

13. Did he ask for access to the Treasury and Defence books?—Beyond what is in the evidence appended to my report he did not. This report might be misunderstood. I dare say he wanted to see those, but I cannot add to the evidence. I know very well that it would not have served any purpose whatever of my report. He could only have seen entered in the Treasury books the entries of the original vouchers which he had seen and inspected. There is one thing he did appear to want, and it was that every voucher of any amount that was paid should be taken out and published. That request is, I think, in the evidence.

14. I am not asking you with reference to the vouchers—I am asking you about the alleged refusal of access to the Treasury books?—My previous answer was that I paid no attention to such request, but I do not think that was strictly correct, as I have already explained that not a word more or less passed than appears in the evidence appended to my report. It is not strictly correct to say that he was refused or was not refused, or that no notice was taken of his request.

15. Did he make the request?—Yes; that appears in the evidence, but nothing more passed than appears there.

16. You know at any rate that he says in his evidence that he was refused access to those books?—The answer there is that many of his statements I would not like to comment upon. My answer to that question now is "Yes."

17. Then, again, he says he was refused access to the butt of the cheque-book?—My answer was that I did not recollect any request to that effect. I have since ascertained that there is no butt to the Treasury cheque-book—the cheques of the Treasury Paymaster-General are without butts. I formerly spoke with some doubt; I said I believed there were butts to the Treasury cheques. I find by inquiry since that the cheques of the Treasury Paymaster-General are without butts. The butts are to the cheques used by the Treasury Cashier for local payments.

18. *Mr. Mills.*] I wish to ask you whether there is not a mistake in your reply to a question on page 10, where you say, "I should say his signature is 'R. J. S. Seddon'"?—I have corrected that. I should say the Premier's signature is "R. J. Seddon."

19. Did you omit to put down in the inquiry anything that could throw light on the matter?—I omitted to put nothing down in the shape of evidence. Mr. Willis asked for a copy of the evidence before it was presented to Parliament and published, and he was refused it till then.

20. Did you omit to put anything down that bore on the inquiry or could throw light on the matter?—I do not think anything was omitted in the shape of evidence. I was requested to make the inquiry into the certificates of the officers of administration. I called all the necessary evidence available. Mr. Willis could give no more evidence than his affidavit afforded. Then, if I might, I would explain why I went beyond the reference. When he had given his evidence, in order to obtain his assistance I went a little beyond the strict reference. Then I had lists prepared—lists which he certified as correct—from the Chief Postmaster's record-book of every voucher of between £40 and £100. These original vouchers were produced to me from the list, and the alleged voucher was not found among them, and he asked that the Chief Postmaster's record should be verified by the Audit Office books; it was so verified, and there was no material correction. Mr. Willis says that much of his evidence was not taken down. I think that not a word of his evidence was left out in the printed copy. My difficulty is this: that I am really examined as to that evidence in regard to my report. It appears to me it is impossible for me to avoid reference to it, and the explanation of my answers to the questions and my confusion was on account of my attempting to do this. What I left out was left out at Willis's request. After he found that all the vouchers produced according to the verified books did not include the alleged voucher, he said something to this effect: "These people would stick at nothing to destroy all traces of the voucher." That puts it very mildly.

21. *The Chairman.*] That was an assertion made by Mr. Willis at your inquiry?—Before me at the inquiry. He himself asked that this which was not evidence should not be taken down. He made some very wild charges, but those were not evidence.

22. Your evidence on this point is to this effect: that there is no evidence omitted attached to your report except what Mr. Willis himself asked to be omitted?—That is so.

23. *Mr. W. Fraser.*] Was it so omitted?—It was. That is, these charges I have just been speaking of. Those charges were omitted at his wish.

24. Mr. Willis did not want these things to appear in the evidence. You are now giving evidence of statements which were made before you and which were withdrawn—do you desire that?—Yes, I desire that.

25. *Mr. Alison.*] Mr. Willis stated this: "When we come to the fact that Mr. Grey states that certain records, certain books of account, and the Register of Records have been searched, but they would not allow me to search them, they would not give me an opportunity of seeing them, but only the things that would establish their case; and the Treasury and Defence books apparently, according to the evidence, are the only places where the name of the payee, the particulars of the services rendered, and the amounts are recorded. That is the very thing I wished to see, but they would not allow me to see them—I had no opportunity of getting at those records." Do you deny the correctness of Mr. Willis's statement?—I say I must quote my report. Not a word more or less passed than appears in the evidence appended to my report. I cannot add a word to that report.

26. Did you give him an opportunity of getting at the records referred to which I have read?—The only request he made to see any books was what appears in the evidence. On page 10 he says, "I would for this reason ask to see the entry in the Treasury books of every payment according to the Chief Postmaster's record without limit as to the amount." That is all that passed, not a word more or less, and I cannot add a word more or less, nor can I interpret it. It is not quite correct to say that the request was refused, or that it was not refused, or that even no notice was taken of it.