

130. How is it, then, that you stated that you had two copies of Mr. Easton's evidence locked up in your cupboard for two or three days?—I may have had the one copy which was sent to the printer.

131. You said you had two copies locked up in your cupboard, and no one could get at them?—No one could get at them unless they went to the cupboard and got a copy.

132. You said there were two copies in your cupboard?—I do not recollect having said so. When I said I missed the copy I meant that I was unable to account for it.

133. You said in reply to me this morning that no one could have got a copy of the other two originals in your possession unless they had a key to your cupboard?—I did not attach much importance to the other two originals when you asked the question.

134. I asked the question where the copies were, and your answer was that the two were locked up in your cupboard?—Then that must have been a mistake. There was only one copy locked up in my cupboard. When I said I missed the copy of the evidence I meant that I was unable to account for the three copies. I knew there was one copy in circulation, and I had forgotten where the third copy was.

135. If you had been uncertain of the fact that two copies of the evidence have been out, is it not possible that the other copy might have been out too?—No.

136. You are certain of that?—Quite certain of that. When the Committee rises I go round and take up the papers on the table—telegrams, correspondence, printed documents, and other papers, sometimes notes made by members of the Committee. I gather them into a bundle. The evidence I either put on top of the bundle or in a place by itself. How I came to know that some of the evidence was missing was owing to the thinness of the bundle of evidence; so I looked at it and found that I could not account for where some of the evidence had gone. But, as I have said, I took it for granted that a member of the Committee had taken some of it away for more attentive perusal or consideration, and thought it would come back all right.

137. But you state that two copies of Mr. Easton's evidence had been sent out to Mr. Cook and Mr. Easton respectively, and were left in their possession?—Yes; it had passed from my mind at the time.

138. In reply to Mr. Fisher, you have said that in one case, where a witness had to cross-examine another witness, you sent to the first witness a copy of the evidence?—I may have done so.

139. You said it was done in Mr. Cook's case?—Yes.

140. When Mr. Easton examined Mr. Cook would you not send it to him for correction?—Yes.

141. As a matter of fact, did he examine Mr. Cook?—No, he did not; he made a statement.

142. I am speaking of the time when Mr. Cook gave evidence. Was he examined by Mr. Easton or not? If so, would you not send a copy of the examination of Mr. Cook to Mr. Easton?—I have no recollection of doing so.

143. Was it the Committee who decided, after Mr. Cook had made the request that he should have the perusal of Mr. Easton's evidence, that that evidence should be sent to him?—I did not follow what took place in the Committee at all.

144. You took your directions from the Chairman?—Yes. I am keenly alive to what the Committee desire, but I take my directions from the Chairman.

ALEXANDER FRANCIS LOWE, Second Clerk-Assistant, House of Representatives, examined.
(No. 25.)

145. *Mr. Pirani.*] It has been stated in evidence by the clerk of the Goldfields and Mines Committee that no record is kept of the names of persons to whom evidence is sent, the date and hour it is sent out, and the date and hour it is returned; can you tell me whether that is the general practice with all Committees?—The practice is to take a careful note of the date on which the evidence is sent out, the name of the man to whom it is sent, and when it is returned. That is the general practice.

146. *Sir J. G. Ward.*] If that were not done by the Mines Committee clerk would you look upon it as careless procedure?—Yes; I would say he was trusting to his memory where he ought to take a proper note of where a document was being sent to.

147. Then, in the absence of a proper note it would be quite possible to lose the run of evidence?—Yes, quite possible.

148. *Mr. Fisher.*] Is it usual to allow the evidence, before it is sent out to witnesses and after it is returned by the witnesses, to lie loosely about the table of the Committee-room?—No, most unusual.

JACKSON PALMER, M.H.R., recalled. (No. 26.)

149. *The Chairman.*] Since you were present at the last meeting of this Committee has anything transpired in connection with the custody of your Committee's documents which you would care to tell us; or will you make an explanation of some circumstances that are known to me?—It has only reference to the forgetfulness of my Committee clerk. Last week I had the memorandum of agreement and articles of association of some companies in my possession, and I asked the clerk to see that they were locked away in the safe. The following morning Mr. Herries came in before the clerk and asked me for the documents, as he wanted to look at them. I went to the safe and looked for them, but could not find them anywhere. Mr. Herries also looked about and could not find them. The clerk then came in, and I asked him for all the documents. He said they were in the safe. I said, "Go and get them, as Mr. Herries wants them." He went and looked, but said they were not there. I asked him if he had locked them in the safe, and he said he had. I said, "Are you positive?" He said, "I am absolutely positive I locked them in the