

402. In how many cases?—I think three, certainly two.

403. *Mr. Pitt.*] Did you send any telegrams for Colonel Whitmore during the late elections elsewhere than from Wellington?—I did not. I was in Wellington when Colonel Whitmore was away.

404. *Mr. Turnbull.*] I understand you to say that a Minister's telegram could not be delayed, do I understand you to say that it would have the preference?—No; but the Minister might be away, and it was understood that the telegram was to be sent and the money paid afterwards.

405. *The Chairman.*] The telegram was not to be delayed by reason of its not being paid?—It was not to be delayed.

406. *Mr. Turnbull.*] And if you thought it was necessary you would mark "Urgent"?—Yes; I have paid four times, double rates for Sunday, and double rates for urgent.

Mr. EBENEZER FOX sworn and examined.

407. *The Chairman.*] You were Private Secretary to the late Premier, Sir George Grey?—Yes.

408. Sir George Grey despatched his telegrams through you?—Almost invariably.

409. All, I suppose, public and private?—Yes.

410. Was there any rule as to the payment of private telegrams?—The rule was that I did just that which I pleased.

411. It was left to your discretion to say whether they were public or private, and to act accordingly?—Entirely. I might tell the Committee how that came about. When there was first a question about a private telegram, Sir George Grey asked me what I had been in the habit of doing. I told him, and he said he had been in the habit of giving Mr. Mitchell money in advance. I requested him to leave it to me to ask him for what I expended, and to leave it to me also to decide whether a telegram was private or public. He said he was willing to do that, but he must make one condition—I was not to put him into a mess. I told him he might be perfectly certain I would not do that; for wherever the question was at all doubtful, I would make him pay.

412. How long have you been acting as Secretary to the Cabinet?—To the Cabinet, only about four years; to the Premier or a Minister, for the whole time I have been in the service, nearly ten years.

413. Were you confidential secretary to any Minister during previous elections?—It chanced that this last was the only election during my period of service that I have been in New Zealand. I was away during the elections of 1871 and during those of 1875.

414. *Mr. Pitt.*] Were you with Sir George Grey, out of Wellington, during the late elections?—No; not at all.

Mr. WILLIAM MITCHELL sworn and examined.

415. *The Chairman.*] You have been acting as Confidential Secretary and shorthand reporter to the late Premier, Sir George Grey?—I have.

416. You accompanied him generally in his travels through the country?—I did.

417. Has he been in the habit of sending all his telegrams through you while on his travels?—Yes.

418. Would you state the rule which you acted upon with regard to payment?—Any telegrams which I considered private I paid for, and entered in a book, and at the end of the journey I made up a statement of the expenditure incurred during the trip, including those items in it.

419. Then it was left absolutely to you to decide what should, and what should not, be paid for?—Yes.

420. *Mr. Pitt.*] Was that during these late elections?—Yes.

Dr. LEMON, General Manager of Telegraphs, re-examined.

421. *The Chairman.*] It was stated by Colonel Whitmore that, after the late elections and prior to the House meeting, he requested you to furnish a list of all telegrams, if any, that might have been sent as private telegrams without being paid for, and that he requested you to furnish a list of those, with the view of their being paid for. Did he ask you?—Yes; he did.

422. And what was your answer?—I had one or two that we turned out, and he paid for, apart from the telegram about Mr. Ingles.

423. *Mr. Saunders.*] Can you say how many?—I think about 15s. or 16s. worth. I cannot tell you exactly how many—all he could give me a clue to.

424. Did he ask for none except what he gave you a clue to?—None except with a clue, because he had sent telegrams from places all over the colony.

425. Will you try to give us the cause of your receiving that request?—I will tell you how it originated. Some three or four days after I saw this Ingles telegram I happened to see Colonel Whitmore. I told him that at the time I meant to come and tell him that telegram should be paid for, but it had escaped my memory. I went over the Appendices to the Blue Books, and pointed out the report of the Committee in the telegram libel case. Then he made the request that if any telegrams had been sent as public which should have gone as private, I would get them out and he would pay for them. I said if he could give me anything like a clue I would do so. We then went through his books, and he paid for fifteen or sixteen shillings worth.

426. He expressed a desire to pay for all?—Yes; but it was a difficult thing for the department, not having a clue, to fix upon what should be paid for; but he went to the books, and by the dates we got the original telegrams.

427. *Mr. Wakefield.*] Did you on that occasion decline to make a general search for Colonel Whitmore's telegrams, on the ground that by doing so you would be breaking the law?—No; no such conversation was entered into on my part.

428. You are quite sure?—I am quite sure.

429. No such conversation took place?—No; the only conversation with regard to Colonel Whitmore's telegrams was, as I have stated, when I asked him if he could give anything like a clue, when he went through the books, and he paid some 15s. or 16s.

*Mr. Maunsell.*

26th Nov., 1879.

*Mr. E. Fox.*

26th Nov., 1879.

*Mr. Mitchell.*

26th Nov., 1879.

*Dr. Lemon.*

26th Nov., 1879.