

Mr. Maginnity.
19th Nov., 1879.

303. I know that. Why do you keep them now for two years?—I do not know; I suppose, in the event of their being required. Personally I think they should all be destroyed immediately.

304. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] The office is not one of record?—It is not.

305. *Mr. Wakefield.*] It has been stated publicly that your department showed an unusual amount of zeal—undue zeal—in getting these telegrams. The expression was that it was a labour of love to search for these telegrams, with a view of injuring the members of the late Government—for venting some grudge upon the late Government. I ask you whether that came within your knowledge?—It did not.

306. The instructions of the Telegraph Commissioner directing a search were attended to without any intention of going beyond?—His instructions were carried out; nothing further.

307. Except accidentally, through some private telegrams getting among the public ones?—Except accidentally, through myself not going to the original receiving stations and verifying them. In justice to myself, the Committee should ask the Telegraph Commissioner that question—whether the department showed any undue zeal in turning out these messages. I am personally interested in that. Dr. Lemon was away at that time, and it is well known that I am responsible for what was done in his absence. A statement was made concerning it in a place where I cannot defend myself. This, I think, should be done to justify my action.

308. I understand the only officers who had anything to do with the production of these telegrams were three—first, the Commissioner of Telegraphs; secondly, yourself, as Assistant Secretary; thirdly, Mrs. Alexander, the clerk of the clearing-house?—Exactly.

309. Nobody else?—Nobody.

310. Was not Dr. Lemon consulted?—That was before the instructions were given.

311. I am right, then, in saying the three I have named were all?—Those three were the only ones.

312. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] There is a private telegram addressed to me among them?—Yes.

313. Would you let me see it?—Certainly.

314. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Would you be good enough to point out the telegrams which were originally despatched as private—the seven you referred to—and take them out altogether?—I will.

Mr. Maginnity.
20th Nov., 1879.

THURSDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER, 1879.

Mr. A. T. MAGINNITY recalled and examined.

315. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Referring to the telegram which was sent by Mr. Ballance to Mr. Sheehan—it was dated after the writs were returned on the 17th September. Does it refer to electioneering matters?—No.

316. Then why was it given up to the Premier?—I simply glanced through the telegrams, and did not notice that there were any doubtful ones.

317. Whose duty was it to select the telegrams which were to be laid before the Premier?—I was responsible as far as the selection of the telegrams was concerned. The telegram you refer to may have referred to any subject whatever; it certainly does not refer to any particular election.

318. *The Chairman.*] With regard to the telegram from Mr. J. B. Fisher to Sir George Grey, dated 17th September, was that a public or a private message?—It was a Government telegram, and was not paid for privately.

319. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] I understand that that telegram was sent from Westport to Christchurch, and that, as the gentleman to whom it was addressed had left Christchurch, it was sent after him at the Government expense?—Yes.

320. The original of the message which was forwarded to Christchurch is lodged in the head office in Wellington?—Yes. The telegram was not traced back to the place from whence it came; but if it had been so traced, inquiries would have been made as to whether it was a public or a private message.

Mr. Maginnity.
24th Nov., 1879.

MONDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER, 1879.

(Mr. A. PITT in the Chair.)

Mr. A. T. MAGINNITY recalled and examined.

321. *The Chairman.*] Were any telegrams sent as public messages which were afterwards withdrawn and paid for as private messages, and, if so, when?—I can only remember one instance, and that was the case of the Ingles telegram.

322. *Mr. Bowen.*] Could a Minister have paid for this telegram at any time?—If a Minister came to us within a reasonable time, and stated that he had sent a telegram at the public expense by mistake, we should certainly allow him to rectify the mistake.

323. What do you call a “reasonable time”?—Well, say, within a week.

324. How long a time elapsed after the Ingles telegram was sent before it was withdrawn?—I cannot say from memory, but it was more than a week. It may have been a month.

325. *Mr. Wakefield.*] If Ministers had gone at the same time and offered to pay for all these telegrams they could have done so?—Yes; we would not have refused the money.

326. And if these telegrams had been paid for they would not have been laid on the table?—No.

327. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] If a Minister came to you and said that he had sent a private message at the public expense accidentally, would you allow him to withdraw it?—We should use our discretion; but, if a Minister made such a statement as that which you have just indicated, we should do all in our power to have the mistake rectified.