

258. *The Chairman.*] That in your hand—the Canadian parliamentary papers—is contract-work?—Yes; it is very indifferently printed, and the paper is very poor, too.

259. With regard to the votes and proceedings, how long does it take, after the House has risen, before they are completed?—About four months.

260. I suppose they are kept back until *Hansard* is out?—My first duty is to get the statutes out. My machines are occupied with that work for about three weeks after the session; *Hansard* is then completed; and then the Journals and parliamentary papers, laid on the table in manuscript, are set up.

261. The Journals of the House?—I am not in a particular hurry to print the Journals, as the papers are often of more immediate consequence.

262. Who supplies you with copy?—The Clerks of either House; they also revise the proofs.

263. With regard to Committees and proceedings in Committees, who revises the proof there? The Parliamentary Reader, Mr. Bell, generally does.

264. You say it takes four months after the session before you take up copy?—No; before I have it finished.

265. How many *Hansards* have to be printed after the session?—It takes several issues to work up the arrears. The fact of our having to send proofs to members by post delays the making-up.

266. I want to know the additional cost of *Hansard* now, as compared with twelve years ago, on the whole establishment—say, in 1874 or 1876 and 1886?—I suppose the expenses of printing and binding *Hansard* amounted to about £3,000 ten years ago, and the total cost of the department to about £12,000.

267. What is the total cost now?—About £20,000 in the year.

268. *Mr. Brown.*] That is your calculation roughly of the cost at the present time?—Yes.

269. *The Chairman.*] Does that arise from the House sitting late?—There are a great many more parliamentary papers than formerly, and the evidence taken by Committees is becoming very voluminous. There is also a very large amount of departmental work, which gradually grows up.

270. What is the average cost of evidence taken before Committees?—About 12s. a page.

271. What would a return cost per page?—That depends on whether it was plain matter or tabular. Plain matter would be about 12s. a page; table-work, about 17s. 6d. a page.

272. Does that include anything beyond setting?—Yes; it includes printing but not paper.

273. That varies, according to the number required?—Yes.

274. Do you think that, if tenders were called for any portion of that work that is now done at the Government Printing Office, it would be more cheaply done than it is now?—No; I do not think it would. My experience of work done by private printers is that the cost works up much higher than it would cost the Government in their own office.

275. Has that been tried?—I have had occasion to get work done which I could not do myself. I form my opinion from experiences of that kind.

276. Did you call for tenders?—I go to printing offices and obtain prices before I give out the work. It could not be done outside of Wellington during the session.

277. The question is, whether, if tenders were called for a certain amount of work previously to the session, private printing establishments would not tender for the work at low rates?—I do not know that private printing establishments would think it worth while to enlarge their offices at great expense for work that would not be permanent.

278. Could they not do the work unless they had larger offices?—No, I think not. As to offices in Wellington, I do not think they are prepared to enlarge their premises for the sake of a probable contract. Moreover, work that is given to private offices often causes the departments to grumble very much because the proofs are not properly read. We save a lot of trouble also in corrections.

279. You have said that the cost of corrections made in *Hansard* is about £270?—Yes; there are other matters also to be considered. The press-reader goes over the whole of the proofs again after the members' corrections have been made. That is necessary because many are not up in the method of making corrections: it has all to be read over again. In going through the press-reader's hands before going to press a large number of corrections have to be made; but these I regard as house-corrections.

280. *Mr. Barron.*] Taking all that into consideration you think the cost would be more?—Yes, certainly.

281. How much more—probably 3d. per page more?—I think more than that; some members make a great mess of their corrections.

282. If the system were adopted of correcting the copy sent from the type-writer and the proof became missing, so that another copy would have to be made, would that cost more?—It would cause more labour to the reporters to transcribe their notes a second time, but would not add to the cost, as they are paid a fixed salary.

283. Have you given us the cost of the reading?—I have not asked the overseer in the room where this work is done to give me an estimate of the time that it takes.

284. Does it take a man's whole time?—No, as he prepares other papers for the compositors also.

285. *The Chairman.*] Have you only one reader to keep all these men going?—I have five during the session, but of course they are engaged upon other work besides *Hansard*.

286. What time is consumed in preparing copy and reading *Hansard* proofs before sending them to members?—I do not know that I could give you even an approximate estimate of the time. I dare say it would take half an hour a page.

287. How much matter does an average sitting of the House furnish to *Hansard*?—About twenty-five or thirty pages.

288. That would be fifteen hours a day occupied in the reading of these proofs?—Yes; that is for four and a half days a week.

289. While the House is sitting?—Yes.