

73. With regard to the time of the sittings of the Council, can you give this Committee any information as to how they could get the time of sitting?—The Clerk of the Council could give it to you quite well. I understand that he has stated that he could not make a return.

*The Chairman* : No; he said that he could not give it, because it is not entered on the Journals.

*Witness* : But it is entered in *Hansard*, the hour the Council meets, and the hour it breaks up. If you apply to the Clerk of the Council, he can easily make out a return by going over *Hansard* day by day, and seeing at the end of each day how long the Council sat. I might state here that, at the time I brought forward certain propositions in 1883, I took the trouble to make out a list. I got the sitting-days taken out myself, and found that the total number of hours of twenty-four sittings between the 13th June and the 31st July, 1883, was thirty-three hours and forty-eight minutes, which was an average of one hour twenty-four minutes and twelve seconds a day. I do not think that, taking the whole session—take the last session, for example—it was much above an hour and a half as an average for each sitting-day.

74. Are you aware whether the duties of the persons whose salaries you have just now criticised—the Chairman of Committees, the Chairman of the Public Petitions Committee, and the Clerk—are sessional, or whether they are allowed to perform other duties during the recess?—They have no other duties comparatively speaking; they have to get up votes and proceedings and get them printed, and see that they, with the minutes, are correct; but a month after the session is over, or perhaps even less, is in my opinion sufficient for that. Having been a Minister here for four years I have had a good opportunity of judging during the recess; and, with the exception of what I have stated, the Clerk has nothing to do.

75. Do you think that the Clerk of the Council has nothing to occupy him during the recess beyond what he could do in a month?—I certainly think he could do it all in a month.

76. That he has no other duties?—None other in connection with the Council that I know of. He does other things, but he is paid for that separately.

77. What are they?—There is, for example, preparing the index to the statutes. I hold that that is a part of his duty; and he ought to do it during the recess. But he is paid for that. I do not know what amount, but you can make this out by inquiry. Then, I understand, he has been engaged by the Government in connection with the census, for which he is paid extra. These two things I know of. There may be other things.

78. *Hon. Major Atkinson*.] Are you speaking of the Clerk now, or of the Assistant-Clerk?—Of the Clerk.

79. He is away, is he not; how do you know that he has been engaged about the census?—I believe that the Assistant-Clerk is engaged now about the census. I cannot be quite certain about that. In regard to preparing an index to the statutes, I have brought up here in these two books a specimen of what was done in the Provincial Council of Otago, which had only one clerk. He prepared a table giving the whole of the Acts in addition to the Journal now before you.

80. *The Chairman*.] All the provinces, I believe, had this kind of work done?—It shows you that the work of the Provincial Council was more than the work of the Legislative Council. Here is the index of the provincial Statutes and Journals for the year 1875—the last year the Otago Provincial Council existed.

81. *Mr. Garrick*.] I think if we go into the work of Provincial Councils this inquiry will be interminable.

82. *The Chairman*.] We are going into it, but to a very slight degree, in order to compare the work of the officers of the Provincial Council with similar officers of the Legislative Council, and the expenditure in connection with them, according to Mr. Reynolds's experience.

*Witness* : I can hand these books to the Chairman. It would be valuable, I think, to have them. You will please to return them to the library.

82A. *The Chairman*.] I want to ask you a question or two more with regard to the Clerk: the Clerk of the Council is now absent?—Yes; I understand so.

83. Are you aware under what circumstances, or where he is?—I think he has got twelve months' leave of absence from the Speaker.

84. From the Speaker?—I believe so; I cannot speak positively.

85. With full salary?—Yes; I believe so.

86. *Mr. Dargaville*.] After how many years' service?—Twenty-three years.

87. *Hon. Major Atkinson*.] Is it not six months?—I think it is twelve months.

88. *Mr. Dargaville*.] Six months after twenty-three years' service, do you think that unreasonable?—The six months would be equivalent to twelve months, seeing that, taking the recess into account, it would cover the year.

*Hon. Major Atkinson* : I think you will find that it is not so.

*Mr. Dargaville* : I think we ought to be very particular in a matter of this kind. The witness has stated that it was twelve months.

*Witness* : I said I was not positive.

*Mr. Dargaville* : I think if we go into particular cases we ought to be very careful that we are accurate.

*Witness* : It can be got if you ask Captain Baillie; he tells me it is only six months.

89. *The Chairman*.] The work of the Council is now performed by how many clerks? I will put the question to you more distinctly: during the absence of the Clerk of the Council, who takes his place?—The Clerk-Assistant.

90. And who takes the Clerk-Assistant's place?—The Second Clerk-Assistant.

91. Who takes his place?—There are clerks engaged for the session. There are three sessional clerks, and I believe as many permanent clerks. The whole of these would not be required if the permanent officers were to render their services in Committee-work. If the Council sits only for about an average of one hour and a half, I think they (the permanent officers) could devote their