

57. It must be apparent to you that they did not want you to attend here and give information as to what is published?—I do not think it a part of my duty to inform the Committee without further instruction.

58. *Mr. Barron.*] Your reason for not giving evidence is that the application made to the Council, and the leave given for your attendance, are not sufficiently explicit: it did not indicate to you the evidence you were to give. Had the application for leave, and the order to attend, sufficiently and fully covered all the grounds that you have been asked about, you would have felt yourself at liberty to give the evidence which you have now refused?—I would have given any evidence that the Council directed me to give through the Speaker.

59. So that, in order to enable the Committee to get the evidence that has been indicated by the questions put, it will be necessary to make a more explicit application, and that more specific instructions be given to you by the Legislative Council when you get leave to attend here?—Exactly; until that is done, or until the Speaker of the Council tells me that I have exceeded my duty in refusing to answer such questions.

60. *Mr. Garrick.*] Do you consider the direction of the Speaker of the Council paramount or superior to the order of the House of Representatives that you should attend and give evidence?—Paramount, certainly. My duty is only to the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Council.

61. *Mr. Barron.*] You are not supposed even to know the House of Representatives officially?—I know nothing of what is going on in the House of Representatives, nor do I know anything of what goes on in the Legislative Council, so far as giving evidence elsewhere is concerned.

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FRIDAY, 25TH JUNE, 1886.

Hon. W. H. REYNOLDS in attendance, and examined.

63. *The Chairman.*] You are a member of the Legislative Council?—Yes.

64. And a Minister of the Crown?—Yes.

65. How many years have you been a member of the Legislative Council?—I think about eight years. Prior to that I was a member of the House of Representatives.

65A. For how many years?—I may state generally that I have been a member of the House of Representatives for many years. I was also a member of the Provincial Council of Otago from its inception to its abolition. I held the position there of Speaker for several years. I mention these facts because I am going to give some evidence in connection with the Provincial Council of Otago as to expenditure.

66. Perhaps it would be as well if you made a statement in your own way?—Yes, I can give you a statement, and then you may put to me any questions you please. In 1883 I brought before the Legislative Council the necessity for reducing the expenditure of that body. I did not carry my resolution. The whole debate on that subject will be found in *Hansard* of the 21st August, 1883. The reason why I came to the conclusion that our expenditure was too heavy was on account of my knowledge of the work done in the Provincial Council of Otago, which was far greater than what it is in the Legislative Council. I was thoroughly convinced that it could be done in the Legislative Council for a very considerable sum less than the expenditure proposed for that year (1883). This session I brought forward a resolution asking for a Committee to consider whether any reductions could be made. But the Council would not accede to my request, and the resolution was rejected. I prepared at the time a list of what I considered could be struck off the estimates without any detriment to the public service. I may read out the items. There is the Chairman of Committees, £300 by Act and £120 by vote. I propose that this £120 should be struck off. Then, there is the Chairman of the Public Petitions Committee, £50. The work of that Committee is really nothing at all—no more than any other Committee of the Council. Then, there is the Clerk of the Council, who has by Act £400, and it is proposed to vote £100. I would have that £100 struck off. Then, there is the "Clerk-Assistant." I would reduce the Clerk-Assistant by £350, for I hold that two clerks are ample to do the work of the Council. Neither the Clerk nor Clerk-Assistant attends the Committees, unless it be occasionally the Standing Orders Committee. I cannot say that I ever see them at any other Committee. Three clerks are just one too many, the third is like the fifth wheel of a coach—one too many. Then, there is the Interpreter. The vote for that office is £200. For all the Interpreter has to do, I think £100 is ample. He has only to be there about an hour and a half in the day on an average, and some days only a quarter of an hour. Then, as to the Shorthand Committee Reporter: I think that, for all the shorthand reporting the Council would require, they could manage to borrow one from the other branch of the Legislature—in fact, there ought not to be any special shorthand reporter for the Council. The shorthand writers should be for the Parliament. Then, there is the office of Messenger. I see it is proposed to raise his salary from £140 to £150. For all the Messenger has to do, I think if he got £110 or £120 a year it would be ample.

67. That would make a considerable difference upon the proposed expenditure for this year?—These are reductions which, if I had been Speaker, I would have carried out.

68. How much do they amount to?—To about £909 or £910, I think.

69. I would ask you whether, since you have been in the Legislative Council, the business of the Council has increased or otherwise?—I do not think it has increased at all.

70. Has the expenditure increased?—Yes; the expenditure has gone on increasingly slightly.

71. What do you mean by "gone on increasing?" Do you mean to say it has been added to year by year?—Yes; and there is an attempt to make it more. The Speaker has wanted more than the Government would assent to. There has been a correspondence, I believe, between the Speaker and the Government on the subject.

72. *Mr. Dargaville.*] Can we get that?

*The Chairman:* I should think so; it is, no doubt, an official record. Do you know, Mr. Reynolds, whether it is an official record?—I do not know but that it is a private correspondence between them, but I think it is to be had.