

pointed this out to the strike leaders, and I said we could not employ any more men until such time as we have funds to do so. They said, "It is most unfortunate, and what can we do?" I said the only hope we had of re-employing the men is to get first an advance on this loan from the Department. At that time we had had no advance from the Government, and the representative of the men said, "Hadn't we better see the Ministers in town?" The only Minister in town was Sir John Findlay, and we waited on him. He apparently did not know that we had negotiated for a loan, but he wanted to know the facts, and we told him that unless we obtained an advance of £10,000—something to go on with—we could not start work. He then wired down to Wellington, but I do not know to whom, and a reply was sent that the matter would receive consideration. After that a reply was got from Mr. Poynton, as follows: "1/11/11, Wilson, Clerk to Road Board, Remuera.—Rate for £40,000 loan only sufficient security for £37,045, and for £44,000 loan only £42,090. Please forward plan for Remuera Road District No. 2 Drainage Area.—ADVANCES." On the assurance that we would get an advance we reinstated some of the men, and on the 20th December, I understand from the Clerk of the Board, we received £10,000, the first payment made to the Remuera Road Board, and that was three days after the second ballot.

32. So that no portion of the money was paid until after the general election was over?—No portion of the money, so far as I am aware.

33. How did you finance the wages of the men from the time of the interview you had with Sir John Findlay and the receipt of portion of the loan on the 20th December?—The only finance was the General Account. Those were the instructions of the Clerk. That was the only fund that we could take it from.

34. When you addressed the men on the occasion referred to, did you recommend them to support the Government candidate?—My recollection was this: to support generally the Government. I must tell you that this State-guaranteed Advances Act was, to my mind, a measure giving the greatest good to the greatest number, and enabled us to prosecute works that we could not undertake in the past, and I was impressed with it. I considered it was an advantage to have the Government still in power in order to get cheap money, as we had other works coming on. In the case of the Waitemata County, we had approval there for £66,000.

35. Were you connected with the Waitemata County Council?—Yes. The county members, with one exception, were hostile to the Government.

36. The approval for the £66,000 for the Waitemata County Council was received, when?—On the 4th September.

37. And do I understand you to say that the members of the Waitemata County Council, with one exception, were all supporters of the Massey Government?—Yes.

38. Was there any difficulty experienced in obtaining that loan?—None whatever. That was done by myself in the same way as in the case of the Remuera application.

39. You put the applications in for both bodies, the Remuera Road Board and the Waitemata County Council?—Yes.

40. And the procedure followed by you in each case was the same?—Precisely the same. No one was more surprised than myself with the ease with which the thing went through. There was no fuss raised, and no refusals except in connection with the Remuera loan, where they knocked off £1,000 for fire plant.

41. Was there any attempt at political influence exercised by the Waitemata County Council?—No, absolutely none.

42. Although all the members of the Waitemata County Council, which Council received a loan, were all supporters of Mr. Massey's Government?—Yes.

43. *Mr. Craigie.*] You said you applied in March or April for this £80,000?—Yes, but I am not sure of the exact date.

44. When did you get the provisional approval from the Superintendent of the Advances Board?—On the 22nd May, 1911, for £84,000.

45. Did you take from that that you were going to get the money for certain from the Department?—Oh, yes, we understood that.

46. Did you begin to let contracts to carry out these works? No. On the 1st August I addressed a meeting of the ratepayers, and this loan was voted for. A poll was taken on Wednesday, the 9th August. Then we had to pass several orders in regard to security, and that took up the time till September. As soon as the loan was granted we made preparations to go on.

47. After your getting all the procedure ready the loan was granted?—The provisional approval we received in May we took as a commitment. The Government have always kept their word, and when the loan was provisionally approved they paid the money.

48. Well, after you had taken the legal steps, did you start operations in letting contracts?—Yes, when we had the loan approved.

49. Before you got the money?—Yes.

50. As far as politics went, whether Sir John Findlay was returned or Mr. Dickson, you did not expect it would make any difference so far as the loan to you was concerned?—Absolutely none whatever.

51. Who was the member for the district at that time?—Mr. Frank Lawry.

52. Did you approach him to use his political influence in any way?—No, it would not have been any use if I did.

53. It did not matter how the election went, it would not have altered the promise you had from the State-guaranteed Advances Department?—No.

54. *Mr. Lee.*] You and Mr. Wilson are not on the best of terms?—No, we are not.

55. You say he has been turned out of several billets?—Well, they have dropped him: put it that way.