

101. How—by issuing more Treasury bills?—No.

102. Well, if I am not to issue Treasury bills, what am I to do to find money for the local bodies?—I should be deadly opposed to issuing Treasury bills to lend to any Department.

103. And as I understand you to say you do not recollect any instance in which the Consolidated Fund has been able to get through October and November without the issue of Treasury bills?—Irrespective of that there has been a large balance carried forward at the end of the year for many years past.

104. I am talking about October and November?—I am taking the end of the years. That is equal to showing liabilities at the end of June. That I would describe as a trick.

The Chairman: I must ask you to answer the question put, Sir Joseph, or refuse to answer it.

Witness: I can answer the question in whichever way I like—that is my business. You cannot force me to answer the question in the way you desire.

Mr. Hanan: Surely Sir Joseph had a right to answer the question as he chooses.

Witness: You have no right to suggest to me how I should answer a question. It is a downright piece of impertinence.

Hon. Mr. Allen: I move, That the words be taken down—"A downright piece of impertinence."

The Chairman: I think if you look back in your cooler moments, Sir Joseph, you will realize that you should withdraw the words. Mr. Allen wanted to know what would occur in October and November, and you wanted to state what would be the liability at the end of the year. I drew attention to the fact that it was not a fair way to answer the question, and you said you had a perfect right to refer to any matter you liked.

Witness: I was referring to the position of this country at the end of the financial year. Mr. Allen asked me in regard to the two months, and I said that was equal to showing the liabilities at the end of June. You cannot ascertain the position at that time.

Hon. Mr. Allen: I move, That the words be taken down.

Mr. Hanan: Surely you are going to take with that the previous statement?

Hon. Mr. Allen: Take any words you like.

Witness: I have my rights as a representative of the people, and it is not for me to withdraw. I always obey the Chairman, but the Chairman has no right to tell me how I am to answer a question. (The resolution was then put and carried.)

Witness: Very well, I retire from the Committee. You can do what you like. It must be reported to the House.

Hon. Mr. Allen: I move, That the words be reported to the House.

Witness: I am not going to sit on a Committee that does that sort of thing at the instigation of the Minister. The Chairman did the same sort of thing before to-day. I have acted fairly throughout. (Sir Joseph Ward then left the Committee-room.)

The Chairman: I do not think it becomes a member to leave the Committee-room after making such remarks.

Mr. Myers suggested that the matter should not be discussed further, and the Committee decided to report the matter to the House.

TUESDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 1912.

(Minutes of meeting of 18th October read.)

Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward: That is not a correct record of the minutes.

The Chairman: Which part do you take exception to?

Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward: In that part where the words are used by me and where it does not quote the words used by the Chairman to me, where he asked me to answer straight or refuse to give an answer.

The Chairman: I take it it devolves upon the Committee to say whether the minutes are a true record or not. I do not think it requires any ruling on my part.

Hon. Mr. Allen: Let me look at the minutes.

(The clerk read the minutes again.)

Mr. Myers: I think in justice to Sir Joseph Ward there should be a more complete report, and I trust the Minister will see his way clear to at once agree to that.

Hon. Mr. Allen: What do you want?

Mr. Myers: What Sir Joseph Ward asked for, that the remarks of the Chairman should be included. The object is that there should be a fair and accurate report. I see no reason why the Minister should object to that.

Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward: The words used were made before I made that statement.

Mr. Craigie: The Chairman said to Sir Joseph Ward, "Answer the questions as put or refuse to answer."

Hon. Mr. Allen: If you want the words put in we can get the exact words. We cannot put into the Chairman's mouth words that he did not say.

The Chairman: I wish to say that I said, "I must ask you to answer the question or refuse to answer."

Hon. Mr. Allen: I have no objection to those words going in. I think what the Chairman said was, "Answer the question or refuse to answer."

Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward: I can only say that the Press have reported it as I say, in addition to which I heard the remarks myself, and I am perfectly sure that members of the Committee heard the remark.