

that the Premier has stated that there are two people who are likely to know of such a voucher—the person receiving it and the other the person paying it—it is absolutely necessary that we should show what little value can be placed on Mr. McBeth's evidence. That point we did not have full opportunity of explaining or showing at the Auditor-General's inquiry. Then I would like to point out that Messrs. Heywood, Collins, and Grey in their certificate to the House stated, "The system in force in connection with the issue of public moneys is so complete that if any such voucher or payment had been issued or made it could not fail to be discovered, even though the voucher itself had been destroyed." I would like to point out that they actually place on record there the chance of the voucher having been destroyed, and in the event of the voucher being destroyed and the substitution of another voucher, the inquiry that has already been held was absolutely useless, because they showed me no records of anything, and they have stated that there is a possibility of the record having been destroyed. With reference to Mr. McBeth's evidence, he points out himself that he did not know Captain Seddon personally, he did not know him by sight, and yet, however, he was quite satisfied that he was never in his office, and the funny thing about it is this: that Mr. McBeth was so eager to supply the Premier with a certificate to that effect that he never troubled to ask anybody—he went at it haphazard, as one blind, whereas if he had asked the clerk in his room whom he always consulted, he would have owned to him at once that he remembered the payment quite distinctly; but, no, Mr. McBeth gave his evidence without having asked or without troubling to consider the possibility of such a payment having been made. Then there is placed on record the fact that Captain Seddon was in the habit of signing his initials "R. J.," but the document we saw was made out in the initials of "R. J. S.," and unless he signed it in the way it was made out he would not have got the payment—it would have been stopped. And Larcombe and West have not sworn to the signature at all; they knew at the time they made their affidavits that it was a receipted voucher, and they believed it was signed by "R. J. S. Seddon," but they were not confident enough to swear it in their affidavits; they have sworn it was made out in the name of "R. J. S. Seddon." Then I would also like to point out that in a judicial inquiry attention could have been drawn to the manner in which Captain Seddon asked the manager of the Bank of New Zealand for certain certificates. He does not ask him to say whether he did or did not do a certain thing, but asks him whether he will furnish him with a certificate signed by himself certifying to certain facts which he requires; and the manager of the Bank of New Zealand is, to some extent, a Government servant, and in a judicial inquiry we should have had the opportunity of referring to that fact. Then Mr. Grey, Acting-Under-Secretary for Defence, stated that if any claim had been made during the time he was on leave he would have seen it. He means to say that every entry in his ledgers—it does not matter how many hundreds—during the time he was on leave for four or five weeks would have been examined on his return. I am quite satisfied before a judicial inquiry no man would think it possible that a business man would examine every entry in his ledgers or books, and still less would a Civil servant, and it is a peculiar thing that both the Defence officers, Mr. Grey and Mr. Williams, state that they would notice at once on their return from leave if any such voucher had gone through. Well, all these points go to show the need for cross-examination. Then 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 any 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. Then Mr. Collins refers to the many records of such payment, but he would not allow me to see one of them. What was the need of concealment? Would he not have been compelled in a judicial inquiry to have placed his books there to allow the prosecution, or the defence, or whatever we may be called the opportunity of verifying his statement? He states that there are four records kept, and I would like to point out that this gentleman, Mr. Collins, chose to consider himself an accused person, that his Department was under a certain cloud, and he had every opportunity—we had none. He states there are four records kept—one in the Defence Department, which we were not allowed to see; one in the Audit, which was useless; and two in the Treasury, which we were not allowed to see. He also placed on record that if the voucher was lost or destroyed it would still appear in the many records, but the Audit Office books are no good, and the books which would show the payment I was not allowed to see. Then, sir, it was placed on record that this voucher was of a peculiar character, and that it would have to pass through so many hands that one of those clerks are sure to have noticed it. There was nothing in the complexion of the voucher we saw that would draw anybody's attention to it unless they handled it carefully or checked over the items as Larcombe did, and many may have handled this voucher and never noticed it. Larcombe had to examine every item of that voucher carefully, and then having noticed the voucher carefully he brought it out to me, and then we examined it again, and discussed it for five or six minutes. That, again, shows the need for cross-examination. Then we have the evidence of Mr. Litchfield, of the Bank of New Zealand. This evidence is considered most damaging to our case. The whole substance of Mr. Litchfield's evidence seems to be to assist the other side as much as possible, because he introduces much extraneous matter which has nothing to do with the case. All he can say is that there was no record of any Treasury cheques in his books. He starts talking about other vouchers, the cheques for which would be countersigned by the bank, but those vouchers would not come in, and we would not have an opportunity of seeing them. His evidence goes on to say, in reply to the questions, "Have you questioned the bank's tellers on the matter? If so, please state the result?—I have questioned the tellers. They have no recollection of having made any payment to Captain Seddon." If there is a judicial inquiry set up I can prove that Mr. Litchfield made inquiries with reference to this matter after his return