

179. Did you believe his statement?—That he had conversations with Ibbetson, Yes.

180. Do you believe it now?—Yes.

180A. Do you believe it now that there was any collusion between Ibbetson and Jenkins?—I think Mr. Jenkins informed Ibbetson about weight of jumpers.

181. You do not mean to say or to suggest that Ibbetson was getting anything out of the contract, or Dawes?—No.

182. For when you say collusion with two officers of the Government it means a great deal?—If they had been looking after their departments they should have had no conversation with him at all.

183. Mr. Ibbetson was the gentleman who wrote about the tents?—Yes.

184. I think you wrote a letter to him asking him to withdraw his words?—I was open to discuss the matter of the tents with him if he had not asserted that he knew all about the tents.

185. You have seen a number of the alterations in the vouchers in this contract?—The returns are greater or less; greater to the extent of about 1 per cent. I attribute that more to the new schedule. It takes a little time to get into the working of any new schedule.

186. Now, in reference to the contract journal, you took no particular notice of that after Jenkins came into your employment; what was your practice in going through the vouchers—returned book?—I had no practice about it. I occasionally looked at it.

187. You say you looked on the contract journal as a "rough book"?—Yes.

188. Did you trust the officers of the departments to correct your vouchers?—They took the right to say what the weights and rates and quantities should be. If we entered it up daily we would have a larger percentage of alterations by way of returns and exchanges.

189. Do you rely on the Government check in your business?—The check is a very severe one, and they reserve to themselves the right to alter it.

190. *Mr. Montgomery.*] With regard to the sash-cord: as a matter of fact, the evidence shows that hanks were supplied, and not pieces?—I cannot answer that at the moment.

191. Nine hanks sash-cord, 100 yards long each hank?—That is the Stock Inspector's house at Woodville. Judging it as ten single hanks the weight would be 20lb.; 75lb. is absurd.

192. Is there any evidence to show that double hanks were ever sent. Have you reason to suppose they were sent?—We have reason; we have supplied pieces.

193. When they asked for a hank would you supply a piece?—If I had to do with it I would supply a piece, to get the benefit of the larger quantity supplied. If four of these were supplied the weight would be 30lb. I cannot say whether single hanks or pieces were supplied; single hanks would be charged as 100 yards. I understand that weight was charged "as last." That shows Jenkins did not know what he was charging if he charged eight for ten, or ten for eight. The weight must be put down on the basis of ten.

194. Then your assumption is that Jenkins had followed out instructions to charge as before?—He seems to have charged as before without knowing what he was charging.

FRIDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1895.—(Mr. GUINNESS, Chairman.)

GEORGE CECIL RUSSELL sworn and examined.

1. *Mr. Skerrett.*] You reside in Wellington?—At present.

2. You are acquainted with Jenkins?—I am. I have known him for between five and six years.

3. You prepared a statement of certain alleged overcharges from information supplied by him?—Partially supplied by him.

4. Will you explain how you came to prepare that statement?—I prepared it in response to a request by Mr. George Hutchison.

5. Do you know why Mr. George Hutchison should have come to you for the preparation of documents?—Yes; because I had originally gone to him.

6. Will you tell me what induced you to go to him?—Because I was anxious to assist Jenkins to obtain an inquiry into the charges he had made.

7. Why?—Because he asked me to.

8. Have you any reasons why Jenkins came to you?—We are, in a way, brothers in affliction, and both out of work. He has asked my advice before.

9. Is that the true reason?—It is the true reason.

10. Is it not a fact that you are a connection of a previous contractor to the Government?—I am not familiar with the names of all the previous Government contractors.

11. You are a connection of Mr. Mills?—I am his son-in-law.

12. Did you have any communication with Jenkins when in Briscoe and MacNeil's employ?—I saw him twice.

13. Did he then communicate to you matters connected with the business of Briscoe, MacNeil, and Co.?—No; certainly not. That I swear most distinctly. The first time he mentioned Messrs. Briscoe's was the 16th May.

14. Am I paying you a compliment when I say you are responsible in a large measure for these charges?—No; I certainly am not.

15. Responsible for their being investigated at present?—I introduced the matter to Mr. Hutchison.

16. Upon information supplied to you by Jenkins?—Yes; partially.

17. Have you communicated any information to persons outside as to these charges?—I have spoken to other people on the subject.

18. To a great many people?—No, not a great many.