

111. Had you the full overdraft?—No, we had not drawn it, although the liability was there.

112. Were you on this deputation that waited on Sir John Findlay?—Yes.

113. Was it an authorized deputation by the Board?—Yes.

114. By resolution of the Board?—Yes. I was going to explain that. It arose this way: we met in one of our members' offices, a Mr. Pilkins, solicitor, with the strike leaders. I reviewed the finances and pointed out the difficulties. I asked how we were going to get the money, and the suggestion was made, "Was the Minister in town?"

115. Was there a resolution to the effect by the Board to ask Sir John Findlay?—Yes, it was resolved to do so.

116. It was not held in the Board-room?—No, the Clerk was not there.

117. Do you say no Ministerial influence was used in regard to this loan?—Yes, I swear emphatically and absolutely.

118. Well, what was the object in going to Sir John Findlay?—To get him to hurry up the Advances Department, who we considered were putting a lot of red-tape obstacles in our way.

119. Then you had to apply to a Cabinet Minister?—Yes, I went to him.

120. Does that not contradict your statement that you did not appeal to a Minister?—I do not see that.

121. You said there was no Ministerial influence, and you did not ask for Ministerial influence?—I was asked, did I use any Ministerial influence to obtain the provisional approval of the loan.

122. No, you were asked if you had any Ministerial influence at your back. Did you ever address the men before politically?—I think I have—yes, in Waitemata.

123. Will you tell us more about this address—what was the object of it—it is an extraordinary thing for a Chairman to do?—The object was to induce these men to vote for the Government.

124. And you considered your address was useful?—I do not know.

125. You meant it to be useful?—Yes, certainly I meant it to be useful.

126. Do you think if there had been no interview with Sir John Findlay that this promise of the money would have come so soon?—Well, with a man like Mr. Poynton, I did not think the money would come a day sooner till he was satisfied that all the legal preliminaries were carried out to the letter, and when he got the wire he started to hang things up till he got a plan.

127. What was the object of the deputation?—The object of the deputation was to get the Minister to write to the Government in regard to the urgency of making an advance to enable the works to go on.

128. It was to hurry up things?—Yes. There was no particular feature imparted into the matter at all to my mind. It was simply a business transaction.

129. Though you went to address the men on behalf of the Government?—That was not at the time. I addressed the men weeks after this. This was probably a month or six weeks before.

130. The interview with Sir John Findlay was not two months before?—I think, about the 4th November, and I addressed the men on the 13th or 14th December.

131. Before the second ballot?—Yes.

132. Do you know the provisions of the Corrupt Practices Act?—No.

133. Never looked at them?—No.

134. At the time of this interview did you know that Sir John Findlay was going to be a candidate?—When the loan was provisionally approved?

135. No; the loan was provisionally approved in May, but when the deputation waited on Sir John Findlay were you aware he was a candidate?—Yes, he was in Auckland for the purpose. It was common knowledge, and it was in the newspapers.

136. Do you think it is the correct method of procedure that the Chairman of a public body should deliberately use his position and influence in favour of one candidate?—I went there as a private elector.

137. Were you at that moment Chairman of the Board?—Yes, I was.

138. And the men knew you were Chairman of the Board?—I do not know. Some of them must have.

139. They knew you were a member of the Board?—I do not know what was in their minds. I did not know the men from crows, and I do not know if they knew me.

140. At the time of the interview you were a member of the Board?—Yes.

141. *Hon. Mr. Allen.*] Do you remember the date of the deputation to Sir John Findlay?—No, I have not gone into the matter. I think it was some time about the beginning of November. It would be the date that Sir John Findlay sent the wire away.

142. And you knew he was a candidate at the time?—Oh, yes.

143. Do you remember the date on which you addressed the men at the reservoir?—I cannot be precise, but I think it was three days before the second ballot. It was either the Monday or Tuesday before the second ballot.

144. And you gave the men a holiday, did you?—Yes. The man said to me, "These poor fellows are wet through; what would you do?" I said, "I would give them a holiday."

145. Could the foreman give them a holiday?—Yes, the foreman often gives the men a holiday on wet days.

146. Has the foreman authority to give the men a holiday on pay?—It has been done by local bodies. The foreman is put in a position to pass pretty well what he likes.

147. Has the foreman at these works at Remuera ever given the men a holiday on full pay?—Not on these particular works that I know of.

148. Is it the custom to give the men a holiday on full pay at Remuera?—Not unless there is a special reason, such as a wet day. We have paid men for holidays.