

198. You had the figures corrected?—Yes.

199. Did you inform the Minister of this error?—No.

200. You did not?—I did not.

201. Did you not think it your duty, in a matter which must have struck you as one of considerable importance, to inform the Minister?—It did not strike me as being a matter of any importance at all. If I had altered the figures throughout the Statement from £391,000 to £295,000 I should have considered it a matter of very great importance indeed. But, as this figure appears in the Statement no less than five times, and four times out of the five correctly, I thought it was not only unimportant to correct the fifth figure to make it harmonize with the other four, but that it was my bounden duty to do so. If I had allowed it to go out as at first there would have been a want of harmony.

202. The third paragraph of the Statement reads: "and yet the expenditure thereon has been less during the past year than it has been for years past." Do you consider that sentence consistent with the facts shown by the figures?—You mean by the corrected figures?

203. Yes, by the corrected figures?—Yes; I do not see any want of consistency. The expenditure undoubtedly was less during that year than had generally prevailed in previous years.

204. Then turn to the second page, and take the fourth paragraph, which reads: "but, as previously stated, the amount expended has been small compared with the expenditure during previous years." Do you still maintain that these figures are consistent with that statement?—Yes, quite consistent. The two paragraphs are worded similarly, and my answer to the one is my answer to the other.

205. You did not inform the Minister of the error? When were the corrected copies of the Public Works Statement printed? If you want me to give evidence from my own personal knowledge I do not know, but certainly not within twenty-four hours of the Statement being laid on the table of the House.

206. After you had corrected the figures?—Publication proceeded at once.

207. How long was it before the corrected Statement was issued from the printing office?—I believe the next day.

208. Why was it not circulated amongst the members?—I am in no way responsible for that. I know nothing whatever about it. I do not know, as a matter of fact, that it was not so circulated.

209. *Hon. Sir J. Hall.*] Who would know?—The Government Printer would know that.

*Hon. Mr. Seddon:* As a matter of fact it was circulated.

210. *Hon. Sir J. Hall:* What, corrected?

*Hon. Mr. Seddon:* Yes.

*Mr. Blow:* I know several members came and got additional copies, and these were all in the correct form.

211. *Mr. Wright.*] Did you suggest to your Chief, the Minister for Public Works, that it was expedient to circulate the corrected copies?—No. I have already stated that I did not even mention to the Minister that there had been an error in it that had called for rectification.

212. The reprint, the corrected copy, was ready the day following the alteration you made?—Yes, I believe so.

213. Can you say why it was not laid on the table until the 10th October? Do you know anything about that?—I do not think it was laid on the table on the 10th October. At any rate I have no knowledge of anything of the kind. I thought it had never yet been laid on the table of the House.

*Hon. Mr. Seddon:* The corrected copy? Certainly not.

214. *Mr. G. Hutchison.*] Will you look at page 14 of the Statement—the "Conclusion." The last set of figures, £295,978, are incorrect on the basis of the other figures given, are they not?—Yes. Those figures do not appear in the Public Works Statement as generally circulated, and bound in the Appendices.

215. Excuse me, I am speaking of the document laid on the table of the House?—Oh, yes.

216. The copy of which I am speaking was the one circulated to members, and laid on the table of the House. The £295,978 were not the correct figures, relatively to the other figures mentioned in the same paragraph?—Relatively, I do not think they are, because the 1891–92 figures are net, and the others are gross.

217. I ask you whether they are correct relatively with the other figures in the same paragraph?—I have already answered the question.

218. You say they are not — ?

*Hon. Mr. Seddon:* He says they are correct as the net, but not as the gross.

219. *Mr. G. Hutchison.*] Are they relatively the correct figures?—Not relatively; the one being the net and the other the gross.

220. This £295,978 ought to have £95,634 added, to make it relatively correct with the other figures?—Yes.

221. Very well, that makes £391,612?—Yes.

222. Why did you not, in correcting the Statement, put in the correct figures? You will see, in correcting the Statement, you did not make it correct; instead of £391,612 you put in £391,501?—I, of course, deducted the sum of £111, a recovery made during the year, as stated in paragraph 2 of my memorandum, which has been printed as D.-4.

223. Why did you do that?—Because it has been the rule to deduct recoveries made during the year, as the tables themselves will show.

224. Do you mean to say the other figures given here have deducted from them such recoveries?—Certainly.

225. They have?—Undoubtedly.