
CHARGE AGAINST THE DOORKEEPERS OF
PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

RETURN to an Order of the *House*,
Dated 3rd October, 1888, for—

THE REPORT and Evidence of the Board, consisting of the Honorables the President and the Speaker, when inquiring into the charge made by the Contractor for the Refreshment Rooms against the Doorkeepers employed in the Parliament House.

(*Mr. Jones.*)

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 3rd October, 1888.

No. 88/.

Parliament House, Melbourne,
22nd February, 1888.

SIR,

I am directed by the President and the Speaker to inform you that they have inquired into the charge that was made against the messengers employed in the Parliament House, of having stolen a large quantity of liquor on the occasion of the naming of the Queen's Hall, and to transmit to you their report on the charge in question, together with a copy of the evidence taken by them at the inquiry.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

GEO. H. JENKINS,
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
&c., &c., &c.

REPORT.

With reference to the statement made in the Legislative Assembly last session that the messengers employed in the Parliament House had stolen liquor to the value of £100 on the occasion of the naming of "The Queen's Hall," we, the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, have made a full inquiry into the whole of the circumstances connected therewith, and after carefully considering the evidence, have the honor to report as follows:—

1. That an honorable Member of the Legislative Assembly appeared at the inquiry and gave evidence to the effect that Mr. Gregory had said to him that there was more than £100 worth of liquor stolen by the messengers on the occasion in question.

2. That Mr. Gregory endeavoured to prove, by the evidence of himself and his witnesses, that the messengers had stolen liquor on the occasion of naming "The Queen's Hall," but, with the exception that one of the messengers was charged with removing from the tables laid for the guests *one* bottle of wine, Mr. Gregory absolutely and entirely failed to prove that any liquor whatever had been stolen on the occasion.

3. That the messenger charged with having taken a bottle of wine positively denied having done so, and the housekeeper of the Legislative Assembly, in his evidence, stated that the messenger so charged had been employed under him for eight or nine years, and bore an extremely good character.

4. That from the most careful consideration of the evidence submitted to us, we have no doubt whatever that the accusation made against the messengers of having stolen a large quantity of liquor on the occasion of naming "The Queen's Hall" was not true, and we have to express our extreme regret that Mr. Gregory should have made such a charge against a respectable and trustworthy body of men, such as we fully believe the messengers employed in the Parliament House are.

5. The evidence taken by us in connection with this inquiry is attached hereto.

JAS. MACBAIN, President.

M. H. DAVIES, Speaker.

Parliament House, Melbourne, 21st February, 1888.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

Taken before the Hon. Sir James MacBain, President of the Legislative Council, and the Hon. M. H. Davies, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, at an Inquiry into certain charges made against the Messengers of Parliament.

FRIDAY, 13TH JANUARY, 1888.

The speeches in *Hansard* on the subject of the charges made, having been examined, the following letter from Mr. Gregory to the Hon. the Speaker was read:—"Parliament House, Decr. 16th, 1887. Dear Mr. Speaker. Will you permit me, at the earliest opportunity, to place myself right with regard to a statement made last night by Mr. Young. When asked by Mr. Deakin and yourself whether I had made any statement to Mr. Toohey or any other Member, my mind reverted naturally to the past, and I could not recall ever having spoken on the subject to any but the messengers themselves. This week, however, both Mr. Jones and Mr. Patterson asked me to account for the large amount charged for a 'glass of wine and a piece of cake.' I explained to them that I was not to blame for the largeness of the amount charged. I have since asked Mr. Jones if, in my excited state, I had said anything about 'stolen grog,' and he said, No. In this very sad matter my mouth is closed by my peculiar position, but I am quite sure I can safely depend on justice being done me, and that, as the accusation has been publicly made, my justification, if satisfactorily proved, may likewise be publicly established. Mr. Perkins naturally, from an *esprit de corps*, stands to his denial, but in the fact of two highly respectable men who have been in my service, and who for some time have superintended the various banquets, &c., in the Queen's Hall, you may depend on hearing the truth of the matter. I am dear Mr. Speaker, yours respectfully, E. H. GREGORY, The Hon. the Speaker."

Also the following letter from the Hon. J. B. Patterson, M.L.A.:—"35 Collins-street E., 12.1.88. G. H. Jenkins, Esq. Dear Sir.—I shall not be able to attend the inquiry to-morrow, indeed I can throw no light on the matter, beyond the general conversation to the effect that the charges were excessive, and that the wine, if supplied, disappeared in some mysterious manner. I am, yours truly, J. B. PATTERSON."

Mr. Gregory was present during the inquiry.

James Toohey, Esq, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, examined.

1. *By the President.*—I suppose this is a correct report in *Hansard*:—"Mr. Toohey asked if the Premier would take steps to ascertain how the expenditure of £127 3s. in connection with the opening of the Queen's Hall was made up? He had been given to understand that Mr. Gregory repudiated this charge in connection with the entertainment, and that he had informed the Premier that a considerable quantity of spirits had been stolen by officers of the House—he alluded to the messengers." Is that a correct report of what you said?—That is what I said. Mr. Anderson, my colleague, told me he had been told by one of the messengers. It came up because in the Appropriation Bill, Mr. Young questioned the account in connection with the entertainment in the Queen's Hall, and several Members felt strongly in regard to such a sum being expended on the occasion, and Mr. Woods interjected "Oh it is that red herring affair." In the course of conversation with Mr. Anderson a night or two after, Mr. Anderson told me that one of the messengers had told him that Mr. Gregory's explanation to account for the high price of the bill was that £100 worth of grog was stolen by the messengers; and it was on that I spoke in the House.

2. Did Mr. Gregory ever inform you directly of this charge against the messengers of the Houses?—No, he never informed me directly; I had no conversation with him; the information I got was from Mr. Anderson, that one of the messengers had told him that what I have said was Mr. Gregory's explanation after the matter was mentioned in the House.

3. Did he give the name of the messenger?—No, he did not; and it was on the strength of that information I drew the Premier's attention to it, because when it was referred to by Mr. Young it was jeered at. That being so was my reason for bringing it under the notice of the House.

4. Would you like to make any other statement?—No, that is all the statement I have to make about it.

5. *By the Speaker.*—Your statement amounts to this—that Mr. Anderson has made a certain statement to you?—Yes, and on the strength of that statement being made to me, seeing what had transpired, I brought it before the House.

6. So it is Mr. Anderson who could give the information direct?—Yes, but whatever information he has would be got from the messengers.

The honorable Member withdrew.

The Hon. C. E. Jones, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, examined.

7. *By the President.*—I understand that your name has been given as one to whom Mr. Gregory made the charge in regard to the large expenditure—that he informed you that the cause of the large account was that a certain portion of the liquors were stolen by the messengers?—I will give just a statement of the facts as I know them. On the day of the opening of the Queen's Hall Mr. Bent came to me, as we usually meet during the time that Parliament is in session very frequently, to suggest that we would have lunch together. I replied that, inasmuch as we must have the lunch in the Queen's Hall at half-past one, it would be a useless formality to take lunch at half-past twelve—inconvenient, in fact. We concluded that we would go and look at the preparation in the Queen's Hall before determining whether the preliminary lunch would be a part of the programme. When we saw the spread—how very thin it was spread in the Queen's Hall—it was determined that we must have the lunch at any risk as there was not enough there for lunch for two men, for a real lunch; it was the most meagre thing I ever saw in this Parliament House. In consequence, we went upstairs to get lunch, and we there asked Mr. Gregory how it came that there was such a meagre spread in the Queen's Hall. Mr. Gregory said that it was very meagre, but it was not his fault—that it was Mr. Gillies' fault; it was Mr. Gillies' own spread and his own instruction, and that he had pointed out to Mr. Gillies that it was altogether too small, and not equal to the occasion, and that some better preparation ought to be made—that Mr. Gillies had replied to him that it would be only ten minutes any way and a stand-up affair, so that it would be quite enough, and he would not go any more—that accounted for its being such a meagre affair. We, knowing that Mr. Gillies was to pay the piper, could readily understand that it was not to be a sumptuous arrangement on that occasion. Later, when the statement was made that the bill was to be £127 3s. or £127 13s. and the matter was being spoken of in the House, I expressed my conviction, my very strong conviction, that there was not on the tables altogether £20 worth, a conviction that is still stronger now.

8. Does that include everything, wines as well?—Everything on the table; the sandwiches were 84 to the pound—their fragile character will be gathered from that statement—and altogether, including vigorine and sausage rolls, I think that £20 would have paid for everything on the table, and have paid for it magnificently. I stated in the House, in substance, that £20 would pay for everything on the table. Subsequently Mr. Gregory told me, referring to this matter, "You are quite right, Mr. Jones, in saying that there was not £20 worth consumed, but," he said, "there was more than £100 worth of liquor stolen by the men." This is what I know concerning the matter.

9. Did you understand the messengers of the House?—Certainly; there could be no question as to that. Subsequently again, on a third occasion Mr. Gregory said that he could not tell who it was that had stolen the stuff, but that it had been stolen, and that all he had got to say was that the stuff had been stolen; he could not say by whom, but there was no doubt at all about it. But in the second conversation Mr. Gregory referred to the men, that is to our own men in the House, as being the men that had stolen the liquor. Now I did not believe, and do not believe, that there had been any liquor stolen at all, and for that reason, as soon as the matter was notified to me, although at very considerable inconvenience, I have come from Ballarat to be here, and to yield what knowledge I possess towards the completeness of this investigation.

10. *By the Speaker.*—Can you give any dates of these three interviews?—The first was on the day of the opening of the hall.

11. The second?—The second was after the matter had been referred to in the House, after the report of the Commissioners of Audit.

12. This is what you said in the House:—"In the return of unforeseen expenditure there were two lines to account for an expenditure of 1s. 11d., but of such items as the £127 3s., expended on vigorine and sandwiches, the latter having about them a strong suspicion of red herring—an entertainment which £25 would have paid for twice over—nothing had been said to account for anything." Would that be at this time?—Yes, and the second conversation was after that speech had been made, and in reference to the fact that I had said that the entertainment would have been paid for twice over by £20. If not on the 13th December, then near about.

13. Then your third conversation is what date—Mr. Toohey spoke on the 14th and again on the 15th?—The third conversation would be after Mr. Toohey had spoken, and in reference to the fact that the material had been said to have been stolen. I may say that Mr. Gregory told me that he had written to Mr. Gillies stating that the messengers had stolen this amount of liquor.

14. There is a statement here in this letter:—"This week, however, both Mr. Jones and Mr. Patterson asked me to account for the large amount charged for a 'glass of wine and a piece of cake.' I explained to them that I was not to blame for the largeness of the amount charged. I have since asked Mr. Jones if, in my excited state, I had said anything about 'stolen grog,' and he said 'No.'"—Certainly I said nothing of the kind.

15. The statement is not correct?—No; it is exactly the reverse of the fact.

Cross-examined by Mr. Gregory.

16. Did not you come to me behind the bar and put the question to me as to the consumption of wine, and did not I meet you the next day in the vestibule, and did not I say—"Did I, in my excited state, say anything about the wine being stolen?" and you said—"I am unaware of your having said anything of the kind;" and that I had not spoken to Mr. Toohey?—What day do you mean?

17. The day after. I had the conversations after the discussion took place, and I thought I might ascertain, through Mr. Jones, whether I had said anything that he had communicated to Mr. Toohey?—No; I did not say what you say. The question asked by you was whether I had informed Mr. Toohey, to which it was perfectly pertinent to reply that I had not informed Mr. Toohey; and your statement was that you did not want to be held to what you had said about the messengers having stolen the grog—that all you had got to say was that the grog had been stolen, and you could not say by whom. There could be no question at all as to what was intended by you—you were very clear and precise in your statement.

18. *By the President.*—You have nothing further to say?—No; the facts are as I have given them; and I was informed by Mr. Patterson that the statement was made in his presence, when there were not less than a dozen Members that heard the same statement as to men stealing the grog.

The honorable Member withdrew.

19. *Mr. Toohey*.—I forgot to mention that Mr. Anderson made his statement in the presence of Mr. Shiels and Mr. Shackell.

The Parliamentary messengers were called in.

E. H. Gregory, examined.

20. *By the President*.—You have read the whole of the debate on this question?—Yes.

21. And you have heard the evidence given by Mr. Toohey and Mr. Jones?—Yes.

22. Do you agree with the evidence as given by Mr. Jones?—No, not at all. I saw Mr. Jones twice in the matter, one time when he came into the bar to inquire for me, and the second time in the vestibule, when I asked him if I had said anything in an excited tone that led to the explanation given by Mr. Toohey.

23. You spoke as to whether he had told Mr. Toohey?—He said that he had not seen Mr. Toohey; that it was no question of stolen grog at all, and simply that the wine did not come back, and I had to charge for it. That was in answer to a question put to me behind the bar.

24. The first statement you made was that you informed Mr. Jones that the reason of the cost was that the wine was stolen?—Was not returned.

25. He stated "Stolen by the messengers of the House?—I might have said "taken"; I never said "stolen".

26. What did you mean by that?—Appropriated—taken or consumed.

27. Do you mean to put the same construction on those three words?—Precisely, any interpretation may be put on that afterwards.

28. The word "appropriated"—what do you mean by that?—Taking wines lying about, and very often waiters will take wine; you cannot help yourself. They will take a glass of wine; but that is a different thing from taking untouched wine.

29. Do you think the consumption of wine on that occasion was too much?—Wholly excessive. On the morning of this spread it was understood to be a standing affair for a glass of wine and some light refreshment. In the morning Mr. Jenkins sent to say I must not only put wine on the table in the hall, but in the vestibule beyond. That, of course, included a larger amount of tabling, and the quantity of wine to be put on was very large. But that did not matter to me, because, if not consumed, I should not charge for it. After the lunch had begun, Mr. Perkins came to me, and said—"Mr. Gregory, it is really too bad; they are not content with drinking the wine, but they are taking it bodily away. You had better see Mr. Pearse about it, and get him to stop it." I went to Mr. Pearse—he was at the end of the hall—and asked him if he would speak to the messengers.

30. Did he say "the messengers"?—Mr. Perkins called my attention to the fact that the messengers were not only drinking, but taking the wine off the table unwired. I went to Mr. Pearse and told him of it, and he said he could not interfere.

31. Did you see them?—No. Mr. Pearse said he could not interfere, and I then went back to the vestibule where there were no guests, and as it was intimated that those things were placed in the model of the building I went round, thinking it was a solid affair. I said, "It cannot be put here. It is only a bottle or two taken," and I said I would think no more of it. Then after the affair was all over I went upstairs, and when the empties were brought up and I went to count to see what were consumed I said, "These are empties, where is the champagne," and then he said they had taken it and put it in the model.

32. *By the Speaker*.—Which waiter told you that?—Mr. Pullen, the man who has charge of all my banquets.

33. *By the President*.—He informed you that the messengers took the wine away and placed it in the model?—Yes.

34. Did he give any names?—He said one witness could swear to one messenger and another witness could to another, on seeing him.

35. Did he give the name?—He has, but I have not made any inquiry about it.

36. As Mr. Pullen has informed you about this, did he give you any name?—No, he said the messengers placed it in there and I asked how could they have put it there, I saw of no way; and he said they had a lock and key. It is in the vestibule where the tables were, and there were no guests, but the messengers were there.

37. Was the wine there?—Spread all over on the tables, the same as in the hall—right along, because Mr. Jenkins expected a great number of people. The great number of people did not come, and they had had to put the wine ready.

38. *By the Speaker*.—Mr. Pullen told you what?—That another witness that knows the man would swear to him.

39. He said that there was one waiter he did not know, but another he did not know by name that he could recognise?—He said there was one man could be sworn to by knowing his name.

40. Did he not tell you the name?—No.

41. Did you not ask?—I do not know their names. I do not think he knows the names. It is some other man that will prove that.

42. Is it that there is one man that some of them knew, but that he did not know; is that it?—Yes, but it is his evidence.

43. Give it more clearly if you can?—I said, "Where is the champagne," and I expected to see three or four dozen come up unwired, and that would have been taken off the bill; and he said, "There is no champagne left." And I said, "You do not mean to tell me that a handful of people would drink eighty-four bottles of champagne in that short time," and then he told me that the messengers had taken it out and put it in this model. And I said, "It is very awkward for me. I cannot lose this wine, the amount of this money," and I said I did not want to get the messengers into this mess, and I said the best thing I could do was to write to Mr. Gillies that that was the wine used on the occasion, but I thought it was altogether out of character and excessive; and I left it to him to make an inquiry, but I charged no one with stealing.

44. What was the date of the opening of the hall?—

45. *Mr. Jenkins*.—The last week in June.

46. Did you write to the Premier?—I wrote when I sent in the bill in answer to the request of Mr. Thomas, his secretary.

47. What date was that—two months after?—Oh, no!

48. Was it a month after?—I could not venture to say the time.

49. Here is rather a serious charge with the official waiters?—I wrote, certainly within a fortnight, perhaps within a week. I cannot tax my memory. There was no charge against anyone. I said in my own opinion, I could not undertake to charge for that wine; and, I said, it was wholly out of character and excessive, and left it to him to make any inquiry; and if they had come to me I should have told the whole affair.

50. How much wine had you altogether?—Here is the bill I sent in—[*handing in the same*].

[*Mr. Gregory promised to furnish a copy of the Bill but did not do so.*]

51. *By the President.*—How many bottles of wine did you bring down?—Seven dozen; simply to cover the tables.

52. And three dozen of Lafitte?—Yes, and three dozen of sherry in decanters, and I placed those on the tables.

53. Were all those used?—A little of the sherry and Lafitte came back, but none of the champagne whatever.

54. And you cannot tell how many were taken away?—It is impossible to tell, but I should say two or three dozen champagne was as much as could be used in that short time. If 300 were present, as the papers said, they would consume more.

55. Were the messengers of the House under your control on that occasion?—Not at all.

56. What had they to do with the wine?—I do not know. They were dressed, and one of the reasons my waiter gave that he did not interfere was that they had the crown on their coat, and he would have got into a mess if he had.

57. You were responsible, were you not?—Yes; but this place was in the vestibule.

58. Do you generally allow your property to be unprotected?—Certainly not, but I thought it would be safe. I never had spies over wines.

59. How many dozen of champagne ought to have been consumed that day. You saw the people?—I did not serve the wine. The waiters could tell better than I could what was consumed. I merely went round and round.

60. How many dozen, do you think, should have been consumed?—I should have sent five dozen for the first order, and I sent two more for the second order, but I expected to get them back.

61. Were the bottles generally emptied when they were uncorked?—Strict orders were given not to unwire any wine except absolutely wanted. I thought it was Mr. Gillies' own affair, and I was anxious to be as careful as possible.

62. You cannot give an idea of what was consumed?—No, the waiters can.

63. *By the Speaker.*—If everything had been conducted in the way you consider should have been, what would have been the charge for such a spread. You have heard that Mr. Jones said £25?—That is all nonsense.

64. What would have been a fair charge, assuming that none of the wine had been improperly used?—That would depend on the quantity used.

65. Roughly?—The waiters would be a fixed sum, that is £20; 300 lunches at £22 10s.; and if you take three dozen champagne at £6 a dozen, that is £18, it would still cost £80.

66. In your opinion it was about £50 more than it should be?—No, because I only charged £111 3s. 0d.

67. About £30?—Yes, I should think so.

68. Is there not generally a certain amount of unused wine in bottles?—Yes, there was some sherry.

69. *By the President.*—But the champagne?—I gave strict orders that that they should not open the wine in the vestibule.

70. It appears you were not looking after your property?—I was lame at the time.

71. I do not want you to make a statement that would interfere with your position, but others are absolutely charged?—I make no charge.

72. The character of those men is as much to them as your character is to you?—I know it is.

73. It is hearsay, but you say you have a witness to prove that those men have stolen it?—Will it not be better for the decent men, that they should be exonerated. I must carry out what I know?

74. *By the Speaker.*—As to the conversation with Pullen, he, immediately after the entertainment, told you the reason there was no more wine returned was that the messengers had stolen it?—Appropriated it. They do not think those things stolen; that he followed one man into the model, and he could not open it.

75. How was it you did not immediately take some action, having received such a report from Pullen?—Because I did not wish to get the messengers into disgrace, and I did not know of any one man that had done it.

76. Believing the messengers had, what practically came to stealing a large number of bottles of champagne, you thought it was right those messengers should still be allowed to remain, and no action taken?—No, I did not. I thought Mr. Gillies would have taken the matter up. I said as much as I could in the letter to save myself from blame, and did not want to injure the messengers.

77. In that letter you explained these circumstances?—Yes.

78. Did you charge the messengers as you now do?—No. I thought the inquiry would come from him, and then I would state all I knew.

79. You say you did not make the statement of the wines being stolen; you say it was "appropriated"?—I say what my waiters told me. It was taken and placed in this model. I had no idea there was any place. I thought it was a solid block, but I am told there is a lock and key, and you could put any amount of things in.

80. *By the President.*—Could you tell how many dozen of wine you brought down from your store?—Seven dozen.

81. Can you prove it from your books?—I sent them down from upstairs—not the cellar. I can prove that.

82. Of course you did not carry them down yourself. Have you any waiter who was in charge?—Pullen manages all that for me.

83. He looked after the wine. He could prove there were seven dozen of wine put on the tables and in the vestibule?—Yes, I suppose so.

84. How many were in the vestibule?—I cannot say. This man will tell you everything. He laid the tables. I only know what he told me.

85. You do not know the name of any messenger of the House that is implicated in the matter?—I do not. I only know one or two messengers by name. And I never saw anything of the kind, and I thought it was only a bagatelle, and it was only afterwards when I saw this discrepancy, when I counted the empty bottles, that I thought more of it.

86. How many empty bottles came back?—I could not tell.

87. Did you not count them?—No. But none of the champagne came back.

88. How do you know that all were not consumed?—If that is the case, that is another matter.

89. *By the Speaker.*—I understood you to say that you knew the wine was appropriated because a certain number went down and only a certain number came back?—Yes. Seven dozen altogether.

90. Then four dozen bottles disappeared?—None came back.

91. It would appear to you, would it not, that four dozen bottles of wine were taken away and not consumed on the premises?—Whatever the quantity was, it was enough to astonish me and cause me to write that letter.

92. And those bottles were not consumed on the premises?—Else the empty bottles would have come back.

93. *Mr. Jenkins.*—The model is placed on a frame. The frame is about six feet square and is hollow, and I believe it has been used for the purpose of keeping the brooms that Perkins and Toohey use in cleaning the hall. There is a hollow space underneath.

94. *By the Speaker (to the witness).*—Did you mention to Mr. Anderson that the messengers had stolen the wine?—I do not know Mr. Anderson. There are two Mr. Andersons.

95. The old gentleman?—Certainly not.

96. *By the President.*—Is there any other statement you would like to make;—No, I only should like the men employed by me to say what they know.

97. *By Mr. Jones.*—Having been told that there was a person whose name was known to this Mr. Pullen, who had taken some of your wine, you did not ask Mr. Pullen the name of that man?—It was a general thing. He did not name any man. Of course, since then, I understand the person can be named.

98. I understood he said one person he knew by sight?—It is another person that knows them.

99. And you took no trouble to ascertain who it was?—It was only recently the affair came on, and I have not seen or spoken to the men at all.

100. *By the President.*—Only after the opening when you discovered the over consumption of wine—did Pullen, on that occasion, tell you?—No, he only told me a sort of general thing that he had followed them up, and he would have broken the place up himself, but the men had the crown on their coat, and he would get into a mess.

101. He did not know the men?—No, only the last fortnight he said there is one man can swear to one man he knows by name, and another he can swear to if he sees him.

102. *By Mr. Jones.*—Do I understand you to say that you took no action except to write to Mr. Gillies, and you deferred any action because you thought Mr. Gillies would take action?—Yes.

103. Then can you tell the Committee at what date you applied to Mr. Gillies to give information?—A very short time after.

104. You are unable to give any information as to what that date was?—I am sure Mr. Thomas has that letter.

105. *By Messenger Perkins.*—Under what circumstances did this take statement place that I accused the men of stealing the wine?—It was in the hall, and it was in confidence, and I was very sorry to put you in the wrong by mentioning the case to you and Watkins, because I thought I had got you into the wrong box with your fellow messengers.

106. On this occasion you stated you went to Mr. Pearse and told him that the waiters had told you that the men were placing the wine in the red house, and where was the key?—I stated exactly what you told me yourself. I knew it was meant in confidence.

107. I do not say that this may not have been said to him, but I say that to say I said this, is a most confounded lie, Sir James.

108. *By Messenger Watkins.*—You have said that there were eighty-four bottles of champagne put on the tables; are you quite sure there were that?—Seven dozen.

109. *By Housekeeper Pearse.*—How many bottles were there in the vestibule?—I cannot say. The waiters put them on the table. They were put equi-distant all along.

The witness withdrew.

Jeremiah Pullen, examined.

110. *By the President.*—What are you?—Waiter.

111. You have been frequently employed by Mr. Gregory to take charge of his banquets?—I have.

112. Do you consider yourself the head man?—Just so.

113. You remember the occasion of the opening of the Queen's Hall?—I do.

114. You remember the quantity of wine used on that occasion?—I do not know positively the exact quantity.

115. Had you charge of taking down the wine?—Yes, I assisted.

116. Mr. Gregory looked to you as being responsible?—Yes.

117. How many dozen did you take down?—I believe there were eight cases; seven or eight cases were opened, I am not quite sure, I believe that was the amount.

118. How much of that did you take down?—I think there were fourteen waiters, all told, at the opening of the hall.
119. How many dozen of wine did you bring from up stairs and bring into the Queen's Hall and the vestibule?—Probably I made three journeys, and brought down half-a-dozen at a time, and the other waiters followed to do likewise.
120. Then how many were taken for the use of the entertainment?—I really did not take that note to say really how many we did take down, but I know that there was that quantity of cases emptied, and I suppose all were taken down, because they were all emptied.
121. Were they all emptied in your presence?—Not all of it.
122. Did you see them take the wine out of the cases?—Yes.
123. Was all that taken down, or did they keep any in reserve upstairs?—It was all taken down.
124. And you think there was about seven dozen?—Yes.
125. How many were put in the Queen's Hall?—All of it.
126. Was there none in the vestibule?—No.
127. You mean that all the wine was put on the tables in the Queen's Hall, and no wine put on the tables in the vestibule?—Not that I am aware of.
128. You know which the vestibule is?—You mean upstairs?
129. No, the front hall?—Then I misunderstood you, I thought you meant upstairs, that is a misunderstanding between us. I should say as far as my memory would serve me, there was fully a dozen and a half of champagne put on those tables outside in the vestibule. I should judge that by the size of the table, because, in a general way, we put one bottle to each six gentlemen.
130. Do you remember in taking them back whether the bottles returned were counted?—I do not know that I counted them after they were consumed at all.
131. Did you see anybody misappropriating any of that wine?—I did.
132. Do you know who they are?—Yes.
133. Do you know their names?—I do not. At least I know it now, but I was not in possession of the name previously to that.
134. Did you inform Mr. Gregory?—Yes, and Mr. Gregory told me he was informed of it before I told him of it.
135. What quantity of wine did you see taken away this way?—I saw one man take a bottle from the front vestibule, and he took it round and put it under the model of this House.
136. Do you remember who it was?—Yes.
137. You did not know his name?—I know it now. I did not at the time.
138. Who told you?—I since ascertained in the House what his name was.
139. Who told you?—I got it from hearing the men themselves.
140. Nobody told you?—I heard it, but I could not tell distinctly who I got it from.
141. Is that all you saw taken?—All I distinctly saw, but I missed some.
142. But all you saw personally was one bottle taken by one of the messengers of the House, and disposed of that way?—Yes.
143. Can you tell the man's name now?—He is not here now.
144. You do not know his name?—I do, but I cannot think of it now.
145. It is a very serious charge, and you ought to know his name, taking a bottle of wine and disposing of it that way; and you have ascertained his name, and you cannot give it?—There is an honorable Member belonging to the House with the same name—Toohey is the name.
146. He is not here?—No.
147. That is all you saw, personally, taken away?—From the vestibule.
148. From any other place?—I did not personally see it, but I know there was some more taken.
149. You say you saw only one bottle taken?—Yes.
150. Was that the only one you saw taken by any of the messengers of the House?—Yes, that was the only bottle.
151. And at night did you inform Mr. Gregory about this matter?—I informed him at the time, being in the day, and I thought he was going to see about it, and make some inquiries.
152. Is it not the usual practice, at an entertainment like that, for people to take up all the empty bottles; to put them on one side?—I do not know. It is the practice to count them.
153. How do you know what is consumed, unless you have the full bottles and the empty bottles?—The caterer, I should think, would know that.
154. Were you ever told off to count the bottles consumed anywhere?—No.
155. Can you tell how many empty bottles there were?—I should say, guessing, there should have been seven or eight dozen empty bottles.
156. Then that was the quantity taken from upstairs?—Yes.
157. Then they were all empty?—Pretty nearly, there might have been a little ullage left.
158. After the whole affair was over, you think there were seven or eight dozen bottles there?—I should say so.
159. And you think there were seven or eight dozen bottles taken down in the first instance?—Yes.
160. So you could not tell the number of empty bottles and the number of unwired bottles?—Not exactly.
161. You think there was the same number taken down?—About.
162. Had you any conversation with Mr. Gregory, besides about the one bottle?—Yes; I told him I missed other bottles; I missed them from the top table, and it was my pleasure to attend to the top table.
163. Do you mean where the Governor and Lord Brassey were, and the ladies?—Yes, I missed two from there.
164. Might they not be taken by one of the waiters from one place to another, from the centre of the table to the corner?—No, because it was my privilege to put them on the table, and I had the bottles put on the floor down by me, because I would not intercept His Excellency and his lady, and when I turned round to replenish what I really emptied—
165. *By the Speaker.*—Might not the waiters have taken them to supply them?—They were further round the table.

166. Somebody did take them?—Somebody did, but not the waiters.
167. Then who was it?—They were removed from there.
168. Who did it?—I do not know.
169. Did you see any one?—No.
170. Then how can you tell it was not the waiters?—I know it was not.
171. We know that waiters frequently appropriate bottles of wine for their friends in that way?—
I asked the waiter next to me if he did it, and he assured me that he did not.
172. I saw two or three waiters there at the time?—There was no one that I know of.
173. *By the President.*—You are perfectly satisfied that there was not four dozen of the bottles taken down short from upstairs?—Perfectly satisfied.
174. Was there one dozen?—No.
175. They were all there?—Yes.
176. That is two bottles taken by somebody unknown, and one bottle taken by messengers of the House?—
177. *By the Speaker.*—You say all the bottles taken down were afterwards seen by you empty?—Yes, as near as I can tell.
178. So if any large number of bottles were taken away by the messengers, they drunk the wine?—Yes, or they went away somewhere.
179. They would have drunk it on the premises?—That I would not say.
180. You saw the bottles empty afterwards?—Not what they took away; I do not believe that.
181. You say there were seven dozen bottles sent down from upstairs?—Yes.
182. You saw afterwards seven or eight dozen empty bottles?—Yes.
183. If four dozen bottles had been taken away full and not drunk immediately, you could not have seen seven dozen empty bottles?—Just so.
184. So those four dozen, or any other number of empty bottles were taken away, you saw empty afterwards?—Yes, but of course I did not take that particular notice, because I little dreamt of this inquiry.
185. To the best of your knowledge, all the wine taken away by the waiters must have been consumed almost immediately by some one, because you saw those seven or eight dozen empty bottles?—I did not say I saw seven or eight dozen empty bottles.
186. After the banquet, you saw seven or eight dozen bottles, either empty or full?—Yes.
187. So at that time, if the bottles had been taken away, they had been returned, either empty or full?—But I am including both sorts of wine—there was the claret and the champagne.
188. We were talking about the champagne?—I am alluding to the whole of the lot of bottles that I noticed; I am mixing the two.
189. *By the President.*—You did not say that the seven or eight dozen were all champagne?—Yes; they went down, but I did not say there were seven or eight dozen bottles of champagne at the finish.
190. You told me that there were seven or eight cases empty?—Yes.
191. Was that all champagne?—Yes; champagne cases.
192. Then down below, still following that, I never asked you about any other wine, I asked how many bottles of champagne were put on the table and you said they were all put?—Yes.
193. I asked how many of those bottles did you see empty, and you answered the question that there were seven or eight dozen?—I do not stand to a dozen bottles when I see them *in globo*.
194. *By the Speaker.*—I understood you to say that there were seven or eight dozen of champagne bottles empty or full, after the banquet?—I did not mean to say bottles of champagne, I meant bottles altogether.
195. You say you referred to bottles including other wines?—I shall give straightforward answers to every question submitted to me.
196. *By the President.*—About the bottles—was it six or seven dozen bottles you saw after the banquet—were there no more than six or seven dozen?—Yes; I should say more, at a casual glance, I should say there were perhaps, eight or nine dozen, I cannot answer to a dozen—that is mixed bottles.
197. In the first instance, you said seven or eight dozen—did you mean that there were seven or eight dozen as near as possible of champagne bottles?—Yes.
198. After the spread?—I cannot really go as near as that, not to a dozen in the lump sum.
199. Would you say there were six dozen empty bottles of champagne?—No, so far as champagne empties, I should rather say five.
200. Were any of that lot unwired?—No; they were all emptied.
201. How many bottles of champagne were taken down to the hall?—I should say seven or eight dozen.
202. *By the Speaker.*—How many champagne bottles do you think you saw after the banquet was over?—As near as my ideals, I should say five or six dozen.
203. Did you draw any inference as to what had become of the remainder?—Yes, because I saw it.
204. That led to your speaking to Mr. Gregory?—Yes.
205. Together with the one bottle you saw taken?—Yes.
206. *By the President.*—You say the champagne was short about two dozen?—Something like that.
207. And you replied to the Speaker that you knew something about what became of it?—Yes.
208. In the evidence previously, you stated you could only account for one bottle taken by one man and two from the table?—Personally, that is.
209. You say you know what has become of the balance; what has?—You have other witnesses to call.
210. No, we want your own evidence; you do not know anything about it personally than that of three bottles being taken away?—Only from what I have been told.
211. *By Mr. Gregory.*—When you came upstairs, did I not say to you, “Where is the champagne, Pullen?”—Yes.
212. I said, “Those are only empties, where is the champagne?” and you said, “There is none left.”—Yes.
213. And I said, “It is impossible that they drank it in the time”?—Yes, that is correct.

214. *By the President.*—You have had a good deal of experience in attending at these banquets?—I have.

215. Are there no complaints made against waiters for appropriating wine?—I have often heard that.

216. Personally, do not you know that the waiters do a little of that?—I do.

217. Have you any evidence in this case as to where the waiters took any of the wine?—Well, Mr. President, on this particular occasion, as it turns out, and it is very fortunate too, that they have not had the slightest chance of doing anything of the sort. Generally speaking, when they go to a job, they carry a bag with a change of clothes. It happens, in this case, that their bags were all up in the kitchen, at the top of the House. It is a strange coincidence; but so it happens. Now everything was all done, they could not run up with a bottle in their waistcoat pocket without being seen; there was no chance of their doing that on this occasion.

218. But, in your experience, such things have been done by the waiters?—Yes. I will inform you now, at the present time, that, after the last banquet, I saw a man myself, when the things were removed—he must have had it removed—I tell you as a man, I saw one of the waiters at the previous banquet with a bottle of champagne. Then, after everybody had left the room, he had the bottle stowed away somewhere and I detected him, he was about to open it; he had taken the wires off. I need not tell you he was not here on the last occasion.

219. *By Messenger Watkins.*—Are you quite certain there were 84 bottles brought down and put on the tables?—You ask me a question I have already answered. I would not be positive, but I am sure, as far as my knowledge goes, that there were seven or eight cases brought down.

220. Are you quite sure it was a dozen and a-half in the vestibule?—I would not say to a couple of bottles, but, according to the length of the table, I should say about that quantity.

221. You have also stated that there was between five and six dozen empty champagne bottles brought back?—As far as my knowledge extends.

The witness withdrew.

Arthur Henry Gibbons, examined.

222. *By the President.*—What are you?—A waiter.

223. You are frequently employed by Mr. Gregory?—Yes.

224. Were you employed at the entertainment at the opening of the Queen's Hall?—Yes.

225. What position did you occupy?—Partly in charge of it, under Mr. Pullen.

226. Do you remember taking down the wine from upstairs?—I had some brought down to me, and I distributed it on the table; my duty was to wait in the room.

227. Do you remember how many dozen of champagne was brought down?—No I could not say; I might form an estimate; I should say about four dozen. There might be more, but I should say about four dozen.

228. Do you remember how many bottles were placed on the table in the big hall?—The whole quantity was put on the tables.

229. But there is a vestibule beyond the entrance?—That was laid up also.

230. You look upon that as one hall?—Yes.

231. You think there was about four dozen of champagne and other wines in addition?—Yes.

232. Do you remember at the end of the entertainment what became of those bottles?—What were left were taken upstairs.

233. Do you remember estimating the number of them, the champagne bottles?—No.

234. Nor the other wines?—No, just as they were collected we sent them up.

235. How many people were there from the beginning to the end altogether?—One hundred and thirty I suppose, about.

236. Not more than that?—There might be 160, between 130 and 160.

237. So you could not tell the number of champagne bottles that were emptied?—No, I could not.

238. Did you see anybody misappropriating the wine?—I put the wines on the tables out in the Queen's Hall, and in the vestibule, and all the guests were in the Queen's Hall, and I was going out to request the other waiters to come in from the hall, and look after the guests in the other room, and when I went out I did not see any wines on the tables, or very few, but this was twenty minutes after the ceremony had commenced.

239. Did you see the wine put on that table?—Yes.

240. How many?—They were all distributed about—I suppose about a dozen of champagne would be there altogether.

241. And about twenty minutes after the ceremony had commenced you went out there?—Yes.

242. And you say you did not see any wine on the table?—I did not see but very few bottles. A lot of bottles had gone off the table.

243. Did you see anybody misappropriating the wine on that occasion?—I did not. I do not know anybody that took any.

244. Waiters or messengers?—The waiters had no opportunity of taking any; but I did not see any.

245. *By the Speaker.*—That dozen that was put on the table of the vestibule might be transferred to any of the other tables and consumed?—It is possible, but the other waiters, knowing I was in charge, told me the wine had gone off their tables while they had been gone into the other room; that is the only thing that I know; of course hearsay is not what you saw yourself.

246. *By the President.*—Have you had any conversations with anybody on this subject?—Only that we would be most likely called on.

247. You have no charge to make against any messenger of Parliament of having taken any wine?—Not at all; I have no charge against them individually.

248. You never saw them?—No.

The witness withdrew.

Alfred Chessell, examined.

249. *By the President.*—What are you?—A waiter.
250. Have you been frequently employed by Mr. Gregory?—I worked for him twice.
251. Were you engaged at the time of opening the Queen's Hall?—Yes.
252. What duty did you perform?—I was waiting on the outside table, at the entrance.
253. The vestibule?—Yes.
254. Were you employed taking the wine down from upstairs?—I do not think I was.
255. Your occupation was in the hall?—Yes.
256. Do you remember how many bottles of champagne were placed on the table there?—I could not tell you the number; I should think there might be a dozen of champagne on each of those tables outside.
257. How many tables were there?—Two tables—I could not say for certain, but I should think about a dozen.
258. I mean purely champagne?—Yes, I should say a dozen.
259. What became of that wine?—I saw several of the men taking it off the table and putting it into the stand with the cover, and I spoke to Mr. Pullen about it being strange, and asked him whether it was right for to take it.
260. Do you know any of the men?—I do not know one of them; all I know they were dressed in uniform and were working there.
261. Could you recognise any of them?—No.
262. How many did they take?—They took a number from outside, because there were none of the guests there, and we cleared off the rest afterwards.
263. How many did you clear?—Eight or ten bottles of claret, about half-a-dozen of champagne, we took inside into the big hall.
264. You are not certain of the number?—No.
265. You think you cleared off the table in the vestibule six bottles?—Yes, about that.
266. Was there no wine drunk in the vestibule?—Not any, there were no guests there, they all got inside the hall. I went to try and open the cupboard under the model but it was locked.
267. How many bottles do you think were taken?—Half-a-dozen.
268. Did you see more than one man take them?—Yes, three or four.
269. Do you know their names?—No.
270. Would you know them by sight?—No, I should not know them if I saw them.
271. Placed as you were should you not have taken some notice?—I drew Mr. Pullen's attention to it.
272. How do you know the whole of those men were officers of the House?—They had their uniform on.
273. Generally, if you see a man appropriating property, the thing is to identify him?—I had no suspicion of anything of the sort in the House of Parliament.
274. *By the Speaker.*—Each table had a dozen on?—Yes.
275. And you saw some of the messengers take a number of those and put them in the model?—Yes, I told one of them that he would make a very poor thief, because I saw one bottle sticking out from under his coat.
276. Did you remain in the vestibule during the ceremony?—I came into the main hall and cleared the tables.
277. Did you report this case to Mr. Gregory?—I reported it to Mr. Pullen, he being the manager.
278. So you cannot identify anybody?—No, I might have done if I had been working as long as Mr. Pullen, but I have been only twice, and I could not identify the gentleman; there is one of the gentlemen sitting there now—[*looking at the messengers*].
279. Did you see how many bottles were brought down to the place?—I could not tell, I know there was a great number.
280. Did you speak to more than one man about the wine being taken away?—I spoke to one of our men, Gibbons, and another young fellow.
281. Did you see the bottles after they were used—the empty bottles?—No, I did not.
282. Have you anything more to say?—No.
283. *By Messenger Watkins.*—Did you have any champagne there yourself?—Yes, I did; I had a glass of champagne when it was all over.
284. You say you saw some of the messengers put some of the champagne in the red house?—Yes.
285. You could not recognise any of them?—No.
286. Could you if you saw them together?—No, I could not know whether it was you or anyone else.
287. Do you recollect any of the messengers being asked to take some champagne as it stood on the table?—No.
288. You are sure there was about a dozen on each table?—Yes, I should think so.
289. And you took away how many?—Six into the hall.
290. *By the President.*—Do the waiters generally have a glass of wine?—If there is anything left after it is all over.
291. Did anyone else drink with you in the vestibule?—No, I only had a glass of wine in the large hall.
292. The waiters generally do?—Yes, it is the usual practice after it is all over.

The witness withdrew.

James Wilken, examined.

293. *By the President.*—You are a waiter?—Yes.
294. Have you been frequently employed by Mr. Gregory?—I have been, three different times.
295. Do you remember being employed by him at the opening of the Queen's Hall?—Yes.
296. What capacity were you in?—As a waiter.

297. Had you charge of any department?—No.
298. Were you employed to take down any wines from upstairs?—No.
299. You had only to do with serving the guests?—Yes.
300. Which part were you in?—By the model of the Parliament buildings.
301. Not in the main hall?—No.
302. How long did you wait there?—About five minutes, till Mr. Gregory called me to go where the crowd of ladies and gentlemen were.
303. Were you called in in five minutes?—Within five minutes.
304. Were you called in as soon as that?—No, Mr. Gregory told me to go in.
305. Do you remember how many bottles of champagne would have been on those two tables?—On the two tables there would have been about twelve.
306. How many on each?—Six or eight on each, I could not be certain; that is about the number.
307. Did you see anybody drink any wine in that room?—Yes, I saw one of the messengers.
308. Did the waiters open the bottles for them?—Yes.
309. Did you see any of the officers appropriating any of that wine?—Yes; I saw one man put some bottles under the model of the Houses.
310. How many bottles?—About one or two; and I saw him in the act of looking in and stooping to take another bottle.
311. Do you know the man?—He is a tall thin man, dark, and with his hair brushed up straight.
312. Is he present here?—No.
313. Do you remember taking in any wine from the vestibule into the main hall?—No; I turned round to take the bottle when I saw the man taking it.
314. You were taken from the one hall to the other?—Yes.
315. Were you employed to bring in any of the bottles of wine from the vestibule to the big hall?—No; but I turned round to get the bottle to serve someone, as told by Mr. Gregory, and I saw the messenger putting it away.
316. Do you remember seeing the bottles collected after they were emptied?—Yes, they were brought to one end of the room.
317. How many bottles of champagne were there, do you think?—Somewhere about four or five dozen, I should say.
318. Were they empty champagne bottles?—Yes.
319. Were there any unwired?—I could not say.
320. The bottles after being taken off the table?—I could not say.
321. You saw four or five dozen empty bottles of champagne?—About that.

The witness withdrew.

Housekeeper H. Madden, examined.

322. *By the President.*—You are a messenger?—Yes, housekeeper.
323. You remember the occasion of the opening of the Queen's Hall?—Yes.
324. You have heard the evidence?—Yes.
325. Is there anything there you would like to make any remark upon?—I could not say. I was there at the time. I saw some of the waiters removing the champagne from the vestibule in to the body of the hall, but beyond that I know nothing.
326. You could not tell how many bottles of champagne they took?—No, I could not.
327. Did you yourself see anybody drink champagne in the vestibule?—Yes.
328. Some of the public, the guests?—Not in the vestibule.
329. Did you see anybody in the vestibule drink champagne?—Yes, there were a few; there was myself and two or three officers; I think there were four of us on the Council side.
330. Was that after it was over?—No, after it had commenced. The messengers had been working all day, and it was a Government affair, and they had a glass of lemonade or something; some of them do not drink wine, and some had biscuits.
331. You heard the evidence of Chessell?—Yes.
332. Did he drink any wine?—No, I do not recollect seeing him before, or any of the other waiters except Pullen.
333. You know the charge they brought against the messengers; do you know of anything that has come under your observation to provoke them?—Nothing whatever, I saw nothing of the kind.
334. And you repudiate it altogether, as to yourself?—I do; the men under me felt very much hurt that the charge got publicity.
335. You are the head of the Council messengers?—I am housekeeper.
336. You are over them?—Yes.
337. You have no complaint against any of the officers?—No.

The witness withdrew.

Housekeeper G. E. Pearse examined.

338. *By the President.*—You have heard the evidence?—Yes.
339. Is there anything you would like to say?—There is very little. Mr. Gregory came to me on the day of the banquet, and he told me that the waiters had told him that some of the messengers were putting the champagne in the red house. I said to him "Nonsense." I said "I will go at once and see." He said "Will you see to it?" and I said "Yes," and I went straight down to the vestibule and unlocked the red house, and there was no wine in it whatever.
340. What time was that?—Well, it must have been, perhaps, twenty minutes or half-an-hour, I could not exactly say, after the affair had commenced.
341. While the entertainment was still proceeding?—Yes.
342. And you went to the red house?—Yes.
343. You got the key?—Yes.

344. Whom did you get it from?—Messenger Perkins.
345. And you examined, and did not find a bottle of champagne there?—No.
346. At that time, was there any champagne left in the vestibule—when you went to examine?—No, but I saw champagne drunk in the vestibule.
347. By whom?—By guests.
348. They were drinking champagne in the vestibule?—Yes.
349. How many were there?—The guests that I speak of—one was the contractor, and he asked me to take a glass of champagne; I refused, but he said—“You not take a glass of champagne, and this is the naming of the Queen’s Hall!” and I did on that occasion take a glass.
350. Did you see the wine being brought down from upstairs?—I did not; but I saw it after on the tables.
351. After it was taken down?—Yes.
352. How many dozen of champagne would have been on the tables, do you think?—About five dozen; I know how many there were in the vestibule—there were six.
353. On each table?—No, altogether.
354. How do you arrive at that?—Well, we thought the tables were very scanty, and a lot of the bottles that we thought were champagne were only vigorine or something of that kind; they had gold tops to them—that is what drew my attention, and that led to their being counted.
355. But champagne has gold tops as well?—Yes, that was the reason, but these were the small bottles that had the other drink in; you asked me to account for the reason of my knowing.
356. *By the Speaker.*—You say you counted them?—Yes, and there were six quart bottles.
357. After the business was all over, did you see the bottles taken off the counter?—I did not.
358. Can you tell how many were on the tables altogether?—Five dozen.
359. Did you count those?—Yes.
360. Did you count them before any were opened?—Yes.
361. Who has the key of the red house?—It is kept where both Perkins and Toohy can get it; it is merely to lock up the brooms and buckets that they use in the hall.
362. And this time you went and opened that house?—Yes.
- 362A. In the presence of Mr. Gregory?—No, he seemed perfectly satisfied when I said I would see to it.
363. What time was it?—About twenty minutes or half-an-hour after the banquet began.
364. So if anybody had put them there they must have taken them away immediately after?—There was nothing there when I went.
365. How many people were there altogether that day, including everything?—I should say at least 300.
366. One waiter said 130 to 160?—There were a great deal more than that.
367. You are the senior, or housekeeper—senior in the Assembly, and have charge of the hall?—Yes.
368. Did you see any conduct on the part of your officers on that occasion which was reprehensible or objectionable?—No, I did not.
369. I suppose if you saw one of the officers take a bottle and put it away without the knowledge or consent of his superior you would say he was stealing?—I should not allow it.
370. How many of your men are teetotallers?—I should think about seven; about half of them.
371. *The Speaker.*—Have you any reason to suppose there was any improper conduct on the part of the messengers?—Not the slightest. The men were all perfectly sober on that day. (*To Mr. Gregory—*You heard Mr. Pearse’s estimate of the number of bottles on the table?) (*Mr. Gregory—*I do not see how he could possibly know anything about it.)
372. *By Messenger Perkins (to the witness).*—When Mr. Gregory came to you, did he mention my name?—No.
373. I was not mentioned in any shape or form?—Most decidedly not.

The witness withdrew.

Messenger Frank J. Perkins, examined.

374. *By the President.*—Where were you situated on that occasion?—In the vestibule.
375. You have heard of the quantity of wine that was placed on the tables—of champagne; one man says there were six to eight bottles on each table, and another about a dozen; what is your opinion?—Not more than six or eight on the two together, because there was one place in the centre of the table; the tables extended on each side, and there was one bottle in the centre, the middle, and one at each end, and in front of this stood small bottles of vigorine, and then two or three bottles of light wine, which I did not count.
376. Did you see them taking the bottles away from that table?—Yes, I saw them being taken into the hall, because I think Mr. Gregory will recollect my saying, in a joking way, “Are you not going to leave us one,” and it was left, and I certainly drank the christening of the Queen’s Hall. I certainly saw no wines taken away.
377. Did you see any messenger take any bottle of wine from the table and conceal them?—I did not, and I could not have left the vestibule to give the information without being seen, because we were all there together, if I had left to speak to him privately. The men can be questioned, because they must have seen me. All the three doors were propped open, and you could see clearly into the hall.
378. You deny, then, that you ever did inform Mr. Gregory that the messengers were not content with taking the wine, but they were concealing it?—Most emphatically. I never mentioned, in any shape or form, about stealing or appropriating the wine. I cannot understand why I have been picked.
379. *By the Speaker.*—You did not see any improper conduct on the part of messengers taking this wine?—No.
380. Do you remember Mr. Pearse getting the key from you?—Yes. He looked all round, and I said, “Is there anything there?” and he said “No.”
381. Did you see him open the door?—No. I was there while he was close to the model.
382. How long before the commencement of the entertainment were the bottles brought downstairs?—An hour or two.

383. I suppose there were people about all that time?—Yes, but it would be almost impossible to take anything from the tables, because I was there in uniform by Mr. Jenkins' order, and I do not see how any could have been taken, because our uniform is made in such a way that we could not conceal anything.

384. *By the President.*—Did you see the bottles when they were taken off the table?—No.

385. *By Mr. Gregory.*—Did I, on the occasion of the President's banquet, being vexed by the way it was carried on by the messengers, state to you that you were the person that told me?—You said, "There is my information."

386. No, I said you were the very person that told me, and I regretted afterwards I had betrayed your confidence and said, "I shall get him into a mess with his fellows?"—I cannot understand in what shape or form I told you.

387. That it was really too bad, they were taking it as well as drinking it. This was on the night of the President's dinner I spoke about it?—

388. *By the Speaker (to the witness).*—You say that statement is not correct?—No, it is not.

389. You never informed Mr. Gregory?—No. In the evening Mr. Gregory invited us into the dining-room to drink, and we passed a very pleasant convivial hour.

390. What were you drinking?—Mrs. Gregory placed a bottle of sherry on the table, and Mr. Gregory brought a bottle of whiskey, and we had some refreshments at the Ministers' table in the refreshment-room that same night.

The witness withdrew.

Messenger William Watkins, examined.

391. *By the President.*—What position did you occupy that day?—Merely in the Queen's Hall. We were ordered to be dressed to see that no one got in that had no right to go in. I was in both places, backwards and forwards, as I was required.

392. Have you any reason to think that the charge of the wine being stolen or misappropriated or taken is correct?—Not the slightest.

393. Are you a teetotaler?—Not quite.

394. Did you have any wine that day?—Yes, I had some vigorine, in the vestibule.

395. You repudiate the charge of appropriating in any way whatever, for yourself or any of the officers you saw?—Certainly.

396. You know nothing about it?—Nothing.

397. Did you count the wine when it came down?—Yes.

398. What induced you to do it?—Curiosity, seeing the table, the way it was laid out; and we certainly made a mistake in counting, because in going round the first time I counted a lot of the small bottles of vigorine, which I had taken for small bottles of champagne; so we went over and counted again, me and Carr.

399. How many did you count altogether?—Sixty bottles of champagne.

400. How many of vigorine?—I cannot say.

401. Are you sure there was vigorine on the table?—I cannot say vigorine, but it was teetotal drink.

402. It was a curious thing, what induced you to count them?—Six or seven of us counted the bottles on that day.

403. Did that include the Queen's Hall and vestibule?—Yes.

404. You say there were sixty bottles of champagne on the two tables?—Yes.

405. Might there have been bottles in reserve that you did not see?—It is possible after the guests were there, that they ran short, and had to bring some more down, but not before they came.

406. *By Mr. Gregory.*—In what way were you concerned in counting my wine, were you authorized by anybody?—No.

407. Did you ever do it before?—No.

408. It is very singular?—Yes, very singular, we should have counted that time.

409. *By Messenger Perkins.*—Could I have left the vestibule without your seeing me?—Yes, because I was out of the hall often myself.

The witness withdrew.

Messenger John Lennox, examined.

410. *By the President.*—You remember the occasion of the naming of the hall?—Yes.

411. What duty did you perform on that day?—I did not do any except followed about closely after you, and during the time the banquet was on, I stood at your back and Lord and Lady Brassey, and twice Mr. Speaker's messenger was along with me all the time, and we never got away from that post.

412. You were never in the vestibule?—No; except when the Governor was coming in. I followed you up there, and came back.

413. I suppose you did not take any interest in the number of bottles on the table?—I did, being mixed up with those things all my life-time; I took a glance, and I reckoned about 54 bottles of champagne in the main hall.

414. You did not see the other?—No.

415. Do you drink?—Yes; I drink a glass of anything when it comes in my way.

416. Did you drink anything that day?—No; nothing stronger than water.

417. Did anybody ask you?—No. Some of my mates said they had had a glass of wine in the vestibule, but Mr. Gregory seemed to think they had had a glass; and I said I thought it rather ill-natured he did not let me know, because if I had known there was a glass of wine to be there I should certainly have made time to go.

418. *By Mr. Gregory.*—Did I make any objection?—No.

419. *By the Speaker.*—Did you see any wrong-doing on the part of the messengers?—No.

420. No reason to suppose it?—No. As to what Mr. Pullen said about some wine he brought in, there were four bottles brought in, and I saw waiters take this wine away, and it came round.

421. That is relating to the two bottles?—There were four, and they were just as close to me—at my feet. I saw the wine taken away, and the wires were taken off with a corkscrew, and it was served out to the guests.

The witness withdrew.

422. *By the President (to Mr. Gregory)*—Would you like to bring any other evidence?—No. I never said anything about stealing anything, though I spoke in the heat of the moment that night. The wine simply went down, and never came back.

G. H. Jenkins, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, examined.

423. *By the President.*—Do you wish to say anything?—I wish to say on behalf of the men employed in the Parliament House that from personal observation of many of them for nearly 25 years, I consider a more respectable and trustworthy body of men are not to be found in the colony of Victoria, and I think they are utterly incapable of doing what they are charged with, and I make this statement as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly; that is all I wish to say.

424. *Mr. Gregory.*—I can say the same.

425. *The President* stated that he had a letter from Dr. Dobson, who expressed a very warm desire for a close inquiry into the charge; and he said so far as his knowledge of them went—referring to the messengers of the Legislative Council—that he had the highest opinion of their integrity; that they had charge of all he had in his room, and he never saw nor missed a single thing, and he always considered that they were most trustworthy men.

426. *The President.*—Of course it is not necessary that I should corroborate that, because I never had occasion to find fault with any of the officers of the Legislative Council, because if they were guilty of conduct unbecoming to their position, they would not remain there. I have always found them civil and attentive to their duties, and certainly no reflection ever on their moral character, but if a charge like this is brought against them, it must be investigated thoroughly.

427. *Mr. Gregory.*—Mr. Patterson came to me in a joking manner, and I explained, and he said “If that is all the matter, I do not grudge them a glass of wine,” and I said “Neither do I.”

428. *The Speaker.*—I understand you to say that he had never charged the messengers with stealing the wine?—Certainly not.

Inquiry closed.

Further inquiry in regard to the charges made against the Messengers of Parliament before the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY, 1888.

Mr. Jenkins, Clerk of the House, and Mr. Pearse, housekeeper, were present.

Hugh Toohey, examined

429. *By the President.*—You are one of the messengers of the Legislative Assembly?—Yes.

430. You work under Mr. Pearse as the housekeeper?—Yes.

431. Do you remember the occasion of opening the Queen's Hall?—I do.

432. Where were you on that day?—I was on duty at the front door, at the top of the steps.

433. You remember the two tables laid out with refreshments in the vestibule?—I do.

434. One of the witnesses, in his evidence, informed us that you were seen taking a bottle of champagne, and depositing it in the model, called the red house—is there any truth in that?—No; not a word of truth. I never laid my hand on a bottle of wine or champagne, because there were four to six waiters there, and if I had laid my hand on it they would have seen me, and there were other messengers there. I never laid my hand on a bottle on either table in the vestibule.

435. Did you drink any wine at the table with the other messengers?—After the whole thing was over I had one glass of wine, and Mr. Gregory was there himself, and I helped the men to it.

436. He saw you?—Yes. I may say I was only on one or two occasions from the front door taking ladies to honorable Members, and after the affair was over, I took a message for His Excellency the Governor, and had to wait outside for Lord Brassey with the message.

437. There is another waiter who gave evidence, that he saw you take two or three bottles?—Oh, no, Sir, I never laid my hand on even one bottle.

438. Did you see any of the other messengers do it?—No, I saw no man lay his hand on any grog on that occasion, and there were several of our messengers in the hall all the time, and they saw nothing. My colleague, Perkins, was there most of the time.

439. Do you remember how many bottles were on the table?—I could not say. I took no notice.

440. *By the Speaker.*—Is there any other statement you would like to make?—No, I think not. I would not have done such a thing on any account.

441. You positively deny having taken any wine on that occasion?—I do.

The witness withdrew.

G. E. Pearse, examined.

442. *By the President*.—How many years has Toohey been under you?—About eight or nine.

443. What character does he bear for steadiness and honor?—An extremely good character.

444. He has never been guilty of any indiscretion to lead you to suppose he could be guilty of this charge?—Certainly not.

445. He bears a good character?—He bears an excellent character.

446. You have no complaint against him as to the way he discharges his duties?—I am extremely well satisfied with the way in which he discharges his duties.

The witness withdrew.

Inquiry closed.

THE PARLIAMENTARY CATERING INQUIRY.

To the Editor of the *Argus*.

SIR,

Will you permit me to say that on complaining to the Hon. the Speaker, Mr. M. H. Davies, of the various *ex parte* statements that were being made in the press, he assured me that he could in no way account for them.

I do not consider this the time to make any remark, but should at any time the necessity arise, I shall be prepared to place myself right with those who know me.

Feb. 28.

I am, &c.,

E. H. GREGORY.

Parliament Houses, June 22nd, 1888.

DEAR MR. GILLIES,

In the absence of Mr. Deakin will you kindly allow me to request that prior to the evidence already taken being decided upon, I may be permitted to put certain questions to my witnesses, who tell me that they are prepared to give sworn evidence as follows:—

1st. That they saw certain officials—who had a crown on the collar of their coats—in the possession of champagne, notably one who had two bottles sticking out of his pockets behind, and that he drew the man's attention to the fact, telling him that he would make a bad thief.

2nd. That they can identify these men if dressed as they were then.

3rd. That during the short time that they were called away to help the other waiters in clearing the main hall, the whole of the wine that was on the tables had been removed.

These witnesses were strangers to me. I had never spoken to them, and was not aware of the evidence they were prepared to give, so could not ask any questions at the time they were being examined.

I would, with your kind permission, suggest that, in justice to myself, the whole matter should be placed before the Joint Committee of the Refreshment Rooms, to whom I am responsible for the way in which I conduct the catering, and to whom I naturally look for protection from injuries which I may receive, and which I claim that I have received, from some of the messengers of the House, who seem to think that they can do as they like.

I am, dear Mr. Gillies,

Yours respectfully,

The Hon. Duncan Gillies, Premier.

E. H. GREGORY.

SPECIMEN OF EX PARTE STATEMENTS IN THE PRESS.

“The last has not yet been heard of the ‘glass of wine’ which the Premier invited hon. Members to take on the occasion of the naming of the Queen's Hall. This invitation cost the country £112, which had to be paid to the caterer, Mr. Gregory, of Parliament House, for supplying the wine. But it now transpires that actually only five dozen of champagne were consumed, together with a few dozen bottles of lighter wines. The most unpleasant feature, however, remains to be stated—namely, the charge made towards the close of last session that the messengers in Parliament House had on the occasion stolen £100 worth of wine from the hall. This sensational charge has been fully inquired into by the President and Speaker during the recess, and the evidence brought forward altogether failed to support the charge, which, in fact, turns out to be as gross an exaggeration as is conceivable. An attempt was made to prove that one of the messengers had been seen taking a single bottle of wine, but even this was not substantiated. The messenger concerned absolutely denies the accusation, and his denial should be the more readily accepted when it is stated that he is an old servant and bears a very high character. The President and Speaker intend to forward a report upon the whole case to the Chief Secretary in the course of a few days, when it will be for the Government to decide whether—the charge against the messenger having ignominiously failed—a further inquiry is not necessary into the catering at Parliament House.”

REMARKS OF DR. YOUL, THE CORONER, WHICH I THINK PERTINENT TO MY CASE.

“ . . . but that the experience of all the courts of law, and of all persons who were experienced in the taking of evidence, was that in nearly all truthful testimony there were discrepancies. It was only when a number of persons agreed exactly in describing the same event that their evidence might be regarded as being tainted with collusion.”

No. 88/314.

SIR,

Parliament House,
Melbourne 27th September, 1888.

I have the honor, by direction of the Refreshment Rooms Committee, to forward to you herewith an extract from the minutes of their last meeting. I also return, at the same time, the report and papers referred to therein.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

GEO. H. JENKINS,
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary.

Extracted from the Minutes of the Refreshment Rooms Committee.

WEDNESDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 1888.

Committee proceeded to consider report of inquiry *re* charges made by caterer against messengers of Parliament.

Mr. Wheeler moved, That the matter having been inquired into by the Honorable the President and the Honorable the Speaker, and they having taken evidence and brought up a report, this Committee does not feel called upon to enter into the question at all.

Question—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Ordered—That the report and other papers be returned to the Honorable the Chief Secretary.

27th September, 1888.

GEO. H. JENKINS,
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.