

1895.
NEW ZEALAND.

REPORTING DEBATES AND PRINTING COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF THE) ON THE *HANSARD* STAFF, TOGETHER WITH APPENDICES, AND ALSO
ADDENDA LAID ON THE TABLE 11TH OCTOBER, 1895.

Brought up 8th October, 1895, and ordered to be printed.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

FRIDAY, THE 21ST DAY OF JUNE, 1895.

Ordered, That a Committee, consisting of ten members, be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the reporting of debates and to the printing executed by order of this House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members of this House; three to be a quorum. The Committee to consist of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Carncross, Mr. Duthie, Mr. Hogg, Mr. G. Hutchison, Mr. Lang, Mr. Pirani, Mr. Saunders, Hon. Major Steward, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. REEVES.)

REPORT.

THE Reporting Debates and Printing Committee have the honour to report, That this Committee considers that the permanent *Hansard* staff is insufficient to cope with the work at present put upon it, in consequence of the time-limit increasing the amount of speaking compressed into each reporter's "turn," and the increased number of Legislative Councillors. That this Committee considers the present chief of the staff, Mr. Barron, is thoroughly competent to retain charge, and has the confidence and esteem of the reporters.

That this Committee recommends that an additional gallery reporter be appointed at £250 per annum, with an annual increase of £10 up to £300 per year; the appointment to be made by the Reporting Debates and Printing Committee, on the recommendation of the chief of the staff, after a thorough practical test of efficiency.

8th October, 1895.

W. J. STEWARD, Chairman.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

QUESTIONS put to members of *Hansard* staff, and replies thereto. (No evidence was taken down in shorthand.)

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the CHAIRMAN, Reporting Debates Committee, House of Representatives.

UNDER my original appointment I was not to take turns in the gallery; but it was found so difficult to obtain competent shorthand reporters at that time that I had to go into the gallery, or the whole system would have broken down. There were then only five reporters besides myself; there are now seven. I continued doing this for over twenty years, when I found my health breaking down from the strain of work, and felt that I could no longer stand the double work of reporting and carrying on the necessary duties of supervision, &c.

No other chief reporter of any staff in the world of which I have been able to obtain a record has done such work, except in Victoria, where, as I was informed by a member of that staff, they

make use of the full reports given in the daily papers. In a minute by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, dated 4th June, 1895 (last June), the following passage occurs: "The staff at present consists of ten shorthand writers, which includes the principal shorthand writer, who is wholly responsible for the work—a duty large enough without doing any gallery work."

I then tried staying out of the gallery, with the result that, by assisting in the transcribing-room and general organization, the staff is now able almost invariably to rise with the House, and, if there are arrears, to work them off on the following day between 2 and half-past 2 o'clock when the Houses meet. Previously it had been almost as invariably the custom to stay for an hour or two after the House adjourned, and it was frequently necessary to call the staff together again next morning at 11 o'clock and work till luncheon time. Not once this session has this been necessary, which shows that the strain on the staff has been less. Nor have I been compelled to engage any more extra assistance than I did when I reported in the gallery myself. This extra assistance is engaged only when the work in both Houses is very heavy, or when an important debate, such as that on the Financial Statement, is going on, when it is necessary to relieve the strain on the reporters as much as possible.

My extra work renders it necessary for me to attend at the office every morning, whereas the rest of the staff have not to attend now until 2 or half-past 2 o'clock in the afternoon. I have to get division-lists, compare Committee-work with Clerk's notes, answer queries from the Printing Office, go through honourable members' speeches where they are not accustomed to making printers' corrections, write headings to questions, motions, &c., and many other matters which it is difficult to define, but which fully occupy my time, to say nothing of the constant references to me by reporters and honourable members while the House is sitting, which rendered the writing-out of my own "turns" a work of the greatest difficulty.

17th September, 1895.

C. C. N. BARRON, Chief Reporter.

The CHIEF REPORTER to the Hon. the CHAIRMAN, Reporting Debates Committee.

SIR,—

Hansard Office, 21st September, 1895.

I think, as I am now, in the twenty-ninth year of my service to Parliament, on my trial, so to speak, that, before the Committee comes to a conclusion, I should be allowed to say a word or two in my own behalf.

I am accused, I believe, of neglecting my duty, and, by implication, of taking no interest in the work of *Hansard*. I should like to say that I introduced type-writing machines here to assist the work of the staff. These machines were scarcely known in this or the neighbouring colonies at that time, but, with the kind concurrence of Sir Maurice O'Rorke, then Speaker, who saw as I did what a help they would be, I procured them, and they have fully realised our anticipations. They were not used by the New South Wales staff until the Chief Reporter had obtained my opinion upon them. I next procured a shorthand typewriter—the first imported into this colony—thinking it also might assist the staff. Having devoted some time to trying it I do not believe in it, but, as I paid for it myself, the State is no loser. I am now anxiously watching the development of the phonograph. At present the expense and mechanical difficulties, which I need not go into, render my experimenting with it impossible; but I have a strong belief that it will yet be possible to use it for reporting purposes. I have read an account in an American periodical of an alleged successful experiment in this direction, but have not yet obtained any confirmation of it.

I have, as you are aware, compiled the rulings of the Speakers of the House of Representatives: the little book is now on the table of the House with the Standing Orders, &c. This was to me a labour of love. The only remuneration I received for it was a kind note from the Hon. Sir Robert Stout expressing approval of it. I have also compiled the rulings of the Speakers of the House of Commons, of our own Speakers, and of those of other colonies where they seemed to me appropriate. I have them in manuscript, but as Mr. Blackmore, Clerk of Parliaments of South Australia, forestalled me in the printing, though not in compilation, I have not attempted to have them printed.

I trust these facts will convince you and the Committee that my interest in the work has not diminished.

I have, &c.,

C. C. N. BARRON,
Chief Reporter.

The Hon. the Chairman, Reporting Debates Committee,
House of Representatives.

MR. GREY'S ANSWERS.

GENTLEMEN,—

Hansard Office, 19th September, 1895.

I have the honour to acknowledge, from the Clerk of your Committee, the receipt of a series of questions which the Committee desires the members of the *Hansard* staff to send written replies to; and I therefore proceed to answer these questions in the order in which they have reached me.

Question 1. Has the work of the *Hansard* staff, per day, been increased of recent years?

Question 2. If so, what are the reasons, and what do you suggest as a remedy?

Question 3. What was the average time worked after the House rose, and before it met, prior to 1893 and afterwards?

Question 4. If there is any decrease in the hours, has that been due to the different manner in which Mr. Barron has carried out his duties?

Answer. With regard to questions Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, I have to say that there is no data at my disposal which would enable me to give an answer to these questions, and it is impossible for

me to supply such details from memory extending over such a lengthened period. When I gave my evidence before the Committee on Monday last, 16th September, I produced and left in possession of the Committee abundant and incontrovertible statistics to prove that the volume of *Hansard* reporting has very materially increased since 1892, owing to the more lengthy debates in the Legislative Council, to the acceleration of speed in the delivery of speeches that has been brought about in the House of Representatives by the operation of the time-limit, and to the greater proportion of members now addressing the House on various questions than was formerly the case.

Question 5. Is it necessary or desirable that the Chief Reporter should regularly take a turn in the gallery?—Yes, it is both necessary and desirable that the Chief Reporter should regularly take his turns in the gallery. This was affirmed by a resolution passed by the House in 1871, which declared “that it should be a primary duty of the Chief Reporter to take his share in the task of reporting.” (See Appendix to Journals, House of Representatives, 14th November, 1871, and report in *Hansard* of that date.)

Question 6. Is the present staff overworked; and, if so, would the appointment of an additional reporter relieve the pressure?—Yes, the staff is most decidedly overworked, and the appointment of an additional reporter would relieve the pressure.

Question 7. If the Chief Reporter reverted to the old system of taking his turn in the gallery would that relieve the staff sufficiently without the appointment of an additional reporter?—If the Chief Reporter took his regular turns in the gallery the appointment of an additional reporter would not be necessary.

Question 8. If the Chief Reporter took his turn in the gallery would his work be any heavier than that of other members of the staff?—No, the work of the Chief Reporter would still be lighter than that of the other members of the staff, because, in the first place, the compilation of the *Hansard* index is performed by the other seven members of the staff, and this work takes up a considerable portion of their time on days when the Houses are not sitting—namely, on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays. Very few members of Parliament seem to be aware that this is the case. Generally, members appear to be under the impression that on days when the Houses are not sitting the seven members of the *Hansard* staff have all this time at their disposal to recruit from the fatigues of the past week's work. Again, when the Chief Reporter took his turns in the gallery he invariably placed his name last in the afternoon turns, whilst the other members of the staff took first, second, third, and so on in rotation. In this way the Chief Reporter had less reporting to do in the gallery than any of the other members of the staff, and, as a consequence, very frequently escaped a turn when questions were being put to and answered by Ministers, which is one of the most trying times for the reporters by reason of the buzz of conversation that frequently goes on during this period of the proceedings, rendering it sometimes most difficult for the staff to catch an absolutely full note of what takes place. This accounts in a great measure for the “please supply” which members perceive when their proofs reach them for correction. Besides this, when the House is in Committee, and no new business can be taken after midnight, the seven members of the staff “draw” to determine which two of them shall be left in charge until the House rises, and they may be there till all hours of the morning. As the Chief Reporter is never included in this “draw” he always goes away at midnight. Under all these circumstances it is obvious that, if the Chief Reporter took his regular turns in the gallery, his work would still be lighter than that of the other reporters.

Question 9. If not, would £300 per annum be sufficient payment?—I must respectfully decline to answer this question, as I do not consider it is a matter within my province. It is a question entirely for the consideration of the Committee, of the House, and of the Government.

Question 10. What should be the duties of a Chief Reporter?—The primary duty of the Chief Reporter should be to take his regular turns in the gallery. The reporting of the proceedings of Parliament is the only expert and responsible duty connected with *Hansard*. Were the Chief Reporter permitted to abstain from taking his share in the task of reporting a bad precedent would be established, and no one could blame his successors if they adhered to the same practice, which is now, and would be, most unfair to the other members of the staff, as it throws, and would throw, additional work upon them, which in justice they should not be called upon to perform. It would mean nothing more nor less than the creation of a most comfortable and lucrative sinecure; and, if this were established in connection with *Hansard*, the same system might with equal injustice be brought into operation throughout every department of the public service.

Question 11. Is the system of employing note-takers out of the gallery a good one?—The system of employing amanuenses besides being costly is a most objectionable one. In the first place, there is the time lost in dictating notes by the *Hansard* reporter when he leaves the gallery to the note-taker in the *Hansard* room. Then there is a corresponding amount of time lost by the amanuensis in writing to the dictation of the *Hansard* reporter. This loss of time on the part of both in this second-hand process of filtration must take place before the work of transcription for the printer begins. Then, again, the *Hansard* work has to be performed, as a rule, under such high pressure, and at such a break-neck pace, that the *Hansard* reporter has no time at his disposal to read over the transcription performed by his amanuensis, and that “copy,” with any mistakes it may contain—and occasionally the most glaring inaccuracies have been detected by the merest chance—has to go direct to the Government Printing Office. As a member of the staff, I would much prefer to do my own work and take the full responsibility for it; but that is now impossible, owing to the Chief Reporter not taking his turns in the gallery, and a sufficient interval not elapsing between one turn and the next. In fact, it is a case of from the type-writing machine to the gallery, and from the gallery back again to the type-writing machine day and night, and members of the staff, in the transcription of their notes, have not time to do justice either to themselves or to the members of the House whose speeches they have reported. As the hours of the night advance, the members of the staff become “fagged,” and in the early hours of the morning they will have to go

into the gallery to report, perhaps, a speech delivered by the Colonial Treasurer at a phenomenal rate of speed, averaging 211: $\frac{3}{8}$ words per minute. Those who know anything about parliamentary reporting can realise what a physical and mental strain work of this nature involves. As regards the question of employing outside assistance, the system is a decidedly bad one for *Hansard* work, and should only be resorted to upon occasions of great pressure, when both Houses are debating, and particularly towards the close of a session. One reporter taking his turns in the gallery is of greater assistance to the staff than three or four irresponsible amanuenses.

Question 12. Is Mr. Barron a satisfactory Chief, so far as you are concerned?—I respectfully submit that this is a most unfair question to put to members of the staff. It is making the matter a personal instead of what it should be—a purely public one. Its tendency, too, is to divert the subject into a channel altogether foreign to the real issue involved in this inquiry. Is it not quite obvious that if any member of the staff were outspoken enough to declare that Mr. Barron was not a satisfactory Chief that member would, as a natural consequence, incur that gentleman's displeasure? However, so far as I am concerned, I have no hesitation in stating that I cannot regard as satisfactory a Chief Reporter who will withdraw from his share of the work and place it upon the other members of the staff; who will, in 1892, when the work was less in degree, press upon the Government the necessity of appointing an additional reporter; who will, when the Government have given that assistance, monopolize it all to himself by withdrawing from the gallery; who will, in 1895, when the work has become uncontestedly heavier than it was in 1892, make answer to our representations that he sees no necessity for the appointment of an additional reporter, in direct contradiction with his representations to the Government three years previously; and who will practically tell the men who are doing the work of reporting the proceedings of Parliament that they are not the best judges of the duration of "turns" which will be a relief to them, and will at the same time insure greater accuracy in the reporting of honourable members' speeches; whilst he himself has had positively no reportorial experience of the time-limit system and the increased arduousness of the task which it imposes, to say nothing of the additional work imposed upon them by his own abstention from taking notes in the gallery.

Question 13. How should future appointments to *Hansard* be made?—As a rule, any future vacancies in the *Hansard* staff should be filled up by the selection of the best available talent from the newspaper Press of the colony. Newspaper experience is a great essential to the production of a first-class parliamentary reporter. In a word, the literary faculty must be a necessary qualification. While giving my evidence last Monday, a member of the Committee made reference to the appointment of Ministers' private secretaries to *Hansard*; and, in saying what I do upon the subject of filling up future vacancies, my observations must not be misconstrued into a condemnation of what was done a year or two ago in selecting two Private Secretaries to fill *Hansard* vacancies, or as a reflection upon the gentlemen who at that time received this promotion. Nothing is more foreign to my mind, because I can confidently affirm that both these gentlemen have acquitted themselves remarkably well since they became members of the *Hansard* staff. I am also conscious of the fact that Mr. Frank Hyde, who is now Private Secretary to the Colonial Treasurer, has had considerable newspaper experience, both in the Old Country and in New Zealand; and I consider him to be in all respects fully competent to have a *Hansard* appointment conferred upon him. For anything I know to the contrary, there may be other Private Secretaries who have also had newspaper experience, and who may be sufficiently expert shorthand writers to fit them as note-takers in the gallery. Therefore it would be unjust to these gentlemen if I were to say that, as a hard-and-fast rule, the staff should be exclusively recruited from the ranks of the newspaper Press of New Zealand; but to anybody of ordinary intelligence it must be evident that men who have had newspaper experience are best adapted for the work of parliamentary reporting.

Question 14. Do you know of anything likely to improve the reporting in regard to the position in which the staff is placed in the House?—I can best answer this question by at once stating that the accommodation for the official reporting of the proceedings of Parliament is of the most primitive description. In fact, the representatives of the Press have better facilities for doing their work at any ordinary Road Board meeting in the colony than the official reporters have for recording the proceedings of the highest tribunal in the land. I would suggest that, with the view of insuring greater accuracy in *Hansard* reporting, the staff should have a place set apart for them immediately in front of the Speaker's chair, so as to command a full view of the House and be in closer proximity to Ministers and the leaders on the other side. This is the plan adopted in the Corps Législatif in Paris, and in the German Reichstag. In the New Zealand House of Representatives there would be no difficulty in providing this improved accommodation; it would only necessitate the higher elevation of Mr. Speaker's chair.

Question 15. Is there any necessity for a Chief Reporter, and, if so, what special qualities are necessary to fit a man for the position?—Of course there is a necessity for a Chief Reporter, just as there is a necessity for a ganger over a body of navvies, a foreman in a carpenter's shop or over any other body of artisans, a chief clerk in the counting-house of a mercantile establishment, or an official head in any department of the State; and, as to qualifications, the Chief Reporter of the *Hansard* staff should be professionally equal to any of the members of the staff under his control.

In conclusion, I have only to say that it is very much to be regretted a shorthand reporter was not present at the meetings of the Committee to take down the evidence given by the members of the staff, so that members of the Committee, of the House, and of the Government, could grasp the whole position, and see clearly for themselves the causes which have engendered a sense of injustice and complaint in regard to the unsatisfactory manner in which the *Hansard* Department is at present conducted.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman and Members of the Reporting Debates Committee.

J. GRATTAN GREY.

ADDENDA.

I have become aware, since the attention of the Committee has been drawn to this matter, that a very sedulous use has been made of the phrase "editorial supervision," for the purpose of leading members to believe that it embraces a sphere of work which is very essential, and which makes it necessary for the Chief Reporter to abstain from taking his turns in the gallery. If there was any such thing as "editorial supervision" imposed upon the Chief Reporter, why did the House in 1871, when the same pretence was advanced, order the Chief Reporter to take his share of the task of reporting as his primary duty? and why has the plea of "editorial supervision" never since been set up until his withdrawal from the only expert and responsible work connected with *Hansard*—namely, taking his turns in the gallery—has been complained of?

As the misrepresentations on this subject are made with the view of obscuring the real issue involved, and of throwing dust in the eyes of members, I feel constrained to characterize this plea of "editorial supervision" as a perfect sham.

As a matter of fact, the only duties discharged by the Chief Reporter, outside his work in the gallery, when he did it, has been to cut out the questions from the day's Order Paper and to write cross-headings to them—a work of about ten minutes—which could be performed equally well by a junior upon the literary staff of any newspaper. Another duty has been, with a pencil coloured blue at one end and red at the other, to tick off the printed division lists supplied either by Mr. Otterson or by Mr. Rutherford. It is absolutely ridiculous to talk of "editorial supervision" in connection with *Hansard*. Hitherto, the copy transcribed by the reporters has passed directly from their hands to the messengers, who convey it to the Government Printing Office, and "editorial supervision" has never been attempted on the staff, nor can it be exercised, except by members themselves and the *Hansard* readers in the Government Printing Office.

It has also been industriously circulated, with what object is too transparent, that I have been the originator of the complaints that have been made in this matter. That statement is absolutely and positively untrue. The sense of injustice and grounds for complaint no doubt suggested themselves simultaneously to the whole of us. Representations on the subject were first made to me by members of the staff, and were repeated over and over again; and, although we were reluctant to take action, it ultimately became evident to us that silence was no longer possible if we hoped for the redress of our grievances. The necessity for action, so far from being prompted by myself, originated with the other members of the staff. Feeling, as they did, that a gross injustice was being inflicted upon us, I concurred to the fullest extent with everything they did and in the representations which, as a body, we decided upon making. Having done that, and having acted in perfect harmony with my colleagues from beginning to end, it is almost needless to say that I am prepared to take my fullest measure of responsibility.

J. GRATTAN GREY.

Mr. J. M. GEDDIS'S ANSWERS.

1. Has the work of the *Hansard* staff, per day, been increased of recent years?—Yes.
2. If so, what are the reasons, and what do you suggest as a remedy?—The chief reasons are:—
 - (a.) That the volume of debating in the Council has been augmented by the addition of twelve new members two years ago, the larger number of whom are very frequent speakers;
 - (b.) That a larger proportion of the members of the House of Representatives take part in debates than was the case formerly;
 - (c.) That a larger number of questions are now introduced for discussion in the course of a session;
 - (d.) That the effect of the time-limit has been to accelerate the average speed of speaking in the House, and consequently, by increasing the quantity of notes, to extend the work of transcription. The most effectual remedy would be to bring the staff up to the numerical strength contemplated by the Government when an eighth reporter was appointed at the beginning of the session of 1893.
3. What was the average time worked after the House rose and before it met, prior to 1893 and afterwards?—I cannot say from memory, and there is no record to appeal to. I only know that the work has gradually increased in severity, and that considerable relief was experienced during that period of the session of 1893 when the entire staff of eight reporters was engaged in the work of reporting.
4. If there is any decrease in the hours, has that been due to the different manner in which Mr. Barron has carried out his duties?—No. If Mr. Barron carried out his duties as he did prior to 1893—that is to say, by taking his turn in the gallery—each other reporter on the staff would have a quarter of an hour longer for transcribing each turn of note-taking, and consequently would be able to do his work with more deliberation and care, instead of being obliged to write out with such extreme haste as to be unable to give proper attention to doubtful passages, where the speaker's meaning is either involved or obscure, or in which part of a sentence has been imperfectly heard in consequence of the under-current of noise which is very frequently going on in the House or the galleries. Besides, the constant pressure of too-limited time for transcription, while obliging the reporter to race at a gallop through his work, also prevents him in very many cases from reading over his turn after he has transcribed it, thus considerably increasing the liability to slips and errors.
5. Is it necessary or desirable that the Chief Reporter should regularly take a turn in the gallery?—Unquestionably; both necessary and desirable. I can conceive of no reason why it should be either unnecessary or undesirable. Eliminate the work of note-taking and the rest is purely routine.

6. Is the present staff overworked, and, if so, would the appointment of an additional gallery reporter relieve the pressure?—To both these questions my answer is Yes.

7. If the Chief Reporter reverted to the old system of taking his turn in the gallery, would that relieve the staff sufficiently without the appointment of an additional reporter?—Yes.

8. If the Chief Reporter took his turn in the gallery, would his work be any heavier than that of other members of the staff?—No; on the contrary, it would be lighter, as it was previously when he took his share of the reporting. Of course, I do not pretend to speak as to the conditions which may have obtained prior to 1888, when I joined the staff. Even when the Chief Reporter was in the habit of taking his turn in the gallery his work was lighter than that of other members of the staff in the following respects:—

- (a.) That in the daily rota of turns in the House of Representatives his turn was invariably the last, while the turns of the others were constantly changing. Thus, the reporter who went first into the gallery one day was placed for the turn immediately preceding Mr. Barron's the next day, and the man who had taken the second turn the previous day went in first the following day. Mr. Barron's turn was always last, and in this way he frequently escaped a turn of the questions and answers, which are always difficult to take by reason of the fact that the speakers do not as a rule raise their voices as they do in debate; and also in consequence of the noise that prevails in the House at this stage of the daily business.
- (b.) I have never known Mr. Barron to take a turn in the Legislative Council, where the turns (half an hour) are just double the duration of those in the House. The work of reporting the Council proceedings falls upon six members of the staff, two of them, in regular rotation, being told off each day to do it. Until these reporters have written up their turns, and the Council has risen for the day, only five reporters are available for service in the House.
- (c.) The Chief Reporter takes no share in the compilation of the *Hansard* index. To this work the other members of the staff address themselves during those days of the week when there is no reporting to be done, that is to say in the interval from Saturday until Tuesday.
- (d.) It is the custom when the House is in Committee on a Bill to make a "draw" at midnight, to determine which two reporters shall be left to carry on the reporting for the rest of the night, so as to enable the others to go home. The Chief Reporter does not take part in the draw, and does not remain after it is made.

9. If not, would £300 per annum be sufficient payment?—This is a matter on which I have no opinion to offer. I have no hesitation, however, in saying that if the Chief Reporter takes his fair share in the work of reporting, which I consider a *sine qua non*, he ought to receive a higher salary than the other reporters; not that his duties would then be one whit more onerous than theirs, but because it is in consonance with a principle recognised and acted upon in all departments, that one officer shall be in authority over the others, and that an ampler remuneration should be provided for him.

10. What should be the duties of a Chief Reporter?—The primary and most essential duty should be to take his fair share in the task of reporting. If he fails to do that, then practically the only service he can render on the staff is to act as amanuensis to the other reporters, which is a very anomalous position for a Chief Reporter to hold; and that work could just as well be performed by any ordinary shorthand clerk who can manipulate the type-writer. It is also the Chief Reporter's duty to exercise general control.

11. Is the system of employing note-takers out of the gallery a good one?—It is a system to be avoided as far as possible. There are periods of stringency when this extra assistance has to be obtained, as when it happens that both Houses are sitting simultaneously at night. But as a general rule it should only be resorted to under the compulsion of stern necessity. It increases the liability of mistakes being made; and, as the reporter has not the time to read over the transcription of the amanuensis, he has not the opportunity of detecting and rectifying any errors; and yet the responsibility for them must fall on his own shoulders. I would prefer to do my own transcription rather than delegate the duty to another while the responsibility remains with myself.

12. Is Mr. Barron a satisfactory Chief so far as you are concerned?—Up till the time when he withdrew entirely from any share in the note-taking he was.

13. How should future appointments to *Hansard* be made?—In case of a vacancy applications should be invited, so that the field of competition may be as wide as possible; and, in selection, preference ought to be given (other things being equal) to candidates who already possess a knowledge of parliamentary work, either through service in the Press Gallery, or through acting as Ministers' Private Secretaries. Not only are the capabilities of such candidates more easily ascertained, but they have had a training which should fit them for *Hansard* work.

14. Do you know of anything likely to improve the reporting in regard to the position in which the staff is placed in the House?—A position near Mr. Speaker would enable the reporter to perform his work in a more satisfactory way than it can be carried out under present conditions. It is desirable that he should be as nearly as possible on the floor of the House, and midway between Government and Opposition benches, so as to hear clearly all that is said. At present the reporters labour under great difficulties.

JAS. M. GEDDIS.

MR. LESLIE'S ANSWERS.

1. Has the work of the *Hansard* staff, per day, increased of recent years?—No; here is the proof: In 1892 the Houses sat on sixty-six days, and produced 2,841 pages of *Hansard*, or an

average of forty-three pages per day. In 1894 Parliament sat on eighty-one days, and produced 3,150 pages, or an average of thirty-nine pages per day.

2. If so, what are the reasons, and what do you suggest as a remedy?—In view of answer to No. 1, answer unnecessary.

3. What was the average time worked after the House rose, and before it met, prior to 1893 and afterwards?—I cannot state the average time, except on Friday nights, when the staff has always gone home as soon as the House rose. Prior to 1893 they remained transcribing from three-quarters of an hour to an hour and a half after the House rose, and frequently met again at 11 in the following forenoon to continue transcribing. Of late—that is to say for the last two years—the staff has never remained transcribing after the House rose at night, and has never met again for transcription before 2 o'clock the next day, or on very rare occasions at a quarter to 2 o'clock.

4. If there is any decrease in the hours, has that been due to the different manner in which Mr. Barron has carried out his duties?—The difference is due to several causes—viz., increased transcription assistance, through Mr. Barron not taking a turn in the gallery; increased efficiency in transcription on the part of individual members of the staff; and new and improved type-writing machines.

5. Is it (1) necessary or (2) desirable that the Chief Reporter should regularly take a turn in the gallery?—(1) Certainly not; (2) only in the case of the appointment to the position of a man inexperienced in and unaccustomed to *Hansard* work.

6. Is the present staff overworked; and, if so, would the appointment of an additional gallery reporter relieve the pressure?—To the first part of the question I answer unhesitatingly, No; the second part of the question therefore requires no reply; but I am of opinion that the relief afforded in times of extra pressure by the engagement of additional transcribers, as at present done, is more satisfactory than would be the appointment of an additional gallery reporter. It appears to me that the importance of rapid transcription makes this quite evident.

7. If the Chief Reporter reverted to his old system of taking his turn in the gallery, would that relieve the staff sufficiently without the appointment of an additional reporter?—The staff require no further relief than that accorded under existing arrangements.

8. If the Chief Reporter took his turn in the gallery, would his work be any heavier than that of other members of the staff?—Unquestionably, very much heavier.

9. If not, would £300 per annum be sufficient payment?—No answer required, in view of reply to No. 8.

10. What should be the duties of a Chief Reporter?—Control and supervision of his reporting staff, arrangement of work, the hundred and one details in connection with the editing of a publication like *Hansard*, supervision of corrections of proofs, &c.*

11. Is the system of employing note-takers out of the gallery a good one?—Yes (see answer to No. 6).

12. Is Mr. Barron a satisfactory Chief so far as you are concerned?—There is no one point of duty in regard to which I could conceive any one filling the position more satisfactorily; his authority is absolute and always unquestioned, his impartiality is unwavering, and his treatment of the staff individually and collectively kind and considerate to the last degree.

13. How should future appointments to *Hansard* be made?—I answer this question under protest, as being entirely outside my province. My opinion is that they should be made only on the recommendation of the Chief Reporter, who must necessarily be the best judge of qualification for this particular expert work.

14. Do you know of anything likely to improve the reporting in regard to the position in which the staff is placed in the House?—The only idea that has occurred to my mind at all feasible is the possibility of a more central gallery—say, immediately over the Speaker's chair—at a lower elevation than the present one.

15. Is there any necessity for a Chief Reporter; and, if so, what special qualifications are necessary to fit a man for the position?—The answer to the first part of this question is obviously in the affirmative (see answer to No. 10). The Chief Reporter must be a man of refined education, large literary and journalistic experience, high character, great judgment, absolute integrity, impartiality, firmness, administrative capacity, and self-command. His existence is as necessary to *Hansard* as that of the Speaker to Parliament; and his relative position to the staff should be similar to that of Mr. Speaker to the members of the House.

WALTER LESLIE.

MR. SPRAGG'S ANSWERS.

1. Has the work of the *Hansard* staff per day increased of recent years?—Undoubtedly; but we have overtaken it much more comfortably than formerly.

2. If so, what are the reasons, and what do you suggest as a remedy?—The reason of the increase in the work is the accelerated utterance of members when addressing Parliament.

3. What was the average time worked after the House rose, and before it met, prior to 1893 and afterwards?—From an hour and a half to two hours before 1893. This year half an hour, with the exception of the few notes those may have who were last on at the Friday sittings, when,

* I have known Mr. Barron to be engaged during the whole forenoon or afternoon of an off-day rendering into a form intelligible to the printer the corrections made by a member in his proof. Important corrections by members in their proofs are submitted for the Chief Reporter's inspection, and in this connection the Chief Reporter requires to be a man of sound judgment, and upright and impartial in this exercise of grave responsibility. Questions of detail regarding form and phraseology are referred by the members of the staff daily to the Chief by dozens. The whole of the "copy" connected with division lists and pairs is prepared for the printer by the Chief. After a night in Committee this alone occupies a whole forenoon.—WALTER LESLIE.

according to an old custom, each one finishes his own turn. On other occasions those who have clear books help those with notes till all notes are transcribed.

4. If there is any decrease in the hours, has that been due to the different manner in which Mr. Barron has carried out his duties?—It may be partly due to increased facility in typing; but even that is largely due to Mr. Barron's obtaining better machines.

5. Is it necessary or desirable that the Chief Reporter should regularly take a turn in the gallery?—No. But, in the event of a new appointment, other conditions would arise which would modify this opinion.

6. Is the present staff overworked, and, if so, would the appointment of an additional gallery reporter relieve the pressure?—The staff is less overworked than formerly. Of course, the more reporters there are appointed the less there will be to do; but, in any case, unless the staff was overmanned, there would come occasions when extra assistance would be necessary.

7. If the Chief Reporter reverted to his old system of taking his turn in the gallery, would that relieve the staff sufficiently without the appointment of an additional reporter?—Judicious management is worth more than an additional reporter. I have absolutely nothing to complain of. The work is necessarily hard. On that understanding I accepted it.

8. If the Chief Reporter took his turn in the gallery, would his work be any heavier than that of other members of the staff?—Certainly. Heavier as to actual work, *plus* responsibility, and work of management and control.

9. If not, would £300 per annum be sufficient payment?—In Victoria the Chief Reporter, who does no actual reporting, gets £800 per annum. £300 per annum for the position would be absurdly inadequate.

10. What should be the duties of a Chief Reporter?—Those now discharged by Mr. Barron. Generally speaking, the control of the staff, the allotment of work, its supervision, the decision of numerous questions that arise in connection with it, oversight of proofs, a means of communication with Mr. Speaker or members, advising as to appointments, dismissals, &c.

11. Is the system of employing note-takers out of the gallery a good one?—It is inevitable, on certain occasions of pressure, unless the work is to be allowed to go into arrear, the staff overworked, or the staff expensively manned—that is, over-manned for ordinary occasions.

12. Is Mr. Barron a satisfactory Chief, so far as you are concerned?—Yes.

13. How should future appointments to *Hansard* be made?—I have some diffidence in answering so important a question; still, as my opinion is asked, I would say they should be made by Mr. Speaker, who alone is capable of representing both sides in Parliament.

14. Do you know of anything likely to improve the reporting, in regard to the position in which the staff is placed in the House?—Have not sufficiently considered the subject to give a reply of any value. If members would speak distinctly, there is no reason why under existing arrangements they should not be reported accurately.

15. Is there any necessity for a Chief Reporter, and, if so, what special qualities are necessary to fit a man for the position?—Such an officer is as necessary as the captain of a ship, or the Speaker of a Parliament. As to the second part of the question, I should say integrity of character, scholarship, experience of reporting work in its highest branches, a judicial mind, and, in fact, just those qualities that have to my certain knowledge been exemplified by Mr. Barron during the last ten years.

S. SPRAGG.

MR. BERRY'S ANSWERS.

1. Has the work of the *Hansard* staff, per day, been increased of recent years?—I do not think the hours are longer, but there has been a marked increase in the rate of speaking.

2. If so, what are the reasons, and what do you suggest as a remedy?—The appointment of an additional reporter.

3. What was the average time worked after the House rose, and before it met, prior to 1893 and afterwards?—It takes about an hour to write up notes after the House rises; but it has been found more convenient to come back at 2 o'clock next day, and, as during the first quarter or half-hour the business is usually formal in the House, that gives us the necessary time to transcribe our notes.

4. If there is any decrease in the hours, has that been due to the different manner in which Mr. Barron has carried out his duties?—No.

5. Is it necessary or desirable that the Chief Reporter should regularly take a turn in the gallery?—It is very desirable; but if another reporter were appointed it would not be necessary. Considering the present Chief Reporter's long services, and the fact that up till last session he has taken his regular turn in the gallery, I think he might now be excused; but I do not think it should be made a precedent for future Chief Reporters.

6. Is the present staff overworked; and, if so, would the appointment of an additional gallery reporter relieve the pressure?—Yes.

7. If the Chief Reporter reverted to the old system of taking his turn in the gallery, would that relieve the staff sufficiently without the appointment of an additional reporter?—Yes.

8. If the Chief Reporter took his turn in the gallery, would his work be any heavier than other members of the staff?—Very little.

9. If not, would £300 per annum be sufficient payment?—No.

10. What should be the duties of a Chief Reporter?—To control the staff, and generally to direct the work of reporting.

11. Is the system of employing note-takers out of the gallery a good one?—Only when absolutely necessary in times of pressure. I estimate that one additional gallery reporter is worth four

or five assistants who do not go in the gallery. The great strain is upon the note-taker in the gallery.

12. Is Mr. Barron a satisfactory Chief, so far as you are concerned?—Yes.

13. How should future appointments to *Hansard* be made?—By the Speaker, on the recommendation of the Chief Reporter.

14. Do you know of anything likely to improve the reporting in regard to the position in which the staff is placed in the House?—If the top of the Speaker's chair were lowered a little, and we were given seats in the present Press Gallery immediately above it, that would be a great improvement.

15. Is there any necessity for a Chief Reporter; and, if so, what special qualities are necessary to fit a man for the position?—There must be a Chief Reporter. He should be a competent reporter; and should possess the power of being able to work with his staff, and yet control them.

18th September, 1895.

WILLIAM BERRY.

MR. RUSSELL'S ANSWERS.

Hansard Office, 17th September, 1895.

1. The work has increased since I joined the staff in 1893.

2. And on account of the increase in the number of members in the Upper House, and the adoption of the time-limit in the House of Representatives. Many of the new members in the present Parliament are also very fast speakers, and more members speak in the debates (this applies to both Houses) than formerly was the case. I suggest that the strength of the staff should be made up to eight gallery reporters, as contemplated in 1893, when the appointment of an additional reporter was made.

3. I was not on the staff prior to 1893. The average time worked by the staff since that year, "before the House meets at 2.30 p.m.," has been from half an hour to an hour.

4. I can only speak of the work of the staff since 1893.

5. It is "desirable" that the Chief Reporter should take a turn in the gallery, in order to keep in touch with the active work of the staff. It would not be altogether "necessary" that he should do so if the staff were made up to eight gallery note-takers, in addition to the Chief Reporter.

6. Yes. When both Houses are sitting at the same time and engaged in a debate, and two reporters are detached from the Lower House to report the Council, the pressure becomes exceptionally heavy.

7. Yes.

8. Yes; he would still have to attend to certain duties that fall to the position of the head of the staff.

9. Decidedly not—if the Chief Reporter takes his turn in the gallery.

10. Generally to supervise the work of the staff.

11. Yes. It is a great relief, during a heavy and protracted debate, for the gallery reporter to be able to dictate a portion of his notes to an amanuensis; it saves time. It is the system employed on the *Hansard* staff of the New South Wales Parliament, where several permanent amanuenses are employed. In my opinion, one additional reporter in the gallery is of more assistance than three note-takers employed as amanuenses.

12. Very.

13. Upon the recommendation of the Chief Reporter.

14. It would be an improvement to place the reporters on the floor of the House in front of the Speaker's chair. At present there is difficulty in catching the words of the speakers on the benches under the *Hansard* Gallery.

15. Yes. He should be a capable shorthand reporter, able to take a turn in the gallery, if required; and, generally, should be so able to direct the work of the staff that things would run as smoothly as possible.

W. H. RUSSELL.

MR. GORE'S ANSWERS.

Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4. As I was only appointed to the staff in 1893 I do not feel myself competent to answer the first four questions.

No. 5. I have always thought that it was too much to ask of any Chief Reporter that he should regularly take a turn in the gallery.

No. 6. The extreme pressure of work on the staff is intermittent, and if it were possible to obtain the services of a competent reporter when occasion required, I think it would be desirable to do so. I am aware, however, that it is difficult to get a competent man to work under such conditions.

No. 7. I have already said I do not think it desirable that the Chief should take a turn regularly. If it were possible for him to do so it would, of course, relieve the pressure on everyone except himself, just in the same way as if I myself took an extra turn or two it would relieve the pressure on the others. There is no doubt an extra reporter would be an advantage; but I presume it is a question of expense.

No. 8. Very much greater.

No. 9. Absolutely inadequate.

No. 10. To maintain the efficiency of the staff, and be responsible for correct reporting. To recommend to the Speaker or the Government reporters for appointment when vacancies occur. To decide what should and what should not be reported. The appointment of assistants when occasion requires. To write the headings of the different subjects discussed in the House. To

receive and answer communications from members and from Government Printer, &c. To supervise the indexing of *Hansard*. To arrange the turns of the different reporters in the gallery, and to arrange for relieving the pressure on those who most require assistance, and to supervise and manage generally. To instruct the staff with regard to Parliamentary procedure.

No. 11. I think it is inevitable, because the pressure of work is intermittent, and competent temporary reporters probably could not be obtained for gallery work.

No. 12. Yes.

No. 13. Either by Mr. Speaker or the Government, on the recommendation of the Chief Reporter.

No. 14. I am unable to say without seeing an experiment made. The Chief would be better able to answer that question.

No. 15. If there were no Chief the utmost confusion would at once prevail. A Chief requires long experience in Parliamentary reporting. Must be a shorthand writer, a gentleman, a man of firmness, cool in emergency, and a good organizer ; also, he should be a man of more than ordinary education, with almost as great a knowledge of Parliamentary procedure as the Clerk of the House. I consider the present Chief possesses all these qualifications.

H. M. GORE.

ADDENDA.

ADDITIONAL PAPERS in connection with the Report of the Reporting Debates and Printing Committee brought up on the 8th October, 1895, laid upon the table by the Hon. the Premier, by leave of the House, on the 11th October, and ordered to be printed, together with the other papers attached to the Report.

MEMORANDUM BY MR. GREY.

HAVING been on the parliamentary and literary staffs of the Melbourne *Argus* and the Melbourne *Age*, and knowing the members of the Victorian *Hansard* staff intimately, I can speak from personal knowledge of the working of the *Hansard* Department in that colony. Ever since its inception to the present date, the Chief Reporter of the Victorian *Hansard* Staff has always taken his regular turns in the gallery. Five or six years ago, when Mr. Hadly, who was then chief of the staff, found himself incapable of taking his turns in the gallery, that gentleman did not endeavour to impose upon the other members of the staff by throwing his share of work upon them, but at once retired from the position; and the Government promoted Mr. G. V. Robinson, then senior reporter, to the vacancy, and another reporter (Mr. Lumsden) was appointed to *Hansard* to keep up its strength, reduced by the retirement of Mr. Hadly from the service. Later on, Mr. Jenkins, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, received the appointment of Clerk of the Legislative Council; and Mr. G. V. Robinson, Chief of *Hansard*, was appointed Clerk of the Assembly in Mr. Jenkins's place. Mr. Loughran, who was next in seniority to Mr. Robinson, was then appointed Chief of the *Hansard* staff, and has continued to hold that position to the present time.

In the Legislatures of Queensland, South Australia, and New South Wales the Chief Reporters of *Hansard* take their share in the task of reporting.

DEAR SIR,—

Hansard Office, 1st August, 1895.

I am requested by the other members of the *Hansard* staff, whose signatures are attached, to forward you the enclosed recommendations, and to express a hope that you will give them favourable consideration.

I remain, &c.,

C. C. N. Barron, Esq., Chief Reporter.

J. GRATTAN GREY.

Hansard Office, 1st August, 1895.

THE undersigned members of the *Hansard* staff respectfully submit the following recommendations for the consideration of the Chief Reporter:—

1. That in view of the heavy debating, there is urgent necessity for engaging an extra note-taker. The effect of the time-limit has admittedly been to considerably accelerate the speed with which speeches are delivered in the House, and consequently to increase the notes. Moreover, the debating in Council has gradually attained to larger proportions.

2. That it would be a relief if the House turns, from 7.30 up till 12.30, were limited to ten minutes, and to five minutes thenceforward; the present understanding as to five minutes turns, while Mr. Ward is speaking in debate, to continue.

J. GRATTAN GREY.

JAS. M. GEDDIS.

S. SPRAGG.

W. H. RUSSELL.

W. BERRY.

H. M. GORE.

SIR,—

Hansard Office, 2nd August, 1895.

In reply to your letter and the memorandum of the *Hansard* staff of the 1st instant, I beg to say that I see no urgent necessity for engaging an extra "note-taker," if by that is meant the addition of a permanent reporter to the staff.

You will be good enough to bear in mind that the staff almost invariably rises with the House, and is able to work off any arrears between 2 and half-past 2 o'clock on the following day; also, that when I consider the work is heavy enough, I procure extra assistance in transcribing.

I see no advantage in altering the after-dinner turns from a quarter of an hour to ten minutes, but I have no objection in making the alteration after the supper adjournment; nor can I agree to a hard and fast rule that, after 12 o'clock, turns are to be limited to five minutes. Circumstances must be considered.

You will also please remember that there is no understanding that, when the Hon. Mr. Ward speaks in debate, five minutes turns are to be taken.

I remain, &c.,

C. C. N. BARRON,

J. G. Grey, Esq.

Chief Reporter.

In the year 1871, Mr. Ebenezer Fox, who was then a member of the *Hansard* staff, drew the attention of the then Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Vogel, to the fact that the Chief Reporter took no share in the work of reporting. Mr. Vogel brought the matter under the notice of the Reporting Debates Committee, who inquired into it and brought up a report; and the following is an extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives, dated the 14th November, 1871. (See also debate in *Hansard* on that date.)

“Resolved, That, with the view of improving the character of *Hansard*, a permanent staff of efficient reporters should be engaged for that service, and that it should be a primary duty of the Chief Reporter to take his share in the task of reporting, and that the Government be authorised during the recess to engage an efficient staff of reporters at salaries not exceeding £300 per annum.”

EXTRACT from JOURNALS of the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES, 16th September, 1876.

MR. SPEAKER communicated to the House the following letter which he had received from the Chief Reporter of the *Hansard* staff:—

“SIR,—

“*Hansard* Office, Saturday Evening, 16th September.

“I beg most respectfully to say that the reason why the present debate is not being reported is that it is physically impossible for my staff to do the work, and I could not get sufficient assistance in Wellington to enable it to be done.

“I have, &c.,

“C. C. N. BARRON,

“Chief Reporter.”

“The Hon. the Speaker.

EXTRACT from JOURNALS of the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES, 18th September, 1876.

MR. SPEAKER communicated to the House the following letter, which he had received from the Chief Reporter of the *Hansard* Reporting staff:—

“SIR,—

“Monday, 18th September, 1876.

I have the honour to state that the debate is now being reported, and will be as long as the Reporting Staff has strength to do the work.

“There are seven reporters on the staff, including myself, to do the work of both Houses; and, as there is an important debate coming on this evening in the Upper House, I shall have to detach three reporters to take it. I shall then be left with four to take the proceedings of the House of Representatives.

“The staff did go on reporting until it could report no more. It would take more than double the number of the reporters at my disposal to report such a debate, and that number I cannot possibly obtain.

“I have, &c.,

“C. C. N. BARRON,

“Chief Reporter.”

“The Hon. the Speaker.

EXTRACTS from APPENDIX to JOURNALS of the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES, A.—3, Vol. I., 1893.

On the 18th August, 1892, Mr. Barron wrote to the Speaker recommending that an additional reporter should be appointed to the *Hansard* staff. Mr. Barron recommended that Mr. A. M. Kay [then and now on Mr. Pirani's paper at Palmerston North] should be appointed. In his letter Mr. Barron says: “I am compelled to make this recommendation, because the work has become so heavy that it is with the greatest difficulty the staff can overtake it.”

Again, on 2nd November, 1892, Mr. Barron writes: “Of course I do not apply lightly for an additional reporter. It does not mean an additional expense of £250 or £300 a year, but about half that, for every session. I have to get additional assistance through the smallness of the staff. I am convinced that before long this appointment will have to be made or the staff will break down.”

COMPARATIVE TABLE to show that the volume of parliamentary reporting has increased during the last two years:—

		1892.	1893.	1894.
Number of pages of <i>Hansard</i>	...	2,841	3,001	3,150

Comparing last year with the present year it will be seen that the volume of reporting is still increasing, as the following figures show:—

1894: 21st June to 9th August	...	...	1,200 pages of <i>Hansard</i> .
1895: 20th June to 9th August	...	...	1,312 “ “
Increase for 1895	...	...	112 “ “

MR. WARD'S SPEECH (Reply to Financial Debate, 19th July, 1895):—

Total number of words	...	...	...	12,698
	60	12698		
		211 $\frac{38}{60}$		
Average per minute	...	...	...	211 $\frac{38}{60}$ words.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,400 copies), £7 12s. 6d.