

SESSION II.
1906.
NEW ZEALAND.

ALLEGATIONS MADE BY F. M. B. FISHER, ESQ., M.H.R.
(REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

COMMISSION.

PLUNKET, Governor.

To all to whom these presents shall come: Greeting.

WHEREAS it has been alleged that the Audit system of checks and records in connection with the issue and payment of public money is inefficient and defective, and that by reason thereof it is possible that in cases where vouchers are issued for payment of moneys out of the Public Account, and the moneys are paid pursuant thereto, the departmental books and records may fail to show any trace thereof:

And whereas it has been further alleged that such a case actually occurred in the year 1904, when (as alleged) a voucher of between £70 and £80 was issued in favour of Captain R. J. S. Seddon for the reorganization of Defence Stores, and the money was paid to him at the Chief Post-office in Christchurch, although on investigation and search being made no record or trace of any such voucher or payment could be found by the Audit Department:

And whereas it is expedient that inquiry should be made into the questions above referred to:

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me by "The Commissioners Act, 1903," and the amendments thereof, and of all other powers and authorities enabling me in that behalf, I, William Lee, Baron Plunket, the Governor of the Colony of New Zealand, acting by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council of the said colony, do hereby appoint their Honours

Sir ROBERT STOUT, Chief Justice;

JOSHUA STRANGE WILLIAMS, Esquire, Judge of the Supreme Court of New Zealand;

JOHN EDWARD DENNISTON, Esquire, Judge of the Supreme Court of New Zealand;

WORLEY BASSETT EDWARDS, Esquire, Judge of the Supreme Court of New Zealand;

THEOPHILUS COOPER, Esquire, Judge of the Supreme Court of New Zealand; and

FREDERICK REVANS CHAPMAN, Esquire, Judge of the Supreme Court of New Zealand,

to be a Commission, or such of them, not being less than three, as undertake the burden of this Commission, to inquire into and report upon the questions,—

- (1.) Whether a voucher for payment of an amount by cheque on the Public Account, signed by the payee, could disappear without any record of its existence or payment being left in the departmental books or records.
- (2.) Whether in the years 1903–4 a voucher was issued in favour of Captain Seddon for payment to him at Christchurch out of the Public Account of a sum of between £70 and £80 (or any other sum) for the reorganization of Defence Stores, or for any other service.
- (3.) Did Captain Seddon ever claim or receive any such payment or sign any such voucher?