

135. Are you aware whether the work in the House of Representatives has increased very much of late years?—I think it has increased.

136. Do you think that increase of expenditure has been proportionate or greater than the increase of work?—I do not know that the work has so much increased but that the same staff could have done it.

137. Can you point out the increase of staff that has been made unnecessarily within the past few years?—No; I could not. It is not a question of staff; it is the excrescences that I object to.

138. You mean by excrescences increases to regular salary?—Yes; it would be far better to alter the Act. If £600 is not sufficient, make it £800 and have done with it. I would not have it so much by Act and so much by vote.

139. *Mr. Barron.*] Will you indicate to the Committee any items that you consider excessive other than those you have already indicated?—I am giving evidence here on legislative expenditure.

140. Will you be so good as to indicate any of the items from the estimates before you bearing on legislative expenditure which you consider excessive—any item that you have not had an opportunity of bringing before the Committee?—I would strike off £200 to the Speaker of the House of Representatives by vote, and the £100 to the Chairman of Committees. I would strike out also the £100 to the Chairman of Public Petitions Committee. I do not see why he should be paid any more than the Chairman of any other Committee. The Chairman of the Native Affairs Committee I would deal with in the same way. The £100 to the Clerk of Parliaments, who has by Act £600, I would strike off. The Clerk-Assistant £500—I would strike off that £100. Then, with regard to the second Clerk-Assistant, if you reduce the Clerk-Assistant to £400, the second would have to be reduced in proportion. As to the Sergeant-at-Arms, if he gets the same as the honorarium—£210—it ought to be sufficient. Then, there are two Interpreters at £225 apiece. My impression is that that is too large a sum to pay for Interpreters for three months in the year. I think that £450 might be reduced by £150, leaving £300—to each £150. Then, there is the Messenger, who gets £187 a year; his duties are little better than those of a labouring-man. I would put that down as having £67 to be struck off, leaving him with £120 a year. Then, there is the Examiner of Standing Orders on Private Bills. I would strike that off entirely, and give the duty to one of the Clerks of the Legislative Council. Then, here is an item, “Interpreter for translating speeches of members, £60.” Surely the two Interpreters attached to the House could do that without extra pay. Then, there is translating the Acts into Maori, £25. Surely that is a part of the Interpreters’ duty. They have very little else to do. Of course these are trifles, but it is trifles that mount up. That is about the extent. As to the sum of £600 for the library, it is a question whether that should be voted or not.

141. All these items are connected with the House of Representatives?—Yes.

142. *The Chairman.*] I would ask you whether you have any remarks to make in regard to *Hansard*?—No; I could not offer any opinion about *Hansard*. If *Hansard* is to continue it must be properly conducted.

143. *Mr. Barron.*] You have seen this return (B.-16)?—Yes; I have seen it.

144. You see that among the other items of expenditure increasing to a great extent are the salaries of Ministers?—Yes; that is so. You will find that in 1860 the salaries of Ministers were at £2,913, and last year they were £9,250.

145. Do you think it is possible to effect any reduction on that item?—Well, I do not know what that £9,000 is for.

146. Salaries?—I cannot say how much it covers. There are seven Ministers.

147. How many were there in 1860?—I forget.

148. Not so many as seven?—No.

149. But there would be certainly four?—I should think so.

150. You will find another item there of travelling expenses and allowances, which in 1875 amounted to £1,044 and in 1885 amounted to more than double that amount, viz., £2,100—that is, in ten years?—Yes.

151. Do you think that it is possible to curtail that expenditure?—I should not like to give any answer on that subject unless I devoted some attention to the several items. Without going into the matter fully I would not be able to form a correct idea. At the same time, I must say the travelling expenses are heavy.

152. Do you find an item for ministerial residences?—Yes.

153. What is the reason of the increase from £124 to £2,812 a year? Do you think there is any possibility of making a reduction in that item? From your knowledge of the position of a Minister, do you think it is necessary to have ministerial residences?—I think it is necessary to have ministerial houses, for Ministers outside of Wellington could not be expected to enter the Government unless they got a furnished house. If they were to rent a house they would have to furnish it, and they might not be in the Government for more than a month or two.

154. Does the item refer to an annual expenditure in addition to this?—There should not be any outside expenditure for ministerial residences more than there has been already.

155. How many of them are the property of the Government? You say there are seven Ministers?—Yes.

156. How many of them reside in houses that are the property of the Government?—I cannot say which are the property of the Government. I know that two or three of them are the property of the Government—three, I think. I am not certain whether the Government bought the house in which Sir Robert Stout is. They had it leased. I know it was leased for many years; but I think they must have bought it now—I am not certain.

157. Would you object to take that return and look at it, and, if the Committee should so determine, to give us some information upon it?—I do not think I could give much information besides what it contains.