

Hon. the Premier asked me how came it to pass members were in possession of the corrected copy. I have had a statement prepared which will quite explain the matter [Exhibit No. 8 produced], and will account for the whole of the distribution of the short number, 300, and how members came into possession of corrected copies. The explanation is very simple. After the first issue—the ordinary issue—is made, requisition is made upon the Printing Office for additional copies. They were supplied to members in that manner. But no instructions were given to make a complete issue of the corrected copy, so that these copies containing the corrected figures were simply issued in an incidental manner on further copies being asked for by the officers of the House.

543. *Hon. Sir R. Stout.*] That is, there was no order to cancel the previously-issued copies?—There was no order of cancellation. Shall I leave this statement of the issues with the officer's receipts attached?

*The Chairman:* If you please.

*Hon. Sir R. Stout:* Apparently there were delivered to the House, 45 copies; to the Library, 2; Miscellaneous, 28; Mr. Blow, 12. Altogether there were delivered 295 of the first issue and 300 of the second. Of the second issue 75 went to Mr. Revell, Mr. Blow had 163, the Railway Commissioners 100, O'Rorke for the House 25, Blow another 25, O'Rorke 12: 37 only went to the House.

544. *Mr. Wright.*] When was that?—On the 6th October.

JAMES BURNS examined.

545. *The Chairman.*] What position do you occupy in the printing office?—I am Superintending Overseer of the Government Printing Office.

546. Do you remember an alteration in the Public Works Statement of last year made after it was laid on the table of the House?—Yes, I remember Mr. Blow coming in. I think it was the second day after the Statement was presented to the House. The Statement was presented on Tuesday, and I believe it was on the Thursday that the alteration was made—the Thursday morning. I am speaking from memory. The tables—the bulk of them—were printed, run off, the day following the delivery of the Statement; that would be the 28th. But I find from the Press files that the text of the Statement itself was printed on the following day, the 29th. So I take it from that I am correct in stating that the alteration was made in the text of the Statement on the second day after delivery.

547. Did you get instructions to alter?—Well, as a matter of fact, there are no particular instructions. We take whatever is given by the officers in charge; we do not question anything. Mr. Blow was the officer in charge of this; to all intents and purposes, he was like the author of it.

548. And it was Mr. Blow?—Yes, Mr. Blow. He was in frequently the three days—Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

549. *Hon. Sir J. Hall.*] Did he come personally?—Personally.

550. Did Mr. Blow give any written instructions?—No, Sir. He just brought in the copy in his hand, with the alterations that he wished made.

551. *Mr. Saunders.*] The corrected copy?—Yes.

552. *Hon. Sir J. Hall.*] That is, of the text?—Yes.

553. With regard to the tables, were there alterations made in the tables, so far as you recollect?—I believe not, Sir. I believe there were no alterations made in the tables, so far as I remember. In fact, I think the bulk of them were printed. Some of them were entirely run off on the evening of the delivery.

554. Some of them? Do I understand some of them were not run off?—Some of them were not, because in the hurry on the evening of the delivery of the Statement, there was not time to work the full number. Often the forme has to be lifted off a machine to allow another one to go on, and so to get the short number finished for the House.

555. Could any alterations have been made in the tables without your knowing it?—No; they would have to go through my hands. There can be no alteration made without my knowledge. Everything came directly into my hands from Mr. Blow or the officer of the department. Mr. Clapham, in the first instance, was frequently in, but his work was before Mr. Blow's, rather.

556. And are you quite certain no alterations were made in the tables after the document was laid on the table on the 27th September?—I would not like to be very positive, but my belief is, there was none.

557. *Hon. Sir R. Stout.*] If you look at that Table C; look at the one laid on the table of the House, and the other you will see there is £391,501 and £391,612, by £111 being put in. It is not correct?—It would appear to have been done, but I do not remember it.

558. Having seen these tables, are you now aware that some alterations were made?—Yes, it is quite evident it has been made. But there is this. I have no right to question any alteration Mr. Blow would make, he having charge of the work. It was not a matter I would take any interest in, further than doing as I was directed.

559. Is there anybody else in the department who could throw any light upon that question; the compositor who would make the alteration?—Well, Mr. Gamble is next to me; he is the overseer in the room.

560. *Hon. Sir R. Stout.*] These are his initials—C.G.?—C.Y. it will be—that is the machinist, Mr. Young—he has charge of the machine-room.

561. *Hon. Sir J. Hall.*] Who could tell us?—I question very much if any one could tell from memory. These things are up and down very frequently, and corrections are so continually made, that it is very difficult at a year's distance to say exactly how a certain thing was done.

562. Is it possible there may have been other alterations in the table besides what you now recollect?—Now that is brought to my notice, I cannot pretend to say.