

Statement goes the round of the colony, showing a tapering-off policy and a reduction of public works; and the Government gained credit for having reduced expenditure on public works, though absolutely contrary to fact."

30. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] What year was that?—In 1892; just at the end of last session.

31. *Hon. Sir J. Hall.*] Did Mr. Seddon speak after that?—Mr. Seddon spoke after that, and wound up the debate.

32. Did he make any allusion to the statement of Mr. Richardson?—He made this allusion, which I think I pointed out to the Committee, that "the statement was perfection in itself."

33. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] Then there are two charges you make, Mr. Rolleston, against me; one, that it was I who "secretly, silently, and surreptitiously" altered the Statement. Do you still adhere to that?—I see no reason to alter it. If you did not absolutely give the direction—if you did not do it—you adopted it, and knowingly adopted it. If a man adopts the act of another, particularly if that other is an officer of his department, it is all one as though he did it himself.

34. Then I am to understand if one person—say Brown—commits an illegal act, and Smith says he will adopt it—?—I contend if a man takes advantage of the wrong-doing of another without disclaiming it, he is *particeps criminis*.

35. Were you not under the impression when you made that statement it was I myself who had made the alteration? Had you not been informed so, on your honour—?

36. *The Chairman.*] It is a little out of order to put a gentleman here on his honour.

37. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] At the time you made that statement had you not been informed it was I, personally, who had made the alteration?—I do not know I had been so informed. It was upon my mind, from the general tenor of what had passed upon the subject. And it would have made no difference in my statement whether you had absolutely given the direct order for it or whether you had not.

38. It is not whether I had given the order or not; were you not under the impression I had made the alteration? You said so, in fact, that I had made it. You said I had "silently, secretly, and surreptitiously" altered the Statement?—Yes; I say you either did alter it, or allowed it to be altered with your knowledge; and that is the same thing.

39. I want to confine you to your statement made in the House—to the *Hansard* record of what you said; and I ask you what evidence you have to support that accusation?—The general evidence I have brought before the Committee now.

40. Have you any further evidence?—Not that I know of. Of course, the thing had been discussed, and these statements had been made. I had no special information on the subject.

41. You were not under the impression that I had altered the Statement? Have you heard it stated in the House that I had tampered with the Statement?—I cannot tax my memory particularly; but to my mind it makes very little difference whether you tampered with it or allowed it to be tampered with. You did not correct it.

42. Then, the second part of your charge is that I ought to have publicly corrected it. That is the second part of your charge, is it not?—I say, nothing less than a formal correction of the statement in the first paragraph and the last paragraph of the Public Works Statement should have been made—a correction of the most formal character. Nothing less than that was called for under the circumstances.

43. Well, now, you have positively no evidence whatever in support of the accusation that I had made these alterations, except what you state now to the Committee?—I have stated to the Committee all I have to say. It is a question the Committee will investigate further. I have no doubt they will go into the particular way in which it has been brought about.

44. Were you present when Mr. Richardson and Mr. Mitchelson spoke, on the occasion of the 5th October, on the Public Works Statement?—I think so. If any one said I was not there, I would not swear I was; but, so far as I know, I was. I know I was there some part of the time, at any rate.

45. Did not Mr. Mitchelson open the attack?—Yes.

46. By the *Hansard*, does he not tell the House that these alterations had been made?—Yes, he does.

47. Do I question that, and say the statement he has made is incorrect?—No; you said you were asleep.

48. Not when he was speaking. I have not said I was asleep then, but when the question was put that we go into Committee. The question to leave the chair was put without my knowing. But the question I ask you is, did I contradict Mr. Mitchelson when he made that statement?—Not to my knowledge.

49. You have said that during the same debate I ejaculated three or four times?—Yes.

50. Mr. Richardson in the same *Hansard* report makes the same statement, and on that day?—Yes.

51. On the 5th October?—Yes.

52. Did I contradict him?—No.

53. I did not?—Not so far as I am aware.

54. Now, coming to the corrected *Hansard*, would you be surprised to know that the Public Works Statement and the Financial Statement goes into *Hansard* without a Minister ever seeing them from the time they are put on the table—that that is following the usual course?—Oh, I would not be at all surprised to hear that; but I should be very much surprised to hear any alteration was made to any official record of the House of that kind without authority.

54A. You would be surprised?—Yes.

54B. If you were informed with regard to the Financial Statement and the Public Works Statement that there is scarcely an occasion in which the same thing is not done, would you be surprised?—I should be very much surprised if I were told that figures in a statement, which meant one thing, upon which a considerable portion of an official record like the Public Works