

my investigation of the books, that is, that Captain Seddon during a period of two years has only received, in addition to his salary, his travelling-expenses, sessional allowance, and a small sum, being balance of an amount due from South Africa.

110. What does the "sessional allowance" mean?—Every Private Secretary receives £25 for attendance on his Minister.

111. *Mr. Rhodes.*] All those payments referred to appear on your records?—Yes, that is so.

112. And if Captain Seddon had received the payment alleged, that would be on your record?—It would be on the record.

113. Did Mr. Willis apply to you to see those records?—Willis never spoke to me, and I have never spoken to him.

114. *Mr. Taylor.*] How does the Treasury distinguish between the Premier who signs "R. J. Seddon" and Captain Seddon, who signs also "R. J. Seddon"?—One voucher is made out in the name of "Hon. R. J. Seddon," and the other in the name of "Captain R. J. Seddon."

115. Then, when the Post Office officials say the voucher was made out in the name of "Captain R. J. S. Seddon," it would be correct?—Probably it would be right. I know of no voucher that does not bear its proper title. In some cases the voucher may be for "R. J. Seddon, Captain," or "Captain R. J. Seddon."

116. Would the Treasury always omit to put in the three initials?—The vouchers would be "Captain R. J. Seddon."

117. Always?—I would not answer that question right off, but I can say that every receipt given by him since 1902 is signed "R. J. Seddon," and sometimes he adds "Captain."

118. Is not that practice of father and son signing their names the same likely to lead to confusion?—The examining clerk knows the signatures. In the case of the Right Hon. the Premier the money is paid to his credit, and in the case of the son it is always paid to himself.

119. You obtain the Premier's signature?—No; the bank signs as the agent.

120. You said in reply to Mr. Rhodes just now that this sum of money was not paid to Captain Seddon during the last two years—do you suggest that it could have been paid before that?—Not at all.

121. Has any search been made as to whether such payment was made before March, 1903?—All payments made to Captain Seddon since his return from South Africa have been turned up, but as this inquiry only extended from the 31st March, 1903, to the 30th June, 1905, only vouchers for that period were produced. On his return from South Africa he received his balance of pay.

122. Supposing this payment had been made for services rendered three years ago, how do you file the voucher, according to date of payment or date of service?—According to date of issue from the Treasury.

123. How many books in the Treasury contain a record of the name of the payee of public money?—There are two in the Treasury.

124. What are they called?—One is called the "Abstract Book," in which all the particulars are entered, and the other is called the "Address Register," showing the number of the cheque, the name of the claimant, and his address.

125. How long would it take you to ascertain, supposing a question is raised dealing with a payment made to Captain Seddon—how long would it take you to search your records and make yourself satisfied?—A payment under the Defence vote for examination of stores could be done in an hour or an hour and a half.

126. When you were recommended to do this first, did you consult the Secretary to the Treasury.—The Secretary to the Treasury handed the document to me to make the examination. Instructions from the Minister came to the Secretary, and were then passed on to me.

127. If Mr. Heywood said the reason why he did not sign the certificate was because he was not at the office in time, was that correct?—That is quite correct, and I might explain. The request came down a little before 1 o'clock midday, and Mr. Heywood had not returned to the office by half past two, when the House met, and that was the reason it was signed by me. Mr. Heywood would have signed on my certificate.

128. Did you make the investigation, or the clerk?—The clerk in charge, Mr. Vincent, made the investigation. I subsequently made an investigation myself before the Auditor-General's inquiry.

129. There is no record of that in the evidence?—Yes; in my evidence I say that I personally examined the books in order to verify my certificate.

130. How do you preserve a record of the vouchers that should come back to you from the various Postmasters—supposing a voucher did not come back?—We have what we call a "Voucher Book," and the numbers are set down there in numerical sequence, and as the vouchers come in they are ticked off in this book. If a voucher is absent, application is made to the countersigning officer within a month or six weeks for its return.

131. Supposing a faked voucher was seen by these men and they returned it to the Paymaster-General at Wellington, what would become of it?—It would be handed to me, and I should bring it under the notice of the Secretary, and the inquiry would be made.

132. Did anything of the kind ever happen?—No.

133. *Mr. Fisher.*] I notice in the certificate which you gave that the Treasury officials were careful always to say that there was no record of a payment to be found?—Yes.

134. That may mean that a payment may be found, but no record can be found?—We mean that there has been no payment made when we say that.

135. Would you have a record of such payment if it was made out of a separate fund: supposing such payment was made out of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, would you have any check on it?—Yes; we should have the same check, and these accounts have all been searched.