

46. During four months you tell us that the overcharge paid to Briscoe, MacNeil, and Co. amounted to £4, after giving credit for under-charges?—Yes.

47. Disputes always arise between contractors, engineers, and public officers upon the proper mode of charging particular items?—Well, the schedule is a comprehensive one; there is very little reason for a dispute in a contract of this nature.

48. I ask you whether the schedule is not only a comprehensive one, but also a complicated one?—I do not think it is complicated.

49. Take the reductions that have been made; take No. 2166, which is one you mentioned first: "Gold-leaf charged at 1s. 6d., reduced to 1s. 4½d.": looking at that, would you say whether the clerk has not made it out at the Christchurch instead of the Wellington rate?—I do not think there is any error there.

50. What is the number of the item?—No. 78.

51. What is the Christchurch rate?—1s. 5d. I do not think there is any error there.

52. If transferred?—It makes no difference whether transferred or not.

53. Then, voucher 2162; that was an under-charge?—That was an under-charge in weight.

54. No. 1447 was the case in which glass was charged at per sheet instead of per foot?—Yes.

55. Then, there is 1472, in which yellow ochre was charged as not being in the schedule?—It is charged at 20s. per cwt., it should be a ½d. per pound in the schedule.

56. Now point out 131?—Oxford ochre or yellow ochre.

57. Then 2208: is that where the glass is charged at per sheet instead of per foot?—Yes.

58. No. 2204 is picture wire?—Yes.

59. 1433?—That is reduced to scheduled rate, from 5s. 6d. to 2s. 6d.

60. Do you know that a different schedule was supplied to the previous contractor?—I do not know that.

61. Do you know that Briscoe and MacNeil went round the trade, and that Mills and Co. found out what they were supplying at?—I could not tell what they did.

62. 2172 is a mistake of charging a dozen as a gross?—Yes, apparently that is so.

63. 1446, that is a reduction of 1s. 2d.?—Opal glass globes charged at 2s. each reduced to 10d. each.

64. 1467, twelve brass unions: under what item in the schedule does that come?—Hose unions?

65. These were gas unions, not hose unions?—There is nothing on the voucher to show that; they appear to come under 488.

66. Now, suppose they are brass gas unions, what item would they come under?—I do not see anything they would come under except 488.

67. Would not the size indicate that they were brass gas unions?—They seem rather small for water.

68. I wish to show that these are ordinary errors. Then, there is 1438, 10lb. of caustic soda: is it not a fact that, at the request of the department, this caustic soda was put up in 10lb. tins?—I am not aware of it.

69. 1441, a reduction of 1s. 8d. on bolts: I ask you whether square-headed bolts are within the contract—17½in. by ½in.?—I have always looked upon them as being within the contract.

70. They are not specified in the contract; there is no mention of "square-headed" bolts: these have to be specially made, have they not? It seems to me rather absurd to drag them into the schedule. At any rate, it is open to argument that these were not in the contract?—Yes, it is open to argument.

71. Now then, 1690, enamel toilet basins at 7s. 6d.: do you know whether these were wrought-iron or cast-iron?—

*Mr. Blow.*] The item in the schedule is 42?—That is what the schedule states.

72. *Mr. Skerrett.*] Suppose they were enamel wrought-iron wash-basins, would they be in the schedule?—They would not be in the schedule.

73. Then 1442: That alteration was caused partly by a reduction in the quantity ordered, was it not?—The alteration here is an alteration in rate: three bolts of No. 3 scrim, 150yds.; that was an alteration in rate.

74. Scrim is of different qualities, according to number?—Yes, it is numbered.

75. Do you know that a special quality was asked and arranged for at the time of delivery?—I do not think that Mr. Smith would arrange for a special price for an item that was in the contract.

76. *Mr. G. Hutchison.*] Who is Mr. Smith?—He is an Inspector of Works.

77. 2201: Hobb's drawer-locks, reduced from 5s. to 2s. 6d.; where are they in the contract?—No. 582 in the schedule.

78. Do you know that a desk-lock is a different thing from a drawer-lock?—There may be a difference, but I do not suppose that would affect the value.

79. What I wanted to know was, whether there was some reason for its not being in the schedule. Now, as to the picture-wire, which is reduced to half-a-crown, do you know that that was required to be of a special quality and a special size, for the purpose of hanging some heavy pictures in these buildings?—Yes; I know that now.

80. Do you know that there was a special price to be given for it?—I do not know that.

81. Do you know that Mr. Bridson went to Denton's and bought this special kind, and paid a special price for it?—No; I do not know that. I could not tell you what he gave for it; it is the schedule I am going by.

82. Then, you do not know that this was of a special kind, of a special price, of a special quality, and a special size?—That is not unreasonable; and if these things had been indicated in the voucher it would have saved correction. If it had been shown on the voucher no correction would probably have been required.