

can say is this: that I saw a voucher for a payment which they say does not exist, and I say that that payment did exist and there must be some record of it, and I consider that if we get a proper inquiry we shall prove that it did exist.

107. Do you think it might have been a fraudulent voucher?—It could not have been.

108. Or anything faked for a joke?—It could not be a fraudulent or faked voucher for this reason: the voucher that we saw was regular in every way; it had just left the hands of Mr. McBeth, who had evidently just countersigned a cheque for that voucher. If there was any hoax, Mr. McBeth must have signed a cheque on a faked voucher, which could not happen, because public money could not be paid out at the bank on a hoaxed voucher. It was said the people of Christchurch knew Captain Fisher was a friend of mine, and that they put this voucher in in the hopes that I should see it and give information to Captain Fisher; but at the time this voucher went through Captain Fisher had no idea of standing for election—his father was alive and well, and there would be no election for two years, and what was the object of placing a voucher there which I might not have seen at all. I did not see the voucher in the first instance—Larcombe found it. If it had not been for the fact of it being placed in that particular basket of McBeth's, and so given Larcombe an opportunity of examining the contents, it would not have been noticed, but passed through without comment.

109. Was it possible for any such voucher to be placed in that basket as a joke?—Absolutely impossible; and the peculiar thing in reference to the hoaxed-voucher theory is this, that people would try and make me believe that I saw a hoaxed voucher, and I tried, I should say, for five or six days to make the Auditor-General believe that it was possible to fake a voucher, and I could not get him to imagine such a thing; and, mind you, in Wellington it would have been easy to fake a voucher, because the machinery was all here to do it with, but in Christchurch it was absolutely impossible. In the first place, the voucher would have to bear the Audit Office stamp, it would have to bear the Treasury stamp, and it would also have to bear the certificates of officials who were in Wellington, so for that reason it would be impossible. The hoaxed-voucher theory is so absurd that it is not worth consideration.

110. Were all those stamps on the voucher that Larcombe showed you?—The only thing I can say is that if the stamps had not been there—if there had been anything unusual about the voucher, we should have noticed it. There was nothing about the complexion of the voucher we saw which was in any way unusual.

111. Had Larcombe studied this voucher first before calling your attention to it?—Yes, he must have done so, because he carried it 40 yards, brought it out to me, threw it down, and said, "What do you think of that?"

112. Then, you say you discussed it for several minutes?—Yes.

113. Did you not think it strange that he could not give pretty well the exact particulars?—He gives the exact particulars.

114. Not as to the date and amount?—As I have told you, the facts that would impress themselves upon the mind of any man are, not the date of the voucher, but the name of the payee and the fact that he is the Premier's son, and the fact also that we did not consider him competent to perform the service, and for that reason it looked to us as if he had been allowed to perform a service which, if he had not been the Premier's son, he would not have been allowed to do.

115. That was your idea?—Yes; and also the peculiar fact of the voucher being sent to Christchurch for payment at all; and I remember Larcombe saying, "He has evidently made a special trip down to Christchurch for this."

116. Both of you when giving evidence before the Auditor-General were unable to give those full particulars of what that voucher contained?—Yes, we gave all the particulars in reference to that voucher to the Auditor-General. We gave all the particulars which I am giving now. The only particulars we did not give were the date and the exact amount for £70-odd for which the voucher was made out, and, as I say, the figures are the most difficult things to remember.

117. In regard to the Auditor-General's inquiry, what did you mean by saying that you would have had a better run for your money?—I said nothing of the kind. I said Mr. Innes was going through the search in such a way that I believed I had no chance, and I went to the trouble of explaining to Mr. Innes that he was not looking for a will-o'-the-wisp—that he was actually looking for something which had been handled by four men who knew they were risking their positions and everything on that statement, and after telling him that, his reply was that "he thought I was getting a pretty good run for my money."

118. Are you satisfied, first, with the departmental inquiry, and then the one of the Judges?—The departmental inquiry I know nothing about. I have had no information about it. I have been under suspension about three weeks. I have called at the Chief Post Office every day since suspension, and I know nothing about it. The only facts I have gained are from the public Press, and that is that after an inquiry has been set up for fourteen days it has now been found necessary to change one of the Commissioners, so I cannot say. As to the judicial inquiry, from what we can gather from the public Press, it seems to be not an inquiry to give us an opportunity of proving our case, but simply to inquire into the Audit system of this colony because I, a junior clerk of this colony, happened to state at the last inquiry that the Auditor-General's books were defective. I simply stated that for our inquiry the Auditor-General's books were defective, and for that reason the Premier has thought it necessary to set up an inquiry of three Judges on account of that remark.

119. Then, looking at the similarity of these two names, you do not think it possible there could have been a mistake?—It is absolutely impossible.

120. You mentioned Mr. McBeth having such a bad memory for names?—He has got a bad memory for everything; as a matter of fact, he does not know any of his officers hardly.

121. Have you not known many instances where people are faulty with names and very good in many other things?—Yes, I have; but Mr. McBeth's memory is not only faulty as regards