

To Mr. Stringer : After signing the affidavit, the next stage was receiving the summons from the Auditor-General. He had never in his life had any communications with Messrs. Taylor and Fisher ; he had neither communicated with them personally, nor through Mr. Willis, between the date of the affidavit and the date of the Auditor-General's inquiry. On returning from signing the affidavit, Willis had asked witness whether he had fixed it up all right, and witness said, " Yes." He went to Wellington with Willis for the Auditor-General's inquiry, but they kept aloof from the subject of the voucher—did not discuss it at all.

To the Board : He was in Wellington about two days. He and Willis met Mr. Taylor and Mr. Fisher in the streets, accidentally, not by appointment, in the morning of the inquiry. Messrs. Taylor and Fisher took them round the Government Buildings ; they did not discuss or even mention the voucher ; they merely asked witness and Willis what time the inquiry was to be held, and were told. Mr. Fisher introduced them to the Auditor-General and left immediately ; the inquiry was a private one. He could not say whether he had told Messrs. Taylor and Fisher, that, notwithstanding the Auditor-General's finding, there *was* such a voucher. After the inquiry they had petitioned the House and sent the telegram. He had never, at any time, looked up the record-books in the Post Office to verify his statement. There would be no use in doing this any way, and he had not done it. He had not assisted Willis in his search, and did not know he had made it. Mr. Willis had drawn up the petition ; he was the " leading star." It did not at the time occur to him that he was doing wrong in performing the actions he had. He saw now that he had done wrong, but he did not at the time. It did not appear to him that he was being used as a political tool. He had no special object in taking part in the proceedings. He supposed that as Messrs. Taylor and Fisher were members of the House there was no harm in giving them the information. He saw now that he was wrong to act as he did. He could not honestly say he had thought the matter out definitely—the visit was a surprise one, and he had spoken on the spur of the moment—but he supposed he was influenced by the fact of Messrs. Taylor and Fisher being members of Parliament. Willis's presence with the other gentlemen had also influenced him. He supposed he had been guided to a very great extent by Mr. Willis—that his stronger will had dominated that of witness. *Re* the affidavits : they were not all agreed upon the facts for these. Witness was not sure of the words " at Wellington," nor that the voucher was charged against " Defence vote " ; the other officers were certain on these points. Naturally he was interested in and had read from day to day the newspaper reports of the affair. Certainly he was taking an interest in the matter all along and watching the papers. He had had no political feelings in the matter, and had never desired to injure any political party. The petition to the House, the telegram, the affidavit were all rendered necessary by his first offer to " tell the truth " made to Mr. Fisher. If any one—any outside person—had asked for information he would merely have offered to give it in the witness-box. In this instance, he had given his word to a member of Parliament, and took the affidavit to back it up. Willis had come to him and said he was going to send a telegram to Mr. Taylor, and witness had agreed to its being sent. They had already sworn that they had seen the voucher, and in face of the Auditor-General's report, they thought their honour involved. The telegram was brought to him just as he was going to lunch, and was in a hurry, and he thought he signed it on the back. He remembered Willis coming into the Chief Postmaster's room a little before 1 o'clock, and he thought it was from there that he (Willis) had rung up London on the telephone. Oh, no, he had had no idea that the telegram was to be made public ; it was not sent with that intention at all. His consent was never asked for its being made public, and he had been very much surprised thereat. He would certainly now refuse to give information to anybody except to his superior officer ; but at the time of speaking to Mr. Fisher and Mr. Taylor about this voucher he had considered members of Parliament were Government officers and as such entitled to information. He could not say whether or not this idea was prevalent in the service. This was the impression in his own mind—on what it was founded he could not say. He had not heard this idea expressed ; it was merely a personal one. He supposed it was derived from the fact that members of Parliament had certain privileges in the way of travelling, &c. When he gave the information, he was honestly under the impression that members of Parliament had a right to demand it. His conscience was perfectly clear at the time, and he honestly believed he was doing no wrong. The first false step having been taken, all subsequent action was simply to back up his own position ; he had no political purpose or ulterior motive. At the interview with the members (Messrs. Taylor and Fisher), he had not been suspicious, because Mr. Willis was there ; he naturally thought that as Willis was there it was all right. Mr. Willis was a much older officer in the service than witness. Willis was his " senior " ; he had sometimes to take his directions ; Willis never had to take his (witness's). His length of service was ten years. He had had no offer of indemnity. No one had told him that if he gave this information he would be indemnified ; nothing was said about it. Nobody had said it would be " all right " ; he had had no reason for believing he was doing wrong. The affidavit was given without reservation. At that time he had apprehended no danger to himself.

DAVID HOBSON LONDON SWORN.

Charge read. Defence put in. Declaration and Regulations 1 and 44 put in.

*Witness* : He was a clerk in the Christchurch Post-office, in various Departments. Length of service over seven years. He had not given the regulations much consideration. He had not considered Regulation 44. Mr. Willis had asked him to consent to the sending of the telegram, and he had done so. He had been asked across the telephone, and had not stopped to consider before answering. It did not strike him as a mischievous thing. His object in joining in sending the telegram was that Mr. Willis thought it necessary. He had then, and still had, great respect for Mr. Willis's intelligence. Mr. Willis had explained that the telegram was necessary in view of the Auditor-General's inquiry proving abortive, so far as they were concerned. He had thought the