

104. *Hon. Sir J. Hall.*] There was one question Mr. Seddon asked Mr. Rolleston I do not think he replied to. Mr. Seddon asked: "Did you hear me express regret at being caught napping, as I wished to make an important correction?"—No, I did not hear that, to the best of my belief. If I had I think I should have remembered it, and I do not.

Mr. GEORGE FRIEND examined.

105. *The Chairman.*] You are the Clerk of the House?—Yes.

106. Have you the Public Works Statement that was laid on the table of the House last year?—I have brought it with me. It was laid on the table of the House on the 27th September, last year. You will find it at page 301 in the Journals.

107. On page 14 of the Statement there is a paragraph headed "Conclusion," and figures—£295,978. Have those figures been altered?—No; they have not been altered.

108. *Dr. Newman.*] If a paper like this is laid on the table, it is then in the possession of the officers of the House?—Yes.

109. And who is responsible for seeing it printed as it has been laid on the table?—It is printed before it is laid on the table.

110. After this Statement was laid on the table of the House, who was responsible for its being bound up, as it is printed, in the Appendices? I will put the question another way: This document was laid on the table with certain figures?—Yes.

111. As bound up in the Appendices those figures have been largely altered?—Yes.

112. Who is responsible for permitting the alterations?—The Printing Office.

113. Have the officers of the House no control?—No control. I may explain. A certain number are printed off for distribution—we will say a hundred and fifty—the balance is retained in store, in the Printing Office, and bound up in the Appendix. Without being seen by any one they are bound up the same as the copies sent up for distribution, unless they have been altered in the Printing Office by order.

114. *Hon. Sir J. Hall.*] By whose order?—We have no control over the Printing Office with regard to documents already printed before being laid on the table of the House.

115. *Dr. Newman.*] Nobody in the House is responsible for anything that appears in the Appendices?—All the papers laid on the table of the House in printed form are printed before being so laid on the table, and they are retained in the Printing Office until bound up in the Appendix. With manuscripts, the officers of the House are responsible for their being printed, and for giving orders. That is the difference. The majority of papers are laid on the table in manuscript form. These we have printed, either during the session or later, and are responsible for their being exact copies.

116. The officers of the House never see the Appendices until they are published?—They have no means of seeing them.

117. *Mr. G. Hutchison.*] Referring now to the printed Journals, which, I suppose, are correct, you find by an entry, page 301, "40. Public Works Statement. The Honourable Mr. Seddon laid upon the table, with the leave of the House, the following paper, which was taken as read: 238. Public Works Statement by the Hon. the Minister for Public Works, D.-1. Ordered to be printed."

118. That is the entry?—Yes.

119. You say that in this case, as in some others, the document was printed?—As a matter of fact, the document was printed beforehand.

119A. You assume that the order to be printed here means that the document, as laid on the table printed, was part of the records of the House?—It is an order made as an authority to cover the expense already incurred by the Government.

119B. What do you say about authority?—To cover the expenses authorised by the Government. Before it is laid on the table the Government have to authorise the printing of a paper.

119C. Would you take the "Ordered to be printed" to be that the document is to be retained in the printed form in which it was laid on the table of the House?—Yes.

119D. Supposing this document was in manuscript, and ordered to be printed, would not some officer of the House be responsible for seeing it was printed?—Certainly, in every case.

119E. Is there any officer to see whether or not the printed matter is retained in the shape in which it is laid on the table?—That would be an impossibility. You would have to examine every copy. It would take more than a year to do one single paper.

119F. You trust to the documents that are brought down in print and ordered to be printed being retained in exact shape?—Yes.

119G. In every detail as they are laid on the table?—Certainly, we consider they are bound to be so.

119H. *Hon. Sir J. Hall.*] In whose custody has this document been since it was laid on the table?—The Clerk of the House is supposed to be responsible. I may say I am responsible. The documents are not actually in my custody. I do not know actually in whose custody the documents are; they are locked up in the record-room. This has been so locked up since last session.

119I. But still in somebody's custody. Who is the official custodian of the papers?—The Clerk of the House is responsible for all documents.

119K. You say that documents laid on the table of the House in printed form are proceeded with by the Printing Office without any control on the part of the officers of the House?—We have not the slightest control.

120. Then do you mean that it would be impossible for a document, we will say a document like the Public Works Statement, to be laid on in one form and important alterations to be made in the Printing Office without the sanction of the House?—Certainly.

121. It would?—Certainly.