

What is your opinion of my alterations with regard to the duration of "turns"? Was the shortenings of the "turns" a relief?—Certainly, a great relief.

You think it is a relief to the members of the staff and does greater justice to the speakers?—Yes.

*Mr. Leslie.*] Was it with your knowledge anything further was done after Mr. Barron replied to the letter of the 31st August?—I was not consulted. As regards the request to Mr. Barron drawn up by myself, the statement made by Mr. Spragg is true.

Mr. RUSSELL examined.

*The Chairman.*] Mr. Russell, have you any further statement to make in addition to the replies given by you to the questions forwarded to you by the Committee?—I have nothing to add to my written answers. I still maintain the consensus of evidence is in favour of an additional reporter being engaged. If this was done, I think the Chief Reporter need not take his "turn," considering Mr. Barron's long service. The work is heavy at times, especially in the Council, where half-hour "turns" are taken, and with the assistance of another note-taker when a big debate is going on there, the work would be got through more expeditiously.

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

*Mr. Carnecross.*] What is your opinion, Mr. Russell, with regard to Mr. Barron's position being a sinecure?—It is not a sinecure.

You recommend that another note-taker be engaged?—Yes.

If another note-taker were engaged do you still consider that Mr. Barron should go into the gallery?—It would not be necessary with eight note-takers, and I think Mr. Barron's length of service entitles him to consideration in that respect.

*Mr. Grey.*] Mr. Russell, you have had experience of my acting in the capacity of Chief Reporter. What is your opinion with regard to this?—I have no fault to find with you.

What is your opinion of the result of the short "turns"?—They are certainly a great benefit, and I understand Mr. Ward has expressed his appreciation of the five-minute "turns," as indicated in his proofs.

Are you aware that Mr. Ward says he finds a decided difference in reading the proofs—that is, he has not so many corrections to make in the five-minute "turns" as in the fifteen-minute "turns"?—Yes.

*Mr. Leslie.*] Mr. Russell, was it with your knowledge or consent any further steps were taken after Mr. Barron's reply was sent to the staff?—I cannot answer that question.

Mr. GREY further examined.

*Mr. Pirani.*] Mr. Grey, something has been said about representations being made to the Premier, and how a letter to Mr. Barron went further. I would like you to explain?—A matter of common conversation amongst members and others last session was, "What has become of Mr. Barron, I never see him in the gallery now"? I answered, "Oh, he has retired from taking notes in the gallery."

Did you make representations to the Premier with regard to the matter?—The matter was known to the Government last year.

But this year?—I represented that the staff was being overworked, that it was being "sweated"; that we had made representations to Mr. Barron, and if further representations were not made we would continue to suffer, and a gross injustice would be done to us.

*Mr. G. Hutchison.*] To a Minister?—Yes.

*Mr. Duthie.*] If Mr. Seddon says it was to him it would be correct?—If Mr. Seddon says it was to him that statement would be perfectly correct.

When did you make that representation?—When we found we could not get justice done, and after receipt of Mr. Barron's high-handed reply, it was evident to me the matter could not be allowed to rest there. I objected to being sweated any longer.

Mr. GORE examined.

*Mr. Leslie (to Mr. Gore).*] Was it with your knowledge or consent, Mr. Gore, further steps were taken after Mr. Barron's reply was sent to the staff?—No.

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