

WEDNESDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 1893.

THOMAS SEAMAN sworn and examined.

I reside at Ponsonby. I am aware of the statements made by Mr. Mitchelson in the House of Representatives, reported in *Hansard* (October, 1892, p. 719). The greater part of the information was supplied to Mr. Mitchelson by me. In consequence of the return to the House of Representatives of the 7th July, 1892, I was asked by Mr. Mitchelson if I could give any account of the great difference shown by that return in the cost of the returns for different years. Previous to this several persons had applied to me for employment who had been previously employed by Mr. King in connection with the returns. On comparing the statements of some of them with the list of payments sent me from Wellington, I found that they appeared to have received less than the amounts shown on the vouchers. In consequence of this, when I was asked to explain the differences of cost, I sent notes or memoranda to some of the sub-enumerators asking for information. These notes and the replies I received have been produced, and some of the witnesses have been asked about them. I also had interviews with some of them. It was the information so obtained that I supplied to Mr. Mitchelson. Mr. King was employed by me on the industrial statistics from the 20th April to the 3rd July, 1892. He was then dismissed, having handed in the work as completed: it was completed with very few exceptions. He was paid up to that date. He was not told that any fault was found with him.

1. *Mr. Campbell.*] I did not move Mr. Mitchelson to ask for that return, nor do I know who did. For some years past the collection of census and agricultural returns has been done either by myself or Mr. King. Mr. James Glenny was mistaken in his evidence when he said he had several interviews with me. There was only one, and that was at my office. I only saw two of the whole number. I did not apply to Mr. King for any explanation. With regard to Mr. Brown's evidence about the number of constables employed in 1890, there were thirty-five collectors instead of twenty-eight, and I had nine counties. In 1891 I had eighty-two collectors and only three constables. The instructions have always been to employ constables where practicable. When I employed Mr. Robert Shaw in 1891, his age was sixty-nine, and I knew that his son would help him. In the same year I employed Colonel Rookes, aged seventy-one. He appeared thoroughly efficient, and I was asked by Sir George Grey to employ him.

JOHN KING sworn and examined.

I was census enumerator and superintendent for collection of agricultural statistics in the years 1878, 1881, and 1886. I held the appointment for agricultural statistics annually from 1878 to 1887. I had no complaints from the department with regard to my work all that time. In 1886 the price of labour was much higher than in 1891, and I believe in giving fair remuneration for good work; and I am satisfied that the expenses were reasonable and not excessive. I should think Auckland City lost about 5,000 population during that interval. I was always opposed to the employment of constables [reasons given]. With respect to the industrial statistics, I took the figures as they were given to me, the owners in some cases stating that a loss was incurred. I pointed the apparent anomaly out to them. The work was not completed when I was dismissed.

The increased cost of the agricultural statistics in 1892 is accounted for by the great increase of holdings since 1890, and only five constables were employed as against thirteen in 1890.

With reference to the returns of 1886, in no case were the vouchers signed in blank; also, the authority on the back.

Smith got the whole sum less 9s., which was paid to King, Walker and Co., who discounted the account after the work was completed. Smith received the cheque for £17 11s., as shown by butt of cheque produced, and bank-book of King and Whewell. We neither expected nor got anything out of that cheque.

John Brown got his cheque for £34 direct from the Treasury to his address at Onehunga. I had nothing whatever to do with the cheque. I neither claimed nor received anything from Mr. Brown.

Albert Board had some money transactions with King and Whewell, who made advances to him. They consisted of sums of £4, £5, and £6 15s. before the work was finished. I produce two butts of cheques [the third frayed to pieces]. Board brought us a cheque of Edmiston's for £41, as shown by our day-book of the 10th May, 1886. The £1 was Edmiston's discount. King and Whewell charged 10s. for the advances, and Board received a cheque for the balance, £24 15s. I never received anything from Mr. Board, or had any other dealings with him than what I have stated.

In Glenny's case, I did not receive the cheque. I did not receive a penny from Mr. Glenny. His statement about refunding me £3 10s. is quite untrue. The firm of King and Whewell received nothing from him.

I have had no communication with Mr. Glenny since the allegations against me first appeared. Mr. Broad spoke to me after he got Mr. Seaman's letter, and I told him he had nothing to hide and nothing to fear, and I have refused to discuss the question with him. I never approached him, but he came to me. Smith wanted to speak to me, but I declined to discuss the matter in any way with him. Brown never spoke to me about it, nor I to him.

In Heighway's case the body of the claim was filled up by myself, the signature is Heighway's, and it was affixed after the claim was filled up. The amount, £18 10s., was put in before he signed it. The address is not in my writing, and it does not appear to be in his. The authority indorsed on the back is signed by him, and the words "Eighteen pounds ten shillings" are in his handwriting. I speak from a full knowledge of his writing. The rest of the writing is Edmiston's. Edmiston had told me that if any of the sub-enumerators required money he would be very glad to discount their vouchers. In every case when I did any business with him I generally accompanied