

could not avoid saying what I did in my evidence. As a witness before the Committee I was bound to state facts, as I believed them to be. Mr. Studholme does not corroborate Sir W. Buller, and I am quite willing to leave the public of New Zealand, who have known us both for many years, to judge between us as to whose word they would prefer. I may add that if Mr. Studholme had corroborated Dr. Buller it would not have changed my mind one jot. His recollection would be of an affair in no way remarkable, and not of the slightest importance in itself, that happened many years ago, whilst mine is an unpleasant recollection of a consideration of the transaction within a year of the original occurrence. My memory preserves it with great clearness. If I had given the advice I should not have cared about it, for, in my mind, it is quite a trivial matter, and, as I informed the Committee, I had made a practice of advising arrangement of interests, not only in this Court but in others; but in this case I had not done so, and I thought, as I informed the Committee, that Dr. Buller's telegram to the Chief Clerk was impertinent. I think so still.

There are many other points in Sir W. Buller's paper to which I should like to allude, but I fear that you will object to the length of this letter. I will only treat one more point. Sir W. Buller says my letter was not marked private. Now, was ever such a paltry subterfuge discovered for doing a thing that he must have known was wrong and was altogether beyond the rules of conduct which govern gentlemen? In the first place, it was not his letter; it was given to him to read. Mr. Studholme, who is an honourable gentleman, no doubt thought no more about it; and Sir W. Buller, observing what a powerful use he might make of my most unguarded language, carefully preserved it for use in discrediting me, in case, when he received the evidence, I should turn out to have said anything before the Committee damaging to him. That he was justified, as he says, in using a private letter for the purpose of clearing himself from a charge of falsehood, is absurd, for there is nothing in it that can be strained to have any reference to that allegation either one way or the other. How does it affect the question whether in 1881 (?) I advised Mr. Studholme to take a certain step? And that is the point, and the only point, as far as the falsehood is concerned. The truth is that he perceived that he had the weapon in his hand, and put it by for use, and used it when the necessity arose, which he appears to have expected, with the sole view and hope of discrediting me generally—suggesting an “odious” combination, quite forgetting, or careless of the knowledge, that, if anything of that sort existed, he was condemning himself as well as me. I say this, in conclusion, that, if the general feeling of honourable men does not condemn this gross breach of faith—this utter ignoring of the simplest law of honour—I suffer little, for the respect of the world would, under such circumstances, not be worth having.

F. D. FENTON.

The Editor.