

to intimate this. After I had taken twenty-five minutes' notes, Mr. Grey put on five-minute "turns," which would have brought me in half an hour's notes, against the other members' five minutes.

*Mr. Hogg.*] With regard to the necessity or desirability of the Chief Reporter taking his "turn," you consider it is not necessary, Mr. Spragg? Do you think, if a Chief Reporter were engaged, he should take his "turn?"—He would need to be able to do his work, as Mr. Barron has done his, before he would be qualified to manage and control the staff.

*Mr. Carncross.*] What is your opinion with regard to Mr. Barron's position being a sinecure?—I certainly do not consider Mr. Barron's position a sinecure.

If another reporter were engaged it would lessen the work?—Yes.

Mr. GEDDIS examined.

*The Chairman:* Has the Committee any questions to ask Mr. Geddis?

*Mr. Grey:* If I may be allowed, Mr. Chairman, I should like to put a question to Mr. Geddis.

*Mr. Grey* (to Mr. Geddis).] You remember the time when Mr. Barron was taken ill, in the latter end of 1893, Mr. Geddis?—Yes, I have a distinct recollection of it.

You are aware that I was in charge of the staff during Mr. Barron's absence?—Yes.

In what way did I perform those duties, so far as the staff was concerned?—In my opinion you performed them in a perfectly satisfactory manner. As to the alteration which Mr. Leslie has referred to as having arisen between yourself and another member of the staff, it was so trivial a circumstance that I do not consider any other member of the staff gave a thought to it in the following week, and I am surprised that it should be raked up to-day. If I may be allowed, I should like to make some reference to a point far more material than this. Mr. Leslie has called in question the statement in my evidence about "too limited time for transcription." I wish, therefore, to set forth the grounds upon which that statement rests. On every day on which both Houses are sitting five reporters are available for service in the House, and two are detailed for service in the Council. The five reporters who are engaged in reporting the House proceedings take quarter-hour "turns" in regular rotation, and therefore each of them has an interval of an hour in which to transcribe his "turn." But, as an average quarter-hour "turn" produces four columns of *Hansard*—that is to say, two pages—an hour is quite inadequate for the transcription. The case of the Council reporters is harder still. Their "turns" are half an hour in duration, just double those in the House, and consequently would each average about eight columns or four pages of *Hansard*; and, as these reporters take their "turns" in regular alternation, they have only half an hour for the transcription of each "turn," until the Council rises. It must therefore be obvious to the Committee that the time allowed for transcription is utterly insufficient; and, with only half an hour off in the case of the two Council reporters, it is simply preposterous to say it is adequate.

Mr. Geddis, I have also acted on very many occasions as Chief Reporter, have I not?—On various occasions.

Have I performed the duties satisfactorily?—As far as I am concerned, I consider them to have been satisfactorily performed.

You are aware I was the originator of the new "turns"?—I am not aware whether or not you were the originator of them. For all I know, they may have been tried before I joined the staff.

You know that I introduced them, at any rate, during Mr. Barron's absence?—Yes.

Did that system work satisfactorily?—Yes, it worked to the relief of the staff.

Do you know whether the result was satisfactory to the members whose speeches were reported?—I have heard so.

Do you know that the Colonial Treasurer has expressed his satisfaction with the reporting of his speeches under the shortened "turn" system?—I have heard it said that he has expressed his satisfaction.

*Mr. Leslie.*] Was it with your knowledge or consent any further steps were taken after Mr. Barron's reply was sent to the staff?—I was a consenting party to the matter being brought before the Committee.

*Mr. Pirani.*] What was done after Mr. Barron sent his answer to the staff?—I cannot say.

*Mr. Carncross.*] What is your opinion, Mr. Geddis, with regard to Mr. Barron's position being a sinecure?—Mr. Barron can take down from dictation a portion of the notes of any reporter, and transcribe them on the typewriter for him; but in taking no share in the reporting he can render no expert assistance to the staff, except in giving directions on those points which members of the staff may refer to him; for instance, as to whether certain debates should be reported in the first or third person, or whether matter which may seem to be extraneous or trivial should be reported at all. These are points which any one in charge would give the necessary directions for the purpose of securing uniformity of action on the part of the staff.

Then Mr. Barron's position is not altogether a sinecure, is it?—No; but it involves no expert work. As to the relative value of service rendered by an amanuensis, as compared with the work of a gallery note-taker, Mr. Berry struck the nail on the head when in his written evidence he stated that one note-taker in the gallery was worth four or five amanuenses. I fully indorse that opinion.

Mr. BERRY examined.

*The Chairman.*] Mr. Berry, have you any further statement to make in addition to the replies given by you to the questions forwarded to you by the Committee?—No; I have nothing to add.

*Mr. Grey.*] Mr. Berry, do you remember the period during which I acted as Chief Reporter?—Yes.

Did I perform the duties satisfactorily?—Yes; I had nothing to complain of.