

*Mr. Sheehan.*

26th Nov., 1879.

369. You consider that certain political duties devolve upon them?—They are supposed to keep Ministers informed of everything that transpires in their districts of every character.

370. *Mr. Saunders.*] What is the nature of the evidence you expect from these witnesses? Is it anything that would apply to our order of reference?—Yes; the total number of telegrams sent by the late Government at the public cost. I think their evidence will satisfy the Committee that several telegrams returned against me as having been sent at public cost were not so sent; and they will also, I think, satisfy the Committee that these two or three wires, amongst so many that were despatched during that time marked "On public service," was a mere inadvertence.

371. *Mr. Pitt.*] Your attention was called to certain telegrams at the last meeting of the Committee, and you took memoranda?—Yes.

372. Have you any reason to believe that any of those telegrams were paid for by you?—Yes; I have every reason to believe they were.

373. What is your reason for believing that?—Because the bulk of them were paid for by me; and out of 146 they were all admitted to have been paid for except these three.

374. Can you give any evidence of actual cash having been paid for them?—No, I could not do that. Have you seen the sample accounts I produced? They sent those memoranda, and the clerk went round and paid the amounts.

375. *Mr. Turnbull.*] How many of those accounts before us do you contend were paid for?—I think all those put down as having been sent except about four.

376. There are only four, you contend, that have not been paid for?—Yes; the bulk of the others are from other persons to me. I have explained that, and gone through the list as carefully as I possibly can. When the receipts are produced they will show whether, for instance, this one, G. V. Shannon, was paid for or sent as a Government telegram. On the production of the receipts any doubt I have as to the telegrams in this list will be at once removed.

*Mr. Maunsell.*

23th Nov., 1879.

MR. DANIEL MAUNSELL SWORN and examined.

377. *The Chairman.*] You were Private Secretary to Colonel Whitmore?—I was.

378. During the late elections Colonel Whitmore despatched through you a number of telegrams bearing on the elections?—He did.

379. What were your instructions with regard to paying for them?—That any I considered private I was to pay for.

380. Did you pay for such telegrams?—I did.

381. You paid for those you did not consider public?—I did.

382. And you sent none that you considered of a private nature without paying for them?—None.

383. Could you recognize any of the telegrams that were sent by you?—I think I could; Colonel Whitmore generally dictated the telegrams to me.

384. There is one here to Mr. Ballance, with no date; will you look at it, and say whether you recognize it?—That is between a Minister and a Minister, and I would express no opinion upon it.

385. Was that sent by you?—I rather think it was.

386. Then there is another one to Mr. Ballance on the 13th August?—I could not say anything about that telegram; I do not recollect it.

387. *Mr. Saunders.*] I understand you to say, from what you state, that in the case of a telegram from one Minister to another you would not inquire at all?—Not at all.

388. You would send it as a matter of course?—Yes, as a matter of course.

389. There is another telegram to Major Porter; did that pass through your hands?—Certainly. I consider that a public telegram; and as to the one to Mr. Ballance of the 23rd August, I think I recollect that, and that it was sent as a public telegram.

389A. Do you consider that a public telegram?—I do. There is matter in it which is on public service.

390. Sufficient to warrant you in sending it?—Sufficient to warrant me in calling Colonel Whitmore's attention to it, in paying for it, and in afterwards reclaiming the money.

391. Generally the question was left to you to decide?—Telegrams were given to me to make one telegram, and then I might have to repeat it in other ways, or to send it on; and if I considered it a private telegram I had to pay for it.

392. *Mr. Turnbull.*] If the telegram were between a Minister and a Minister you would not question it at all?—No; I would not consider the question at all. I never have as a Private Secretary.

393. *Mr. Wakefield.*] Colonel Whitmore did not give you any instructions?—I do not think I had any instructions, any more than my experience of the work of a private secretary in other countries.

393A. Then Colonel Whitmore did not instruct you as to whether the telegrams were to be considered private or public?—Certainly he did, frequently.

394. You said he was in the habit of giving you telegrams and leaving you to decide whether they were to be public or private?—When he said nothing on the matter I decided.

395. But he did frequently, in sending telegrams, say, these are private telegrams?—He did; he would say, "That is a private telegram."

396. Then there was no uniform practice?—No uniform practice.

397. If he did not tell you, you would use your own discretion?—I did.

398. Did you ever know a telegram to be sent back to Colonel Whitmore on the ground that it was sent as a public telegram when it was a private telegram?—I have.

399. How many times?—Several times. In every case they were sent back to me.

400. And in every case Colonel Whitmore insisted on their being sent as public telegrams?—They were to be sent. A telegram was not to be delayed when it was from a Minister; but if it was a question of payment it was to be demanded afterwards. There would be no delay in sending a Minister's telegram in view of the department.

401. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Do you know that in all cases in which payment was demanded that payment was made?—It was.