

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

FRIDAY, 30TH AUGUST, 1901.

Hon. C. H. MILLS examined. (No. 1.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Charles Houghton Mills.
2. You are a member of the Mines Committee?—Yes.
3. Were you present at meetings of the Committee held to inquire into the petition of Mr. H. E. Easton?—Not each time.
4. You were present at some of the sittings of the Committee?—Yes.
5. You are aware that this Committee has been set up to inquire into the manner in which certain evidence given before that Committee reached the *Evening Star*, of Dunedin, and was published in it?—Yes.
6. Did you communicate to any person, for the purpose of publication or otherwise, any evidence that was taken during the time you were present at the meetings of the Committee?—No.
7. Have you seen the published evidence which is the subject of complaint?—No, I have not seen it.
8. Do you know at all by what means the newspaper obtained that evidence?—I have not the slightest idea.
9. So far as you are concerned, you gave no information?—None whatever.
10. Did you at any time have a copy of that evidence for your own perusal or use?—No.
11. Therefore it is not possible that you could have left any such copy about which any person might have had any access to?—I have never seen the evidence at all; I only heard part of it, when I was present once or twice.
12. Then, you can give us no information on the matter?—None whatever.

JACKSON PALMER, M.H.R., examined. (No. 2.)

13. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Jackson Palmer.
14. You are Chairman of the Mines Committee of the House of Representatives?—Yes.
15. You are aware of the circumstances under which this Committee has been set up—the object of our investigation?—Yes.
16. Can you give us any information as to the way in which the evidence given before the Mines Committee which was published in the Dunedin *Evening Star* was obtained by that newspaper?—No; I do not know how it was obtained.
17. Did you yourself communicate the evidence in question to any person for the purpose of publication or otherwise?—No, I did not. But we have spoken to one another about it in the lobbies.
18. You mean the members have spoken to one another?—Yes.
19. Did you have in your possession at any time a typewritten copy of the evidence?—Yes; as Chairman I had half a dozen copies for the use of members of the Committee.
20. Did you leave any one of those copies anywhere where a person might have had access to it?—They were left about the Committee-room. That is one of the things I mentioned in the House—namely, that we have not got a Committee-room to ourselves. We cannot lock up all the books in connection with Mr. Easton's petition.
21. You refer to the Mines Committee-room?—Yes.
22. Committee-room L?—It is marked "Mines Committee-room" on the outside.
23. You have reason to believe that copies of evidence were left lying about in that room?—Yes. We have not got that room all to ourselves. We left some copies in that room.
24. You left them in the room?—Yes.
25. Of course, it is possible that some person might have had access to those copies?—Quite possible; for, as I say, we have not got a Committee-room to ourselves. Other Committees use that room.
26. Is it not your practice, in a matter of this kind, to take the documents away when you finish your sittings?—Where would we take them to? At present we have several cases of books there.
27. You take no pains to ensure that evidence given before your Committee shall be secure from prying eyes? Do you not hand it over into the custody of your clerk?—The clerk looks after the room. I must say that I have every confidence in him and the shorthand-writer.
28. Notwithstanding which, you think it possible that copies of evidence may have been left about?—It is possible; I do not say they have been, but I do not want to say they have not been left about when they might have been there.
29. Can you give us any further information on this subject?—I had a conversation with Mr. Cook before the Committee sat on the Monday morning following the publication of the evidence by the newspaper, and he told me that one of the members of the House had told him that there was an account of evidence given before the Mines Committee in the Friday's issue of one of the Christchurch papers—I think he said the Christchurch *Press*—and the Dunedin *Star*. It struck me as being strange that a member should know on the Monday morning what was published in a southern paper issued on the Friday evening.
30. Which Monday do you refer to?—The Monday following the Dunedin *Star*'s publication of the evidence.
31. I am informed that the evidence which was published in the Dunedin *Star* on Friday, the 23rd August—not Saturday—was that which was taken by the Mines Committee on Thursday,