

spare time to act as Clerks of Committees. If, however, there were only two permanent clerks engaged, then it might be necessary to have the three sessional clerks.

92. Is there much Committee-work that these gentlemen have to attend?—They do not attend to Committee-work as far as I know. I never saw them attend any Committee, except the Standing Orders Committee; but they may be for aught I know.

93. Are you on the Standing Orders Committee?—Yes.

94. How often does it sit?—Possibly two or three times each session; it does not sit very often.

95. With regard to the Interpreter, you say that his services could be dispensed with?—No; I do not say they could be dispensed with; but the Shorthand Reporter could be dispensed with. As to the Interpreter, for all the work he has to do, £200 is a very large salary.

96. Do you understand that this gentleman's services are limited to sessional duties?—Yes; I understand that is so.

97. And the Messenger's services, are they so limited?—The Messenger, during the recess, is knocking about the buildings, and attends to the Speaker: that is all. He sees that the buildings and the Legislative Chamber are kept in order: that is about the extent of his work, as far as I know; but I cannot, with certainty, say as much about the Messenger as the Clerks.

98. You have no provision for a Sergeant-at-Arms: how do you dispense with that important officer?—There is no necessity; we do not require him.

99. Does the Messenger take that place?—There is no necessity for it.

100. How do you arrive at the conclusion that the Shorthand-writer is not required?—I think the Shorthand-writers ought to be for Parliament, and, if the Council needed one, one ought to be sent.

101. Are you under the impression that he gives no other service to the Council?—I understand so, but you will find that out from the Clerk of the Council or the Clerk-Assistant of the Council better than from me.

102. *Hon. Major Atkinson.*] With every respect to the witness, I must say that some of this evidence is rather loose. He only "thinks" about the Messenger, he cannot speak positively as to the Clerk, and he is "not sure" about something else. What we want here is accurate evidence, and that is what, I think, we have not got.

*Witness:* I am giving positive evidence. I have said that from the 14th June to the 31st July, being twenty-four days, the total number of hours the Council sat was thirty-three hours and forty-eight minutes, which gives an average of one hour twenty-four minutes and twelve seconds per day.

103. *Mr. Dargaville.*] Is there any prospect of our being able to reduce the honorarium?—I would be in favour of it; but I would not be in favour of coming here without an honorarium. I think, if the members of the Legislative Council and the other branch of the Legislature are to give up their time, they should not be out of pocket by it; but they should be perfectly satisfied with just sufficient to pay their expenses while here. I do not think it right that members of the Legislative Council should have their expenses paid, and make money out of it besides.

104. *Mr. Barron.*] Do you know whether the officers of the Legislative Council get any payment for services other than what appears on the estimates?—Yes; I cannot say the amount. I know they are paid extra for the index to the statutes.

105. You have been many years a member of the Legislature?—Twenty-four years or thereabout.

105A. You are a member of the Government, and have been a member of the Legislature for twenty-four years: is it your opinion that the legislative expenditure is excessive?—Yes.

106. Is it possible for the Government to control the expenditure in the public service?—Do you mean in connection with the Legislature?

106A. I mean, generally, in connection with the public service and the Legislature. I am asking because you say you have been twenty-four years connected with the Legislature?—Do you mean the service generally?

107. Generally, as to the public service?—It is a most difficult thing to do. It is quite competent for the Government to do it. It is, I think, possible to do it, but it is very difficult.

108. Is it possible to control expenditure in connection with the Legislature?—The practice has been to allow the Speakers to send in their own estimates, and then to allow the House of Representatives to deal with those estimates.

109. Has that always been the practice?—That has been the practice. Occasionally, I have known the Government and the Speakers to have a few words in reference to the Speakers' estimates. On one occasion when the vote took place in Parliament all the Ministers except one, I think, left the House. It was stated to the House—in fact, I stated it myself—that the Government were not responsible for these estimates; that they were the Speakers' estimates, and it was for the House to deal with them. I think I was the only Minister who remained. These were the legislative estimates.

110. You do not know why the Government walked out rather than remain?—I do not think I am at liberty to mention that.

111. I wish to ask you whether, in your opinion, it is impossible to control legislative expenditure?—I do not think it is impossible.

112. You say that on one occasion, when the estimates for the legislative expenditure were submitted, the members of the Government had such a strong opinion, apparently, that they were excessive, that they walked out of the House rather than remain to vote?—I would not like to say that. My opinion might be one thing. I am not in a position to say what were their reasons for walking out.

113. But they walked out; all except yourself?—I was the only one, I think, that remained. It was on one item.