

454. Have you during that time observed any difference between one period and another in connection with this question of ministerial control over these estimates?—Yes; I have just indicated that I have observed different views of the question. Sir Edward Stafford and Sir William Fox always stoutly maintained that they alone were responsible for the legislative estimates. Recently I have heard the expression of the opposite opinion—that the Speaker was responsible, and the Minister would decline to interfere.

455. Then, the whole question has been one of ministerial discretion, and there has been no direction by the House, and no opinion in the House as to who had the power to control or alter these estimates?—There has been no direction from the House on the subject. It was the diversity of opinion that appeared to exist which induced me to go to Sir Erskine May to say what the practice of the Imperial Parliament was.

456. Then, in the beginning, the affairs of the colony were arranged in this way: that Ministers exercised full control over the whole of the estimates, that is, as constitutional Ministers they claimed to exercise also full control over these estimates, and there was no doubt on the subject?—I think there was no doubt entertained at that time.

Witness.] There is one matter which, with the permission of the Committee, I should like to mention. When furnishing the return of payments made to Messengers it quite escaped my recollection that there was a payment made to one Messenger which did not appear on the return sent in to the Committee. This is an old Messenger, who has been the attendant of the Speaker for many years. The recess before last this old man, who is incapable of hard work and is not likely to obtain any employment, came to me in the hope that I might get him work. I went to the Colonial Secretary and got him some temporary employment. Subsequently the Colonial Secretary gave him employment in attending upon the Property-tax Department while they were located in this building for the performance of extra duties. During the last recess the Speaker authorized me to employ him in this building at 6s. a day. The Speaker has been trying to get him some employment, but as yet he has not succeeded. The amount paid to him was a trifle under £50. He was appointed to attend on Sir Maurice O'Rorke when Chairman of Committees, and since he was elected Speaker in 1879 he has been in attendance upon him every session.

457. *Mr. Barron.*] Is he now so employed?—Yes; he is employed as Speaker's messenger this session.

Memorandum for the Chairman of the Select Committee on Expenditure on account of the Legislature.

I SHOULD like to be permitted to add to the evidence I have given before the Committee a few words on the subject of the employment of the sessional Committee clerks. There is, no doubt, a considerable number of them, but I desire to point out that during the last month there have been from eight to ten Committees meeting daily, and all so nearly at the same time that it is seldom possible for a clerk to attend more than one Committee. Although these clerks are engaged before the session commences, they are only taken on pay as they are required, and they are discharged by degrees as the Committees report, and the work becomes slack towards the end of the session. It has been under consideration whether one man might not do the work of clerk of a Committee and shorthand-reporter, and the Reporters permanently attached to the department have done so on some occasions; but it is found that, when a Committee is taking much evidence, it is as much as the reporter can do to get the transcript of his evidence completed by the next meeting of the Committee. In some of the Committees the clerical work, apart from the reporting, is very considerable (copying reports, petitions, &c., that are referred to the Government), so much so, that assistance has to be given by the other clerks.

I have, &c.,

F. E. CAMPBELL,
Clerk, House of Representatives.

8th July, 1886.

MONDAY, 19TH JULY, 1886.

Mr. A. T. BOTHAMLEY, Acting-Clerk of the Legislative Council, in attendance and re-examined.

458. *The Chairman.*] The Committee would like to know, Mr. Bothamley, if there are any arrangements made for checking the daily attendance of members of the Legislative Council?—There is no record kept of the daily attendance of members; so far as is possible the first attendance for each session is noted down, but merely by way of assisting members in recollecting at the end of the session the date of their first attendance. Members sign a certificate at the foot of the honorarium abstract, and on that the honorarium is paid.

459. I see that the certificate is scarcely in accordance with the Act: there is not any provision for deducting advances made on account of honoraria, or for other reductions?—If you will look at the form I have handed in it will be seen that there is a line for deductions in the body of the matter. I have not a copy of the Act with me. Practically, it is left to the honour of the members of the Legislative Council to say how long they were present, and the Clerk assists them to the best of his ability in telling them what leave of absence they have had.

460. Who keeps the accounts and fills in the vouchers for the payment of persons employed in the Legislative Council?—The Clerk-Assistant, as a rule.

461. And who certifies to their attendance?—The Speaker certifies to salaries, wages, and so on.

462. Does the Speaker certify during the recess?—Yes; he keeps the authorization-stamp locked up, and it can only be procured from him; therefore he must see each individual voucher before it is passed.

463. What books are kept in the Legislative Council?—There is an account-book, and a small book kept to show the advances made to members on account of honoraria, both of which I now produce. The first contains an account of all honoraria paid, also of payments to clerks, reporters, messengers, &c.; the second book merely shows what advances have been made to members on account of honorarium, and some notes for my own guidance.

464. Who keeps these books?—The Clerk-Assistant.

465. *Mr. Thompson.*] Can you give us any information as to the amount allowed to members of the Legislative Council for travelling expenses in coming to Wellington for the session?—The account-book contains the payments on account of travelling expenses; they consist almost entirely of Union Steamship Company fares, and sometimes a coach-fare, or the fare for the wife of a member.