

1. During the whole period of my employment in the public service of New Zealand I have never received from the Imperial or New Zealand Government any payment whatever in Christchurch.

2. I have never performed any services in or about reorganizing Defence stores.

3. I have never received in Christchurch or elsewhere any payment of between £70 and £80, or any other sum, for reorganizing Defence stores, either from the Imperial or New Zealand Government.

4. I have read the statements made by Mr. Fisher, M.H.R., with respect to a voucher for a payment to me of between £70 and £80, and I say that I never saw, received, or signed any such voucher or received any such payment.

5. I have never at any time or in any place received any sum or sums of money whatever from the New Zealand or Imperial Governments to which I was not legally and properly entitled under the terms of my engagement as a servant or officer of either of the said Governments.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of an Act of the General Assembly of New Zealand intituled "The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882."

R. J. S. SEDDON.

Declared by the said Richard John Spotswood Seddon, this 15th day of August, 1905, before me—D. M. Findlay, a solicitor of the Supreme Court of New Zealand.

WEDNESDAY, 23RD AUGUST, 1905.

JOHN FRAME McBETH sworn and examined.

*Witness:* I am the Chief Postmaster of Christchurch, and I have been there in that position since January, 1903. As regards the claims against the Government for which receipts are taken by me or at my office, the claims payable by Treasury cheques to be countersigned at my office are on their arrival opened by myself or the Chief Clerk, and placed in a clip in my room. They are left there, arranged in the numerical sequence of the corresponding cheques, till the payees present such cheques. On presentation of the cheque the voucher to which it relates is by me generally or by a clerk in room handed to the payee to be signed—that is, receipted—and on being receipted the cheque is countersigned and delivered to the payee. The voucher is then put on the left-hand corner of the clerk's table in my room. These vouchers are, after being receipted, forwarded or sent back to the Treasury once or twice a week, being first entered in a rough record of Treasury vouchers returned. I myself very rarely enter the vouchers in that book. I have not entered any for fully a year and a half. The work of entering them is left to the clerk. I think the book is a reliable record of all the vouchers received from the Treasury and paid by Treasury cheques countersigned by me, or the officer acting for me in my absence on leave. The only other claims against the Government for which receipts on the vouchers are taken at my office are the claims paid out of the balance in my hands of the cash in my Post Office Account. No imprestee or other person has ever left at my office a voucher to be receipted there. If an imprestee had asked me to make a payment for him with his cheque and get the voucher receipted for it, I should have done so. But this has never happened. As to the question whether there exists or was ever passed through my office a voucher for the payment to R. J. S. Seddon for organizing Defence stores, I heard nothing of the matter till the newspapers reported what had been said in Parliament. I do not recollect any such voucher. I am certain there was not. I do not know Captain R. J. S. Seddon personally; I do not know him by sight. I am, however, quite satisfied that he was never in my office. This is what I telegraphed to the Hon. the Premier. I cannot account for the allegation by Messrs. Larcombe, Willis, and West, that there was such a voucher in my office. They were good officers. They behaved themselves well in the performance of their duties, and I never knew anything against their private conduct. Their private conduct was, so far as I know, excellent in every way.

KENNETH MCKAY RODGER sworn and examined.

*Witness:* I am a clerk in the Chief Post-office, Christchurch. I have at different intervals since April, 1903, dealt with the vouchers received from the Treasury for payments to be made in Christchurch on Treasury cheques, countersigned by the Chief Postmaster or by the officer acting for him in his absence. To my knowledge the practice of dealing with these vouchers has been the same all along. When the Treasury envelope containing the vouchers arrives in the mail from Wellington, it is opened by me when I am doing duty as clerk in the Chief Postmaster's room. It might occasionally be opened by the clerk when the package is small and there is doubt as to the contents. When I open the envelope I place the vouchers in their order on the file, so that when the cheques are presented the vouchers are easily obtained. If the Chief Clerk opens the envelope he puts the vouchers in the Chief Postmaster's basket, and I gather them from that basket to deal with them as if I had opened the envelope. I do not remember the Chief Postmaster ever opening the envelopes. But he may have done so. When the person presenting the Treasury cheque calls I take the cheque from him or her. Then I get the voucher receipted, and while the receipt is being written I get Mr. McBeth to countersign the cheque. Mr. McBeth did not ask the names of the persons. He asked no questions. He trusted me, I think. It did not appear to me that Mr. McBeth knew the persons who passed in and out of his room on this business. The cheque being countersigned, I examined the signature of the person receipting the voucher, and on being satisfied that everything is in order I hand over the cheque to the person who presented it. The vouchers receipted are filed till they are returned to the Treasury. But before they are