

(Cries of "Oh.") Greymouth, £26,720; Dargaville, £21,500; Blenheim, £70,150; Birkenhead, £25,180. Now, the honourable gentleman wanted to know where the money had gone.' Mr. Hine: 'What about Remuera?' Mr. Allen: 'Remuera is not a borough; it is a Road Board.' He added that Remuera had received £87,625—£37,000 three days before the election, and £42,000 one month before the election. Mr. Hine: 'Diabolical!' Now, in the Auckland *Herald* of Wednesday, the 2nd October, 1912, a similar statement in the way of a report, word for word, appears in this paper as given in the *Dominion* of the date I have mentioned. Commenting on that the Editor says, "The statements made in the above report are sufficiently alarming to make the country still more thankful that it has seen the last of Wardism. The report plainly shows that the rich bodies have been helped at the expense of the poor, and that several of them, moreover, were granted assistance at the very moment the prospects of certain Government candidates at last year's polls were looking so black. This applies particularly in the case of Remuera, which received £37,000 three days before the election and £42,000 one month earlier. Remuera, we would point out to our readers, is the richest portion of the Parnell electorate, for which Sir John Findlay was the Government candidate. Further comment is needless." Now, from the reports I have read to you and the comments with reference to your electorate, and the loan obtained by the Remuera Road Board, what conclusion do you draw from that?—There is no other conclusion but the imputation that I or the Government was assisting these local bodies for the purpose of promoting my candidature in Parnell. I want to say that such an imputation is entirely groundless. I want to say that I never discussed with Sir Joseph Ward, the Minister of Finance, or any other Minister, the question of any advances to any part of that electorate. I never asked for a loan; I never suggested it, and never discussed it. In point of fact, I knew nothing of these loans except the one in respect of which I sent that wire. The whole head and front of my offending, if any, is contained in that telegram.

32. Am I right in saying that, having regard to the facts as known to you and what you did, the statement that you used political influence, or that it was an attempt on your part or on the part of the Government to sweeten your borough at election time, is extravagant and wild fiction?—I should say it is political criticism.

33. In other words, Sir John, the statement is utterly untrue?—As far as I am concerned and my knowledge is concerned, the statement is without foundation.

34. *Dr. Neuman.*] Do you think the sending of that telegram speeded matters in Wellington?—I do not think it did.

35. If it was not speeded up, why did you send it?—I sent it to speed it up. My motive was to get this money for these people.

36. Were you the candidate for the district?—I intended to stand for Parnell. I think the 2nd November was the day that I arrived in Auckland. But I put this: how can you disserve your character as a Minister from your character as a candidate? A Minister does not cease to carry out his duties because he is a candidate. No doubt he is liable to the criticism that you are suggesting to apply to me, but what I did in the matter is what you or any other man would do in my position as a Minister of the Crown.

37. *Hon. Mr. Allen.*] I think, Sir John Findlay, you knew the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Cawkwell?—No, I did not know him before.

38. He came to you about this matter?—He came, I think, the day I arrived.

39. Will you tell us what he said to you?—Do you want me to repeat the exact words?

40. Yes, if you can?—I cannot.

41. Did he lead you to understand that if this loan were secured that it would help your candidature?—Not in the least; my candidature was not referred to. As far as I recollect, it was a short interview. It was an explanation of the difficulties they had in their work.

42. He never referred to your candidature or that this would assist you?—There was no reference to it that I have the faintest recollection of.

43. If the loan had been refused, would it have affected any votes in your district?—I do not think it would.

44. Do you remember the men working on the Mount Hobson Reservoir getting a holiday?—I do not remember that.

45. You know nothing about it?—I know nothing about it.

46. Mr. Cawkwell never said anything to you about paying those men?—I do not remember anything about paying those men. Are those men Government employees?

47. I do not know—the men working on the Hobson Reservoir?—I do not remember anything about it.

48. They were Remuera Road Board employees?—I did not know anything about it.

49. And you never gave Mr. Cawkwell to understand that you would do anything towards paying them?—Certainly not. Do you suggest they are Government employees? I do not know how the question arises.

50. I do not suggest it: I am only asking you because some one may suggest you did?—I will be very glad to see the man who would suggest it. I do not understand the question. If it implies impropriety, I think I ought to know it still further.

THURSDAY, 17TH OCTOBER, 1912.

"Return of Post Office Savings-bank Funds invested in Securities granted outside the Treasury or Government Departments to the 31st December, 1911," prepared by the Secretary to the Post Office and forwarded to the Committee. [Return put in—Exhibit K.]