

76. Then, where is the check?—In that case they would be checked in the Engineer's office at Eketahuna or Woodville.

77. You do not see the goods?—I never see them.

78. Then, really, in going through these vouchers your endeavour is to ascertain as nearly as possible what are the items, and what is likely to be their correct weight?—Yes.

79. How can you ascertain that if they come in large quantities and are delivered at the works, being sent there direct?—They are not always large quantities; they are very often small quantities.

80. *Mr. Tanner.*] It appears from the papers produced that trifling quantities of blacklead, gold-leaf, caustic soda, and things like these, where the total is only a few pence, are tested in respect to weight, and yet you have not the slightest idea in a matter of 20lb.?—In the cases you refer to we have the contract rates to guide us. The charge is altered to the contract rate if there is an overcharge. There are two elements—the contract rate and the quantity.

81. How do you show that 30lb. of nails were delivered?—I could not tell you, because they are not weighed on the works.

82. How are the Committee to form a judgment, where there are scores of errors and mistakes, while yet you would give the contractor credit for honesty?—I would. These are all very small items.

83. What is the value, say, of 30lb. of lead-headed nails?—5s.

84. But a ninepenny packet of blacklead is tested?—No, it would not be tested. It would be checked according to contract rate if overcharged. If it were charged at 9d., and the contract rate were 7d., it would be altered to 7d.: there is no other test required.

85. While testing little things?—No; there is no test.

86. Where is the check—you say there is no mode of checking?—No, if the quantity is not weighed on the work.

87. What is the difference between quantity and weight?—I should distinguish nails by weight.

88. Did you make out this list the other day—this list which we have been discussing before the Committee?—Yes, I made out that list.

89. It has been your custom to check those vouchers which have been produced, with the exception of one or two?—Yes.

90. Did you hear any report on this subject into which we have been inquiring?—No, I did not.

91. Have you been examined by any one on these matters?—I have not been examined.

92. Are you used to checking and compiling figures?—Yes, it is my business in the office which I hold.

93. You have had experience for a number of years?—Yes, as an ironmonger.

94. Have you been in the Government Insurance Department?—No.

95. Never?—Yes, I was some years ago, for about a month.

96. Would you tell me whether you had all your figures correct there?—I had nothing to do with figures.

97. Quite sure?—No, nothing.

98. Have you ever been in the employment of Messrs. Briscoe, MacNeil and Co.?—Yes.

99. Will you give the Committee an idea of the time?—I was for some years in their employment. I do not know that I can give you any information as to the time.

100. You say you were there some years: would you tell the Committee the year?—It is some time ago; I could not tell you the exact year.

101. But you would be able to get it within a year or two?—It might be ten years; I could not say for the year.

102. Might it have been eight years?—It would be longer ago than that.

103. Might you not have left in 1886?—I was not at Briscoe and MacNeil's in 1886.

104. *Mr. Lang.*] I understood you to say that certain goods sent by weight you could not check if there were no facilities for checking by weight?—No.

105. Have you no means at all of checking any goods delivered to the public buildings in Wellington?—They are delivered direct to the workmen on the spot; they are not weighed.

106. Could you give us an idea of the proportion of these goods, or the totals, roughly speaking?—No, I can give you no total; but I should say it would be a very small proportion that are weighed.

107. Do you know the proportion?—I could not tell you the proportion in value. At a rough guess I do not think it would be 5 per cent. that would be really by weight; most of them go by quantities.

108. You have told us that some of the articles are supplied by weight and some by quantity: by weight you do not check where the goods are delivered to buildings outside the stores?—I have no means of checking only where the goods can be checked by table rate.

109. When goods are supplied by quantity, do the persons who receive them check them?—They check the quantities and sign for them: they give a receipt for them, and that is attached to the order on the voucher.

110. *Mr. Skerrett.* You were asked whether you had been in Briscoe and MacNeil's employment at one time?—Yes.

111. Was that not between twelve and fifteen years ago?—It might be twelve years—I could not tell you right off.

112. Since then you have been in Mills's employment?—Yes.

113. For many years?—For some years.

114. And you have been in other employments?—Yes; I was in Mr. Dawson's. I also disposed of the business of Waring Taylor.