

Mr. *Russell* further Examined,

[By Mr. *McDougall*.]

*Ques.* 23. Will you explain how the rule you have just handed in, operated to prevent unnecessary supplies, or in what way it secured the public against extravagant charges?—

*Ans.* When the Heads of the branches brought me a requisition for stationery, &c., I examined it and judged from my knowledge of the business of the Branch, whether the articles were requisite, and that the quantity was necessary, but the requisition had no reference to the prices of the articles.

*Ques.* 24. Do you mean to say that if articles were charged at 3, 4, or 5 times their value, you would not have objected to the account, or that you had no power to object?—

*Ans.* The only means I had of judging of the cost of stationery, &c., were the accounts of the *Queen's Printer*, who formerly supplied all. On Mr. *Foote* sending in his first account I observed that his charges for certain articles were higher than those of the *Queen's Printer*. I drew the attention of the Commissioner to the fact, and suggested that as none of the employés in the Department had the requisite knowledge of the business of stationery, printing, bookbinding, &c., to enable them to judge of the prices which should be allowed, I should be permitted to write the Auditor of Public Accounts, stating the fact, and requesting to learn how the accounts should be audited. I did not form any opinion as to whether I had any power in the matter.

[By Mr. *Jackson*.]

*Ques.* 25. In the copy of the Departmental order of March 5, 1862, it is provided that no books, stationery, &c., should be ordered until the cost of the work or material is procured and approved. By whom was the estimate to be examined and approved?—*Ans.* By the Head or Deputy Head of the Department, who would consult the trade.

On motion of Mr. *Starnes*, seconded by Mr. *Morrison*,

*Ordered*, That a short-hand writer be employed to aid the Committee in its proceedings.

[By Mr. *McDougall*.]

*Ques.* 26. You have stated in answer to a previous question that the Auditor did not reply to your letter. Did you take any other steps to reduce the unusual and improper charges in Mr. *Foote's* account, or were they paid as a matter of course?—*Ans.* The account was sent with the letter to the Auditor of Public Accounts, and I do not remember having seen it since. I proposed to the Commissioner that we should import all the stationery we required, who replied that the Government would consider the proposition.

[By Mr. *Pope*.]

*Ques.* 27. Under the order the 4th March would you be at liberty to order any stationery or printing without first ascertaining what the cost would be?—*Ans.* My Departmental order was intended as a check upon the employés of the Department. I could amend or alter it when I thought necessary.

The Chairman laid before the Committee the following statement in relation to Excise from the Assistant Commissioner of Customs :