

1895.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE HON. J. G. WARD AND MR. J. DUTHIE, M.H.R.

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO AN ALLEGED MEETING BETWEEN THE HON. MR. WARD
AND MR. JOHN MURRAY.)

Laid upon the Table of the House by Leave.

No. 1.

The Hon. Mr. J. G. WARD to Mr. J. DUTHIE, M.H.R.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 26th October, 1895.

Concerning the statement twice made by you in the House yesterday, and adhered to after my denial, that, in company with Mr. Watson and Mr. Henry McKenzie, I had met Mr. John Murray, either upon the "Hauroto" or upon the wharf, on the recent occasion of his arrival from Sydney, I have to request that you will be good enough to produce what proof you have for making such a statement, and so clear yourself from the imputation of having promulgated a malicious falsehood concerning me. As you challenged me upon the point in the House, and stated that you had witnesses to prove your assertion, I now demand that you should either prove your words or admit that you have, knowingly, and with attempt to injure me, said that against me which you are unable to prove.

I have communicated with Mr. Watson, Mr. Henry McKenzie, and Mr. Murray, asking them to state succinctly whether I did or did not meet them as you have stated.

I lose no time in conveying this intimation to you, in order that you may adopt an honourable course in either retracting your statement or furnishing me with the evidence upon which you base your statement.

Yours faithfully,

John Duthie, Esq., M.H.R., Wellington.

J. G. WARD.

Enclosures in No. 1.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 26th October, 1895.

A statement was made by Mr. John Duthie twice in the House yesterday that I was on the wharf, along with you and Mr. Henry McKenzie, on the day of the arrival of the "Hauroto" from Sydney, and that, with you, I met Mr. John Murray on board the "Hauroto," or on the wharf. Will you kindly state whether I met you, either accidentally or by arrangement, upon the occasion referred to, or whether I met Mr. Murray with you, either on the "Hauroto," on the wharf, or at any other place before his landing or after his arrival.

Yours faithfully,

J. G. WARD.

William Watson, Esq., President, Bank of New Zealand,
Wellington.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 26th October, 1895.

In reply to your letter of this date, asking me whether I met you on the wharf on the day of the arrival of the "Hauroto" from Sydney, and other questions, I beg to state that before the arrival of the "Hauroto" I saw yourself and Mrs. Ward walking on the opposite side of the wharf; but I did not meet you, nor have any conversation with you. When the "Hauroto" arrived, Mr. Buller and I went on board, and Mr. Murray walked up to the town with me. Neither you nor Mr. Henry McKenzie met Mr. Murray, either on the "Hauroto" or on the wharf; nor at any time during Mr. Murray's stay here did you meet him in my presence.

Yours faithfully,

W. WATSON.

The Hon. J. G. Ward, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

26th October, 1895.

A STATEMENT was made by Mr. John Duthie twice in the House yesterday that I was on the wharf, along with you and Mr. Watson, on the day of the arrival of the "Hauroto" from Sydney, and that with you I met Mr. John Murray on board the "Hauroto," or on the wharf. Will you kindly state whether I met you, either accidentally or by arrangement, upon the occasion referred to; or whether I met Mr. Murray with you, either on the "Hauroto," on the wharf, or at any other place, before his landing or after his arrival.

Henry McKenzie, Esq., General Manager, Colonial Bank,
Dunedin.

J. G. WARD, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

26th October, 1895.

IN reply to your telegram, I was not on the wharf at Wellington when the "Hauroto," with Mr. John Murray, arrived. I had no engagement to meet you there then, nor to meet him with you on any other occasion; nor did I once see that gentleman in company with you since his return from South Africa.

Hon. J. G. Ward, Wellington.

H. McKENZIE, Dunedin.

(Telegram.)

26th October, 1895.

STATEMENT made twice in House yesterday by John Duthie that, accompanied by Watson and Henry McKenzie, I had met you on your arrival from Sydney, recently, either on the "Hauroto" or on the wharf. Will you please say whether, by myself, or with either Watson or McKenzie, or both, I met you either on the "Hauroto" or on the wharf on the occasion of your arrival.

John Murray, care of Bank of New Zealand, Sydney.

J. G. WARD, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

26th October, 1895.

STATEMENT that you met me on "Hauroto," on wharf, or in company with any one, absolutely untrue.

Hon. J. G. Ward, Wellington.

JOHN MURRAY, Sydney.

No. 2.

Mr. J. DUTHIE, M.H.R., to the Hon. Mr. J. G. WARD.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 29th October, 1895.

The language in which your letter of the 26th instant is couched would justify me in returning it to you without reply. Unfortunately, however, some Ministers seem to have acquired a habit of using words which it is only charitable to believe they do not fully see the meaning of, and perhaps I should not therefore expect a letter of another tone or language from you. In replying, I must first correct some of your statements.

I never said—and I corrected you in the House when you charged me with it—that in company with Mr. Watson and Mr. Henry McKenzie you met Mr. John Murray. My statement was to the effect that you met Mr. Murray on his arrival, whether accidentally or otherwise, and that the other gentlemen named also met him. My informants adhere to that statement, although there is a not-unusual reluctance to appear to give evidence. The influence of the Government and of a powerful bank, who would voluntarily care to run counter to? I believe, however, that reluctance can be overcome in a sufficient number of cases to enable me to produce evidence. You cannot, however, be serious in asking that I should submit names and evidence to you. I am afraid that, were I to do so, judging by the remarks in your letter, such evidence would not convince you. An investigation, if such is to be held, should surely be before some one who could act in a judicial manner.

I may state that I should accept the evidence of Messrs. Murray, McKenzie, and Watson as of value; and if they intend to make statements it would only be fair to me that I should have an opportunity of putting questions to them. I would like to ask them whether they did meet Mr. Murray on his arrival, and put some other queries to them.

I may add that every statement I made was from information received by me from persons I deemed, and still deem, reliable and honourable. If I have been misled I would feel extremely sorry, and would at once retract my statement that you had met Mr. Murray. That seems to me the issue between us. If you agree, I think the question as to whether you did meet Mr. Murray, and whether I was told so, might be submitted to the investigation of some impartial person, before whom both of us could produce witnesses. If you agree to this course, I can appoint a friend to see you, or any one you may name, to arrange for such an investigation.

Hon. J. G. Ward.

Yours, &c.,

JOHN DUTHIE.

No. 3.

The Hon. Mr. J. G. WARD to Mr. J. DUTHIE, M.H.R.

SIR,—

Wellington, 29th October, 1895.

I am in receipt of your letter of to-day's date, and I note that you find fault—which is not at all unusual with you—with the manner which I have thought proper to address you, and you endeavour to make political capital as against the Ministry upon what is essentially a matter of personal concern to me, as a result of statements made by you in the House during a debate—a statement denied by me, repeated by you, again denied by me, and yet again repeated by you with a declaration by you that you were prepared to produce witnesses to prove your assertion, and which challenge at the time I accepted, and I stated that I was prepared to meet you outside the House on the matter. Accordingly, I invited you by letter to do as you had offered in the House to do, namely, to produce your proofs and clear yourself from the imputation of having promulgated what I declared in the House at the time to be untrue, and which I now repeat is absolutely untrue. I am quite agreeable to have the question submitted to any tribunal you like to name, before whom witnesses could be produced, the only condition being that it should be open to the Press and public. Apart from the fact that the statement made by you can be disproved, it would be at least interesting to know the class of men who are prepared to spy upon a man's movements, and to report them to a political opponent, to be used for party purposes.

I do not attach the least importance to your now splitting straws upon the point as to whether I was or was not in company with Mr. Watson and Mr. Henry McKenzie, and that with them I met Mr. Murray, or that accidentally or otherwise by myself I met him on his arrival, and that the other gentlemen also met him. This is not what you stated at the time in the House; but I accept the position as now altered, and I am prepared to produce evidence that this is absolutely untrue so far as I am concerned, and it is also untrue at least so far as one of the other two gentlemen named is concerned. I had hoped that, in a matter of this sort, as you had made a positive statement, and in the face of my denial had repeated it, and declared your willingness to prove it, which I at once accepted, that if you were sure of your position you would at once have had it borne out by the written statements of those from whom you received your information. If, as I understand from your letter, they are afraid of the influence of the Government and a powerful bank, I can only stigmatise it as exceedingly contemptible, and a palpable subterfuge. Any one connected with the Government or a powerful bank would be only too ready, I should say, to applaud your informants for honourably stating what they know upon this matter. I had hoped that the evidence you professed to have could have been furnished by letters in accordance with my request, and that the correct position of the matter might be made public. I do not ask you to furnish me with the names of your informants, but I ask you to substantiate a statement which I declare to be untrue, and to produce your evidence, and I again challenge you to produce it.

John Duthie, Esq., M.H.R., Wellington.

Yours faithfully,
J. G. WARD.

No. 4.

Mr. J. DUTHIE, M.H.R., to the Hon. Mr. J. G. WARD.

SIR,—

Wellington, 30th October, 1895.

When replying in courteous terms to your very offensive letter of 16th instant, I sought to treat a gentleman in your position with respect, and reduce your alleged grievance to simple lines. Your reply of yesterday is still offensive, prolix, and inaccurate, and makes me pause and consider the necessity of taking any further steps to satisfy so impossible a correspondent. It will, therefore, be now sufficient answer to say that the shipping reporter of the *Evening Post* states that, after paying his usual visit to the purser of the "Hauroto" on her arrival and learning that Mr. Murray was on board, he saw you in conversation with that gentleman; but, being in some doubt as to Mr. Murray's identity, he inquired from Mr. Fitzpatrick, the chief steward, and was by him confirmed as to Mr. Murray.

Hon. J. G. Ward, Wellington.

I am, &c.,
JOHN DUTHIE.

No. 5.

The Hon. Mr. J. G. WARD to Mr. J. DUTHIE, M.H.R.

SIR,—

Wellington, 30th October, 1895.

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated to-day. In reply I regret that it should be necessary for me to repeat—

1. The statement made by you twice in the House was not true, and it was twice contradicted by me.

2. You challenged my contradiction, and stated that you could produce witnesses to prove the accuracy of your statement.

3. I accepted your challenge at the time, and said that I was prepared to take an oath that your statement was untrue, and I offered to meet you outside if you would produce your witnesses.

4. I offered, in reply to your letter of the 29th instant, to allow you to set up your own tribunal to test the accuracy of your statement, and I now repeat this offer.

5. I note that the only witness you now mention to justify your statement is the shipping reporter of the *Evening Post* (whom you do not name).

6. From this I understand that the evidence of the shipping reporter, upon which you made in the House a statement against the written testimony of three of the gentlemen whom you name—Messrs. Murray, Watson, and Henry McKenzie—as well as of myself, is regarded by you as sufficient foundation for the position you have taken up in maintaining your allegation.

7. As the result of the untruthful statements made upon evidence which you said you possessed, the *Evening Post* has repeated your statement in what I regard as a malicious libel.

8. I am proceeding against the paper in question, and I sincerely hope that you will, as a matter of justification to yourself, produce any witnesses you may have, in order to condemn me.

In conclusion, I can only again say that your statement that I met Mr. Murray either on the wharf or on the "Hauroto," or that I met the "Hauroto" in company with Mr. Watson, or Mr. Henry McKenzie, or by myself, or with any other person, is absolutely contrary to fact.

John Duthie, Esq., M.H.R., Wellington.

Yours truly,
J. G. WARD.

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