

344. His office is open the same as any private office?—His office is always open.

345. You speak of £250 for contingencies. Is that a sessional amount—the sum always put down?—It has been the same for the last year or two. This year, I observe, it is put down again. Until a few years ago contingencies were in one sum for both Houses.

346. Do I understand you that the amount voted for contingencies is always disposed of as a matter of course?—No; last financial year the sum expended was £209.

347. Would it be possible for you to give the Committee a schedule showing, by way of illustration, the distribution of that fund?—I could make it out, but I should have to go through the account-book and pick out the items.

348. You said, I think, there was a Treasury account?—Yes; there is an account in the Treasury. An account is kept in the office, but it would not be regarded as a commercially perfect account, being more a check against accounts being paid twice, than anything else.

348A. Would any part of this £250 be disposed of by way of douceur or bonus?—The second Messenger gets partly paid out of it, and the chief Messenger gets an allowance of 4s. a day during the session by way of making his pay equal to that of temporary Messengers.

349. Is the whole of the second Messenger's wages paid out of it?—No; he is paid for his service during the session as an extra Messenger; for his service during the recess he is paid out of this £250 for contingencies.

THURSDAY, 1ST JULY, 1886.

Mr. C. C. N. BARRON, Chief Reporter of the *Hansard* Staff, in attendance, and examined.

350. *The Chairman.*] You are the Chief Reporter of the *Hansard* Staff, Mr. Barron?—Yes.

351. Are all your reporters engaged for the House of Representatives and the Legislative Council as well?—Yes.

352. Does that include the shorthand-writer for the Legislative Council Committees?—No; Committee reporters are not under me.

353. During the recess are the services of the *Hansard* staff utilized by the Government?—No.

354. So that when the session is over their work terminates?—As soon as they have completed the index, which is a little time after the session.

355. The Committee had evidence yesterday from Mr. Didsbury, and in reply to a question he said that the machine-copies which are now furnished to the printing office are much worse and give more trouble than the manuscript copy furnished previously?—I do not see how that can be possible.

356. Mr. Didsbury says it takes half an hour per page to prepare the work for the printers. He says that in consequence of the many arbitrary abbreviations that preparation is necessary. [Copy of caligraph work produced.] What do you say to these abbreviations which are marked there?—It appears to me that PWS for "Public Works Statement" is an abbreviation that any compositor should understand. The same as to "capital" B for "Bill." I should say at the same time that this is by no means an average of the work turned out from the caligraph.

357. It appears that the printers prefer the manuscript copy formerly furnished?—So far as I can hear, the machine copies are thought preferable to any manuscript copy.

358. Was it not understood that the object of providing these type-writers was that "copy" might go direct to members for correction. Why is that not done?—Partly through the request of the printer that it should not. The difficulty of collecting the copy afterwards would be very great; besides that, it would involve extra expense in sending the copy out and collecting it.

359. How do you arrive at that: the copy is sent out now; one sending would do?—He wanted to send it from my office; but we could not send it without extra assistance; we had not time.

360. Is there no means of working these copies of members' speeches in duplicate?—Yes; it could be done with copying-ink, and having press copies taken; but there again comes in the question of extra work.

361. Would not a boy be sufficient to take all the press copies for the whole *Hansard*?—Yes; there would be a good deal of work; but I think he could do it.

362. Do you not think that the reporters of the *Hansard* staff should take more trouble?—I think you would find that this example was worked off at a time when the reporter was heavily pressed.

363. In what time does a *Hansard*-staff reporter work off copy from the caligraph?—It depends very much whether you have to follow the speaker exactly in transcribing.

364. Then, it depends on the goodness of shorthand notes?—Not altogether; it cannot be put down solely to that; you may have a splendid note, but a very indifferent speaker.

365. What did you say about sending the copy direct to members?—That is what I had hopes of doing; but it was found that so many contractions had to be made.

366. Do you permit contractions?—They save much time.

367. With regard to reporting the Legislative Council, have you a part of your staff apportioned off to the Legislative Council?—It depends upon the work; sometimes there is one, two, or even more engaged in the Legislative Council.

368. What is the proportion between the House of Representatives and the Legislative Council work?—The House of Representatives work is six or eight times as much.

369. Do you find any difficulty in replacing any vacancies that occur in the *Hansard* staff?—I have not had any difficulty.

370. Are the Committee reporters available for your *Hansard* work?—If they are paid extra for it.

371. *Mr. Garrick.*] Do I understand you that the whole of the *Hansard* staff are employed simply during the session?—Except myself.