

THURSDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 1905.

JOSEPH WILLIS (No. 1) further examined.

1. *Mr. Rutherford.*] In what capacity have you been employed at the Post-office?—Clerk in the Chief Clerk's room. I have been acting correspondence clerk for the last two years.
2. Did you yesterday give any fresh evidence in your statement further than emphasizing the fact that Mr. McBeth's memory was bad? You dealt lightly with it in the inquiry before?—Yes.
3. Did you give any fresh evidence further than that?—Practically it is fresh.
4. What is?—Some if it is fresh. A great deal of it was not brought out at the inquiry.
5. Who was it found the voucher in the first instance?—Larcombe.
6. In what capacity is he?—He is also acting as clerk to the Chief Clerk. He does the record work and the general work in the Chief Clerk's room, Christchurch. He has been there acting for the last two or three years.
7. And it was he that emptied the contents of the basket?—He did on this occasion. It would be his work or my work or the clerk in Mr. McBeth's room that would do it. The clerk in the Chief Clerk's room at intervals during the day would clear that basket, and we distribute the correspondence. Mr. Larcombe handled the voucher.
8. There is no special man detailed?—No. Whoever happens to be there does it.
9. You stated yesterday in your evidence that Mr. McBeth's loss of memory was so great that practically a clerk had been detailed off as a sort of memory clerk to assist him?—He was put in there for that purpose.
10. What is his name?—Different clerks have been acting at different times. There have been quite a number acting during the time I have been in the Chief Clerk's room. Mr. West has been acting for the greater period.
11. Was he acting at the time you saw this voucher?—I cannot say whether he was acting then or not. I should think that it is more likely that it was Lundon.
12. You are not certain?—I am not certain.
13. Has Mr. McBeth in his evidence stated that he had no recollection of Captain Seddon being in his office?—Yes, that is so. He stated that he did not know him personally or by sight, but he was quite satisfied he was never in his office.
14. Did a clerk, to your knowledge, see Captain Seddon in the office?—No.
15. Or in any part of the buildings?—I saw him in the Chief Clerk's room, but I am not certain at that time. It was in the building I saw him.
16. Have you any knowledge that Captain Seddon was in Christchurch at the time of the date of that voucher?—I believe he was, but I am not certain.
17. Would it have been necessary for Captain Seddon for the purpose of obtaining money to go to the Chief Postmaster's office and there sign?—It would, unless he gave an order to an authorised agent.
18. It would be possible for him to get the money without going to the office?—Yes; but in that case he would have to appoint an authorised agent, and the authorised agent would have to sign the voucher.
19. And, so far as you know, there is no record of an authorised agent having signed the voucher?—No.
20. In your statement you made yesterday you mentioned that the tellers might have seen the voucher—I think you meant "cheque"?—If I said "voucher," I certainly meant "cheque." I thought I said "cheque." The tellers would not see the voucher.
21. The tellers in evidence have stated that they have no knowledge of having paid a cheque?—No. They have not given evidence. As a matter of fact, I asked Mr. Warburton to call two bank clerks whom I would like called, but he refused to call them.
22. Mr. Litchfield, the manager of the bank, gave evidence?—Yes.
23. And he has stated that he has no knowledge of any such sum being paid to Captain Seddon?—Yes, he had no knowledge. He could not have had any knowledge of such a payment or not, because there is no record in his bank—there would be no record. The cheque is drawn on a number, and he cannot say whether Captain Seddon received the payment or not. His evidence on that point is absolutely useless.
24. Did you furnish Mr. Fisher with a statement to the effect that you had seen and handled a voucher purporting to be a receipt for £74-odd in the first instance?—No, not £74. The amount in the affidavit that I gave to Mr. Fisher was for an amount exceeding £70. It is a very difficult thing to remember a figure. The particulars that I remembered distinctly I gave to him. That was the fact that the voucher was made out in the name of R. J. S. Seddon, the fact that it was for reorganization of Defence Stores at Wellington, and that it was charged to the Defence Department.
25. He gave the number of that voucher?—I do not suggest how he came to do that.
26. And the number of that voucher is now known as the "Sneddon" voucher?—Yes. I would like to explain in reference to that that Captain Fisher got his information in regard to that particular voucher from me in this way: Captain Fisher asked me to give him particulars of a particular voucher or payment which he said had passed through our office in June, 1904, and that it was for an amount of £76, and I looked up the rough memorandum-book which we have in the Christchurch Post-office of vouchers paid at our office, but which record only shows the number of the voucher and the amount of payment—
27. But not to whom?—No, not to whom and not what the service was; and I found there was only one payment for the amount of £76, and I said, "This is probably the payment you refer to; can you find further information with reference to it elsewhere?" That is how Captain