

on the point was perfectly clear and distinct—in fact, it was that part of the proposal which struck him most forcibly that Mr. Harrison had acted with the greatest propriety in the circumstances. Counsel next referred to Mr. Harrison's letter to the Speaker, from which he read the following quotation:—"It, however, was intimated to me by Mr. Holt that should any agreement be made between myself and the firm of Brogden and Sons, it was to be a condition that I should, as a Member of the House, use my interests to further the interest of the firm. It was specially intimated that while I need not commit the *Wellington Independent* (of which paper I am the editor) to any direct support of the present Government, nor that I should vote in that direction in the House, I should do what I could to influence the Honorable Mr. Vogel not to bring down this Session a motion which might involve the defeat of the Government, the reason alleged being that it was to Mr. Brogden's interest that Mr. Stafford's Government should remain in power for at least the current year. The whole tenor of the proposal submitted to me was, that if I received any remuneration from Messrs. Brogden and Sons it would involve my services as a Member of the House." That was very much the same language as was used in the interview with the Speaker. There was a discrepancy, however, which was alluded to by the Speaker in his letter of reply to Mr. Harrison, which letter was read to the House. Between these statements, however, and that made on oath by Mr. Harrison, the Committee would find the most extraordinary variances. That fact is the more remarkable when it is kept in view that the last statement was made on oath, and made, too, after the whole thing had been ventilated; made indeed by Mr. Harrison with his own letter to the Speaker before him. Yet, notwithstanding that fact, we find Mr. Harrison's evidence totally at variance with his former account. In his sworn testimony, Mr. Harrison says—"I went down to Messrs. Brogden's office about twenty minutes or half-past 3 o'clock. Mr. Tribe was then there. He left in a few minutes. Mr. Holt and I resumed the conversation we had had in the morning. He told me that what was wanted was, that I should write certain articles for publication, explaining generally and advocating such works as might be contemplated by the firm with a view of having them ventilated. I stated that my opinion was in favour of the original proposal of Messrs. Brogden to construct railways in New Zealand, but that, as editor of the *Independent*, I could not recommend such in that journal until after the Session. I further told him that as the newspaper was looked upon as the organ of the political party I did not feel at liberty to express my own individual opinions upon such matters, because they might be regarded as the opinions of the party. I further stated to him that I believed I could obtain the publication of my articles upon these subjects in most of the newspapers published in the Colony. In regard to my declining to publish these articles in the *Independent*, I stated that I had no option in the matter. I stated that I could not possibly consent to do anything to compromise the party with which I was connected, and which the paper of which I was editor supported; but if I had not been a Member of the House the thing would have been different. Mr. Holt replied, 'It is because you are a Member that your services will be useful.' I then said that under no circumstances would I agree to any arrangement that might fetter my action as a Member of the House; to which Mr. Holt said, '*We have no desire to control your vote in any way*, but we thought you might use your influence to prevent any motion being brought forward by the Opposition this Session which might lead to a change of Government.' His exact words, as near as I can recollect, were, 'You have considerable influence with Mr. Vogel, and you can persuade him not to bring any vote against the Government this year.'" Between what is here stated and the statement in the letter to the Speaker it will be observed, that a very material discrepancy exists. Here is simply a suggestion, whereas in the letter it is made to appear that it was to be a condition of his employment that he was to vote in such a manner as would suit the interests of the Messrs. Brogden and Co. The statement then, as made to the Committee, is entirely different to the one in the letter addressed to the Hon. the Speaker, or to the private communication made to him by Mr. Harrison. We find similar discrepancies in the statement of what took place between Mr. Harrison and Mr. Tribe. About half-past 5 o'clock, or between 5 and 6 o'clock the same afternoon (that is, the afternoon upon which the interview took place), Mr. Harrison states that he had some conversation with Mr. Tribe respecting the character of the proposal which had been made to him. At this interview, Mr. Harrison, after giving his version of the affair, coolly asked Mr. Tribe this very remarkable question. "I said to him, I suppose some proposal of the same sort was made to you?" No explanation is given of the reasons why he was induced to suppose that an improper proposal had been made to Mr. Tribe. All that he did say was, "I suppose something of the sort was suggested to you?" According to Mr. Harrison's evidence, the reply made by Mr. Tribe was, "Yes, something of the same sort." There could be no doubt upon the subject. The question was put by the honorable Member, Mr. Rolleston, as shown by question No. 24; and again in question No. 30 by another honorable Member (Mr. Sheehan). Mr. Rolleston's question was as follows:—"Did Mr. Tribe intimate to you that he held the same view as to the impropriety of the offer as you held yourself?" The answer is, "I simply told him the view which suggested itself to my mind. In doing so I said, 'I suppose something of the kind was said to you?'" He replied, 'Yes; something of the sort.' I afterwards told him the course I intended to adopt, and he said he thought I was very foolish.'" Mr. Sheehan asked, as shown by question No. 30, "You understood Mr. Tribe's answer to mean, that at that interview Mr. Holt had made similar proposals to him?" The reply is "I did." And yet if we turn to Mr. Tribe's evidence, especially that portion of it given in reply to question No. 173, we find the following:—"Had any suggestion or proposition been made to you, Mr. Tribe, that you felt bound to resent as being of an insulting character?" That question was put by the Chairman to Mr. Tribe, and the reply by Mr. Tribe is "None whatever." Again, in No. 182, he is asked by Mr. Rolleston, "Did you intimate to Mr. Harrison that any overtures or proposals of any character had been made to you by Mr. Brogden?" Mr. Tribe's answer to that question is, "I did not intimate that any proposals having a political bearing had been made by Mr. Brogden or any one connected with the firm." Question No. 186 was also cited by counsel as bearing upon that view of the question; after which he went on to say, that had the honorable Member (Mr. Tribe) ever made such an answer as that imputed to him by Mr. Harrison, it is hardly possible to believe that it could have faded so completely from his recollection. Mr. Harrison's story then is, that he said to Mr. Tribe, "Something

Mr. Travers.
16th Oct., 1872.