

123. Why?—I do not know.

124. He did not give you any reason?—No.

125. Did he say that he was going to write to the House?—Yes; he was then doing so.

126. And he refused positively to give you any opinion?—He did.

127. Did he read to you the letter that he was writing to the House?—No.

128. *Hon. Mr. Dick.*] When you first went to Mr. FitzGerald, did he tell you, before asking him any questions, that he was engaged in writing to the House?—I cannot remember. He sent for the papers, and I took them in my hand to him. It is quite likely he said he was writing to the House, but whether before or after I put my question I do not recollect.

129. You are quite sure that you asked him the question?—Yes.

130. You have no impression that when he read this memorandum to you——?—He did not read it to me. I have no knowledge of the contents of the memorandum except what I have seen in the newspapers.

131. Then you have no impression that he then declined to answer the question?—I asked the question, and he said he declined to give an opinion.

132. Nothing stopped you from asking the question?—No; it was one of the first things I said to him.

133. *Mr. Dargaville.*] How do you know he was engaged in writing a memorandum to the House?—I think he was. He sent an urgent message for the papers, which I took to him myself. I presumed he required them for the purpose of writing his memorandum.

134. Do you mean to say that, in his conversation with you, he made no representation to the effect that he had decided to address the House on the subject?—It is exceedingly likely that he did make such a representation. We spoke for some little time on the subject. I cannot remember the exact words he used, but he previously told me his intention to report the matter to Parliament.

135. *Hon. Major Atkinson.*] You have not brought this under my notice before yesterday, because, from pressure of business, you have not been able to get at me?—Yes; and I did not think the matter was so very urgent.

136. You would not understand, from this minute from the Audit Department, that the matter was so urgent that if it was not attended to forthwith it would be reported to Parliament?—No; but he came to my office, and said if it was not attended to by 4 o'clock it would be reported to the House that day.

137. Can Mr. FitzGerald write memoranda that would make it clear that the matter is urgent?—He is certainly quite capable of doing so.

138. *Mr. Peacock.*] Was that the only business which led you to make the visit to the Controller?—It was.

139. Then you do not think he could have had any doubt as to the object of your visit?—He could not know what the object of my visit was except from my questions; he might have inferred what the object was.

140. But the object of your visit was to ask that question?—It was.

141. And you did ask it?—I did.

142. And do you know of anything likely to prevent his understanding distinctly what you wanted?—No; I think nothing could prevent his understanding the question I put to him.

143. That is to say, there was no other business to distract his attention from the point?—No.

144. You had no other business?—No. I have no doubt that his mind was fully occupied by the subject he had in hand, and it is possible that, when he declined to answer my question, he might have been too busy to consider the matter.

145. Did you make it clear that you had been sent by the Treasurer with a view of asking his opinion as to what was to be done with this money?—No.

146. You did not. You relied on your official position as Secretary to the Treasury to let him understand that?—Yes.

147. But you have no doubt whatever as to the plainness of the questions put?—No doubt whatever. Mr. Batkin was also present at the time.

148. *Mr. Wright.*] Is it usual to allow six days to elapse before bringing important memoranda under the notice of the Colonial Treasurer, coming into your hands?—No; I always bring important memoranda before the Colonial Treasurer's notice as early as I can. Six days is an unusual length of time.

149. Then, how is it you allowed six days to elapse?—Because the Colonial Treasurer happened to be so busy that I could not get access to him.

150. Then, I understand, you were sent to Mr. FitzGerald expressly by the Colonial Treasurer to ascertain his views?—I was sent to make inquiry to see what could be done in the matter.

151. By the Treasurer?—Yes.

152. Would it not have been well if you had intimated to Mr. FitzGerald that you were expressly sent?—Perhaps it might. I do not know what effect it would have had upon him. I do not believe, however, it would have made any difference in the reply that I received.

153. Had Mr. FitzGerald understood that you were expressly sent by the Treasurer, do you not think he would possibly have withheld the letter?—He might if I had made it clear to him that I had come direct from the Treasurer.

154. *Hon. Mr. Johnston.*] Are you aware whether or not the memorandum from the Controller, asking that the Treasurer should give a direction in respect of this money, is based on a misstatement of facts?—Well, I take the first sentence: I think that is a misstatement. It reads thus: "There does not appear anything in these papers to say where the money is placed, or to whose credit." I pointed out to him myself that the money had been placed on the 31st July to the credit of the Minister for Public Works. It seemed to have escaped his notice. Do you wish me to go through the Controller's minute any further than that?