

FRIDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 1912.

ARNOLD WILKINS sworn and examined. (No. 11.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Foreman Inspector of Works for the Remuera Road Board.

2. *Hon. Mr. Allen.*] Do you remember in November and December, 1911, when the election was proceeding?—Yes.

3. And you remember about the loan that was wanted for works in the Remuera district from the State-guaranteed Advances Office?—Yes, superficially.

4. Who was Chairman of the Remuera Road Board at the time?—Mr. Cawkwell.

5. And he was, as far as you know, interested in the loan being procured?—Yes, officially.

6. Did he go up to the works and address the men?—Yes.

7. Can you tell us what he said?—On the 13th December, at about 10 o'clock in the morning, he addressed them briefly, and during the time he was speaking it came on to rain, and most of the men got wet through. At the close of his speech he suggested that as all the men were wet it would be as well to let them go home and to pay them for the day.

8. Did he say anything about the loan in his speech?—The only reference to that was that it was to their interests to support the present Government at that time, as if the then Government went out the money advances would be very much modified.

9. When he was speaking to the men was he speaking in favour of any particular candidate?—He did not mention any name.

10. He mentioned the then Government?—Yes.

11. Was Sir John Findlay standing for election at the time?—Yes.

12. Did you know anything about a deputation having gone to Sir John Findlay?—No, sir, absolutely nothing.

13. Did the Board know anything at all about it?—Not to my knowledge.

14. Was the election over at the time Mr. Cawkwell spoke to the men?—My memory is not quite clear on that, but I think it was a day or two before the second ballot.

15. Was it customary to pay the men when they stopped on account of wet weather?—No, the men are paid for the actual time they work.

16. In this instance were the men paid?—Yes.

17. You had to return the pay-sheet?—Yes.

18. And were you authorized by the Chairman to put those names in and to pay the men?—Yes.

19. Although it was not customary to do so?—No.

20. Did the men understand that the Board was going to pay them?—There was no question about it whatever.

21. Were there any men who were not employed on the works at that time paid for that day, do you know?—There were two men whose names were included on the sheet who were away that day.

22. Were they paid?—Yes.

23. Although they were not there?—Yes.

24. What were they doing?—I could not swear what they were doing, but they were borrowed from me by Mr. Cawkwell.

25. You do not know what for?—No.

26. *Mr. Craigie.*] I did not quite understand what your position is?—I am foreman in charge of works for the Remuera Road Board in the construction of the reservoir.

27. And what was Mr. Cawkwell?—He was Chairman of the Board.

28. Have you any knowledge of what the men were paid for—was it an unusual thing for the men to get paid when it was raining?—It was an unusual thing.

29. Do you know of any reason why they did get paid?—As far as I know it was only an act of grace on the part of the Chairman on account of the men getting wet. He said, "You have lost a lot of time now and the men are wet through; you might let them go home and pay them for the day"; and I said "Very well."

30. Did you think there was anything wrong in that?—At the time I did not.

31. Did you think since there was?—No, I cannot say I did. I took it as an act of grace on his part towards the men.

32. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] In reply to the first question put by Mr. Allen you said you had a knowledge superficially of the loan?—Yes.

33. What did you mean by "superficially"?—Practically that I was not interested in it.

34. Did you know the loan was provisionally approved by the State-guaranteed Advances Board nearly seven months before the election?—No, I did not.

35. Was the loan required for purposes of legitimate expenditure in Remuera?—That I do not know.

36. Do you know what it has been expended upon?—No. I do not know any further than that the works constructed by the Board consist of sewerage, reservoir, and waterworks.

37. As far as you know, are they necessary works in the interests of the people there?—Oh, yes.

38. Did Mr. Cawkwell on the occasion referred to by Mr. Allen make any reference to any action of the Government or Sir John Findlay?—Nothing further than it would be to their interests to support the then Government.

39. That was an expression of opinion of his own?—Yes.

40. *Dr. Newman.*] What else did Mr. Cawkwell say on that occasion?—I am not sure that I can repeat very much of it. It was what you might call an ordinary electioneering political