affidavits and forwarded them. He had been, as it were, "running the show"; the others had followed in his wake. Larcombe and West did not come forward until the charges had been made in the House. He had made the affidavit voluntarily at the request of Messrs. Fisher and Taylor. They had asked him to do so in the morning. Apart from these regulations, it had never been conveyed to him, nor to the other officers involved, he believed, that information should not be disclosed to outsiders. He had seen nothing of any Cabinet minutes relating to this. [*Mr. Rose*: I have not seen them either.] Their reason for sending the telegram was that they felt that their truthfulness was involved. Yes, they were naturally excited about the matter when their truthfulness was questioned by the denial of the existence of the voucher. That was the *only* motive he had had in sending the telegram. He had had two or three years' experience in Auckland as well as in Christchurch—doing clerical work for the most part. He had known Mr. Fisher for about six or seven years, and had been in the corps with him three years. Apart from this, he and Fisher had been good friends. He had said that the affidavits were arranged for before Messrs. Taylor and Fisher left for Dunedin. He saw these gentlemen about 10 or 11 in the morning and arranged the matter. He would swear that the making of the affidavits was the suggestion of Messrs. Taylor and Fisher, and not of himself. He had supplied Mr. Fisher with certain facts simply as a means of enabling him to procure other information. Mr. Fisher had other information before this, and had questioned him respecting this particular payment. He (witness) could not say from whom Mr. Fisher got his information. Mr. Fisher appeared to know something about the matter, and wanted further information. He had certainly given Mr. Fisher the information with a view to his making use of it in some way. Most certainly he still believed that he saw the voucher; he was absolutely confident of this. They had not made any note of it at the time. If they had known of the likelihood of the present occurrences, they would have had the voucher photographed. He believed he had seen this voucher between the 9th January and the end of June, 1904; he was certain it was between the 9th January and the end of the year. Mr. Larcombe had shown him the voucher; it had been placed by Mr. McBeth in the basket with other correspondence for distribution. He had personally held the voucher in his hand for five or six minutes, and discussed it with Larcombe; then West joined them. When he gave Mr. Fisher the information he was absolutely certain the voucher existed. Mr. Fisher had asked him for particulars of a certain voucher, dated June, amount about £76. He had looked up the book in Christchurch (which showed no details), and said to Mr. Fisher, "This is probably the voucher you mean: can you not get further information elsewhere?" The book was lying open on the office table for any one to handle or touch. He had not had more than two letters from Mr. Taylor in his life, also some telegraphic communications; probably all were destroyed, excepting the letter he had received that morning. He had been in correspondence with Mr. Fisher ever since the latter went to Wellington, and it was not likely he would keep all this correspondence.

(To Mr. Rose): He had held no appointment from the Treasury Department, and was solely employed by the Post Office. He considered himself responsible to the Post Office for his actions in the performance of his duties. He certainly would not consider himself justified in informing an outside person of what deposits were made in the Savings-Bank. This was referred to in the special clause of declaration, "or any information which may come to my knowledge with reference to the business of the Post-Office Savings-Bank." The tail-end of Rule 44 was the only part applying to the present charges, and he had been ignorant of that. The book was signed in the most haphazard manner by the men. He might have signed it again in Auckland. He had made some extracts from the record-book of Treasury vouchers, and these extracts were now in his possession. Considering the circumstances, he thought it absolutely imperative, in his own interest alone, to