

that, we should require the authority in writing of either the sender or receiver. We should want to be told the date of the telegram, so as to obtain it within a reasonable time. *Mr. Maginnity.*

199. The person asking for a telegram would have to show a knowledge of it?—He would not ask for it without, I presume. 19th Nov., 1879.

200. If asked by a third party, would you produce a telegram?—Not without the authority in writing of either the sender or the receiver.

201. Assuming him to have that, you would require nothing else?—Only some idea of the date and contents of the telegram, so that we might know where to look for it.

202. *Mr. Bowen.*] You said you think it your duty to obey the order of a Minister. Do you speak of him as the Commissioner of Telegraphs or as a Minister of the Crown?—As the Commissioner of Telegraphs.

203. You mean, then, you would obey the order of your superior officer?—Exactly so.

204. Have any applications for instructions been sent to the department by counter-clerks with reference to delayed payment for telegrams?—No; I do not remember any.

205. Do they act entirely on their own judgment?—On their own responsibility. The system of credit is not recognized by the department.

206. Practically, you know there is credit given in certain circumstances?—Yes.

207. Is that authorized by the department?—It is not authorized; but those giving credit are permitted to do it.

208. In the case of everybody?—No.

209. Then, to whom particularly?—It has only been done in the office here to Ministers and members of the Assembly.

210. Not elsewhere?—No.

211. Has any Minister had any account—a running account anywhere else with the clerks?—Not to my knowledge. When I say that no credit is given, the Committee will know we give credit in regard to Press telegrams.

212. There was evidence, I think, that one Minister paid for telegrams by cheques at intervals?—I do not know of the case referred to. It was not done by my authority.

213. *Mr. Wakefield.*] The Hon. Mr. Sheehan said he had an account with a local officer?—I do not know of that.

214. It was not authorized by the department?—No.

215. You spoke of the value of these telegrams—of the particular values?—Yes.

216. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] I suppose the telegrams sent by Ministers with reference to the elections are only a very small part of the telegrams of the Government?—The annual report will give you an idea of the Government business.

217. *Mr. Pitt.*] Are not Ministers in the habit of sending memoranda by wire?—Not now. It has not been done for some years.

218. In reference to Ministers having credit or running accounts, are you aware whether the Hon. Colonel Whitmore had such an account, or paid by cheques?—He did not, as far as I know.

219. Had he done so, would the cheques have gone through your hands?—No; through the office where he opened the account. If he had an account at the Government Buildings Office, or owed money there, he would pay it there.

220. Well, if he paid it at the head office, would you not know?—I should know if he kept an account there; the Officer in Charge would have let me know.

221. In reference to the question asked by Mr. Turnbull about giving up telegrams on the authority of the sender or the receiver, are you aware whether the Post Office does so in the case of letters or not?—If the sender of a letter makes an application he can get his letter back.

222. Can he open it and see its contents?—He can take it away and do what he likes with it. After posting a letter, if the mail is not closed, he gives the office a letter of indemnification, and can get his letter. He gets the authority of the Postmaster-General.

223. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Did you know when you produced Mr. Fisher's telegram that it had been paid for at Charleston?—I did not know.

224. Would you have produced it if you knew it had been partly paid?—I should have produced it, but should have drawn the special attention of the Commissioner of Telegraphs to the case.

225. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Do you consider a Government regulation to forward a telegram from a place a Minister has left to a place where he is can convert a private telegram into a public one?—I should leave that to the Minister as head of the department.

226. But what is your own opinion?—I think it would.

227. I understand you to say that a person who sends a private telegram has a certain right to it, and can have it produced after it has been sent?—He can have it produced on his own authority or that of the receiver.

228. You do not consider the sanction of both necessary?—No.

229. Supposing one of the parties was against its production and the other for it, what would you do?—We should produce it at the request of either party.

230. Even against the remonstrance of the other?—Yes.

231. What is the usage if an operator saw a telegram from a Minister sent as a private message but marked "On Government service," what would the operator do?—He would send it, but query it after being sent. In the case of a Minister, I only know of one such instance.

232. *Mr. Bowen.*] Where was that particular one?—Mr. Smith, the Officer in Charge of the Government Buildings Station, saw a telegram from Colonel Whitmore which looked like an ordinary telegram. It was sent by the writer without instructions, and sent on marked as an ordinary telegram, and application made to Colonel Whitmore for the value.

233. *Dr. Lemon* said that he could have seen, upon looking at Mr. Fisher's message to Sir George Grey, if that was originally a private telegram?—It was impossible to say without tracing it back.