

C.S.

CONFIDENTIAL.

1929.

No. C/17/29.

4

Col. Postmaster.

SUBJECT.

1929.

2nd September.

REPORT ON MR. M. EVANS, CLERK IN THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

Previous Paper.

MINUTES.

1 - 4. Report from Colonial Postmaster, 2nd September, 1929.

*W. P. Labmaster. I consider there are grounds for the dismissal of Mr. Evans under Colonial Regulation 41.*

*S. H. 14  
A. G. C. S.  
3. IX. 29.*

Hon C.S

*Pages 1 to 4 cannot be taken into consideration and care should be taken to keep this jacket under lock & key. I hear from Hon Col Treasurer that this boy shows no aptitude for his work and is not satisfactory in that respect. It would be better, therefore, if he sought other channels of work more congenial to him. G. M. also reported to you in same strain. As Evans has now resigned matter is finished. See me about appointing his successor.*

*R.N. 5-29. (over)*

Subsequent Paper.

P.S.  
Inform Senior Constable about  
lost cheques. He should try  
and find out where leakage  
occurs.

A.H.

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For further correspondence in  
this connection see N. P. 607/29.

G.R.'s  
8.2.30



From POSTMASTER

To. HON. COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Minute.

With reference to our conversation I submit the following report in connection with the fact that there appears to be grounds for suspicion against Mr. M. E. Evans, Postal Clerk. After very full consideration of this matter, which has naturally caused me a good deal of uneasiness, I am of the opinion that the circumstances are too vague to justify any serious charge against this officer. These circumstances are explained below for His Excellency's information as requested.

2. During the past two or three years there have been various cases of cheques lost in transit between the Camp and Stanley, and the Falkland Islands Co. now have a list of some 40 cheques which have been reported lost and payment of which has been stopped at the request of the interested parties. As I considered that these occurrences might bring discredit on the Post Office, although it appeared to me to be more likely that the losses took place before the arrival of the mail matter at the Post Office, I had a conversation with Mr. Creamer, the cashier of the Falkland Islands Co., with a view to ascertaining how these occurred and if possible to arrive at some method of preventing them. As a result of this information was supplied to me which led me to suspect Evans who has recently been spending money at a rate far in excess of his salary, which is £6.10.0d a month. During the period of 11 weeks from 22nd May to 13th August Evans has spent some £16 at the West Store alone, chiefly on luxuries such as chocolates and cigarettes. In addition to this he has been spending money freely at the "Stanley ARms" and the Defence Force Canteen. When it is borne in mind, however, that this officer was receiving £8.6.8d a month from the Treasury during the first five months of this year there does not appear to be any serious ground for suspicion on this score,



and the only definite conclusion which can be arrived at is that Evans has extravagant tastes and spends his money freely.

3. Another consideration is that practically the whole of the losses are in the form of cheques which, with one exception which I will explain below, have never been cashed. This would seem to indicate that there is no connection between the lost cheques and Evans' extravagancies.

4. The exception mentioned in the foregoing paragraph is that of a cheque for 36.15.10d said to have been forwarded from Saunders Island to Mr. L. Sedgwick, Stanley. This cheque was reported lost and was found to have been ~~xxxxxxx~~ cashed in the Post Office. Further enquiries showed that this cheque had been paid in by Evans as part of the cash in respect of Money Orders issued by him during the period 8th to 18th July. In reply to my questions Evans stated that he could not remember from whom he had received the cheque, that he had received it during a busy time and had failed to notice that the cheque was not endorsed by the person who presented the cheque. I would explain in parenthesis that the cheque was correctly endorsed from a legal point of view by Mr. A. Felton of Saunders Island, but as a safeguard it is the practice to obtain in addition the signature of the person who actually presents the cheque when this person is not identical with the original endorser. I was satisfied at the time with Evans' explanation and I cautioned him for his own protection to be more careful in future. I was of the opinion, in the absence of any reasons to think otherwise, that the cheque had got into the wrong hands and had been accepted in good faith at the Post Office. In the light of information since received regarding this officer's expenditure I must admit that I am not completely satisfied with his explanation and I think the circumstances must be



regarded as suspicious.

5. As a result of the incident explained in the previous paragraph it has been agreed with the Manager of the Falkland Islands Co. that cheques should not in future be accepted unless made payable to the Postmaster, and that persons presenting cheques at the Post Office should be requested to cash them at the Company's office, the personnel of which is in a better position to detect an attempt at fraud.

6. I have considered the advisability of demanding an explanation from Evans as to his expenditure, but this course appears to be open to the objection that Evans probably has a reasonable explanation of this and the only result would be that, assuming him to be guilty, he would be on his guard in the future and make detection still more difficult. Also I have always had in mind the importance of preserving the integrity of the department and it is clear that any action taken against an officer on suspicion only must implicate the whole of the staff and bring discredit on a Government Department which handles over £15,000 in cash per annum. I have tried to devise some method of laying traps in order to have a definite case against Evans if it is a fact that he is indulging in dishonest practices, but I have been unable to think of any feasible plan.

7. The only reasons for suspecting Evans are the rather doubtful circumstances connected with the lost cheque of £6.15.10d and the fact that he expends money extravagantly - but not, as far as I can ascertain, in excess of his emoluments if the extra money he got from the Treasury is taken into consideration. Apart from this there is no reason why he should be suspected any more than the other members of the staff. In fact there would be no reason why the Post Office should be suspected at all as these losses might quite conceivably take place on the



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local vessels or while letters are being carried across  
country by riders. I refer of course to ~~mail~~ letters  
brought in to Stanley by hand - the mails despatched from the  
Post Office are always in sealed bags and there is not  
the same danger. I know from experience how careless  
residents in the Camp are when forwarding money or cheques  
to Stanley.

8. The Falkland Islands Co. intend to circularize  
all Managers of Stations whose cheques have been lost  
with a view to ascertaining exactly how these cheques  
were forwarded to Stanley, and have promised to inform  
me of the result. I will report later if it is possible  
to arrive at any conclusion from these enquiries.

H. Chen

Postmaster.

2 September 1929