

JOSEPH WILLIS—

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| Contended that declaration did not cover alleged breach, but related solely to postal packets | 10 |
| Postal packets did not include Treasury vouchers | 10 |
| 1st paragraph of declaration to be read in conjunction with remainder of clause | 10 |
| His ignorance of Rule 44 | 10 |
| Frequency of its being broken | 10 |
| Source of Department's information <i>re</i> these charges | 10 |
| His own statements before Auditor-General | 10 |
| Necessity for making these | 10 |
| Denial of making information "public"; had simply handed it to M.H.R. | 10 |
| Had done so knowing it might be used politically | 10 |
| To Charge 2 had given qualified admission | 10 |
| Was ignorant of Rule 44 then, and did not admit breach now | 10 |
| Then he thought he was doing his duty, but now would take a somewhat different course | 10 |
| Discussion between Chairman and Mr. Willis | 11 |
| CHAIRMAN: Contents of telegram constituted its impropriety, not the actual sending of it | 11 |
| J. WILLIS (<i>continuing</i>)— | |
| Telegram related to Mr. Taylor's motion for inquiry | 11 |
| This inquiry necessary because honour of witness and colleagues involved | 11 |
| Considered he was giving information for public good, and ignorant that he was thereby committing breach of regulations | 11 |
| Referred to length of service and record | 11 |
| Alleged breach a technical one | 11 |
| Its relating to Premier immaterial | 11 |
| Meaning of word "charge," in telegram | 11 |
| In reference to Mr. Taylor's motion: Mr. Taylor came in as a representative of the men involved | 11 |
| He had been in same Volunteer corps as Mr. Fisher | 11 |
| He had seen the voucher between January–December, 1904, through Mr. Larcombe calling his attention to it | 11 |
| He thought it indicated a shady transaction at the time | 11 |
| Questioned Captain Seddon's capacity for work, not rightfulness of voucher or payment | 11 |
| Suspicious that services were rendered in Wellington, but payment made in Christchurch | 11 |
| Had seen other vouchers since that had been indefensible from taxpayer's point of view | 11 |
| He gave Mr. Fisher information merely as a clue | 11 |
| He did not consider the fact of Mr. Fisher's opposition to the Government | 11 |
| He was an intimate friend of Mr. Fisher's | 11 |
| He retained his rights as citizen and taxpayer | 11 |
| He thought he had a perfect right to supply information to a member of Parliament—a trustee of public | 11 |
| He considered himself competent to judge of Captain Seddon's capacity | 11 |
| Mr. Fisher's first source of information was not witness | 11 |
| Witness was personally responsible for the sending of telegram; the other men consented at his suggestion | 12 |
| The affidavits were prepared by Mr. Salter, of Christchurch, from information supplied by men charged | 12 |
| The suggestion that they should be made emanated he supposed from Messrs. Taylor and Fisher, and they made arrangements with Mr. Salter | 12 |
| Speaking generally, witness had been "running the show," and the other men followed in his wake | 12 |
| He had not seen any Cabinet minutes <i>re</i> disclosure of information | 12 |
| The questioning of officers' veracity had been the only motive for sending telegram | 12 |
| He had had experience in Auckland as well as in Christchurch | 12 |
| He was still confident, absolutely, of having seen voucher | 12 |
| Mr. Fisher had asked for information <i>re</i> voucher, of which he had given witness date and amount | 12 |
| Witness had supplied information obtained from record-book, which was always open to inspection of clerks | 12 |
| He had had correspondence with Messrs. Fisher and Taylor, but had not preserved all of it | 12 |
| He was employed solely by Post Office | 12 |
| The latter portion of declaration would prohibit disclosure of information <i>re</i> Savings-Bank deposits to outside persons | 12 |
| Book of rules was signed by men in most haphazard manner | 12 |
| He had made some extracts from record-book <i>re</i> Treasury vouchers | 12 |
| Under the circumstances, he considered this imperative | 12 |
| He had had many conversations with Mr. Fisher, but had not discussed voucher at time of Seddon-Taylor case | 13 |
| The first time it was mentioned was after opening of Parliament | 13 |
| Useless to mention charge to Mr. McBeth | 13 |
| The occurrence of other matters subsequent to the voucher had decided his course of action | 13 |
| Mr. JOYNT, counsel for the four officers | 13 |
| Decision <i>re</i> existence or non-existence of voucher | 13 |
| Mr. ROSE to call counsel | 13 |
| J. WILLIS (<i>continuing</i>)— | |
| Mentioned information outside first to Mr. Fisher | 13 |
| Did not know of any grievance against the Government by Mr. Fisher | 13 |
| Mr. Fisher had first questioned him <i>re</i> improper payments to Captain Seddon | 13 |
| Query definite to this extent, not general | 13 |
| In reply to Mr. Fisher's question he gave information <i>re</i> voucher | 13 |
| He would swear that he gave Mr. Fisher amount and date | 13 |
| He had given Mr. Fisher full particulars in writing (from memory) | 13 |
| He had first discussed this aspect of question with his colleagues on morning after publication of debate in House | 13 |
| Intermittently they had previously discussed the voucher | 13 |
| He did not want the public to know how the information came out | 13 |
| It was assumed that witness's name should not be mentioned by Mr. Fisher; no promise | 13 |
| He had not mentioned his connection with Mr. Fisher to other officers; they were not concerned then | 13 |
| He was anxious to get their corroboration only after matter had been brought up in the House | 13 |
| All the way through he had been the leading spirit | 13 |
| He had written out the telegram; Mr. Larcombe had seen it, Messrs. Lundon and West had not; but all consented to it on his suggestion | 14 |
| RICHARD B. MORRIS, Chief Clerk, C.P.O., Christchurch— | |
| Officers concerned had worked under him; confidential nature of work pointed out to them; all had signed regulations | 14 |
| J. WILLIS: Charge No. 6 withdrawn | 14 |
| W. J. LARCOMBE— | |
| Charge read | 14 |
| Declaration, Rules 1 and 44 put in | 14 |
| Admitted all four charges, subject to explanation | 14 |
| Length of service | 14 |