

252. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] You referred to a letter in the course of your evidence, Mr. Cawkwell, that the Clerk of the Remuera Road Board had written in October. Would you kindly read that letter?—Yes. It states, "I would deem it a favour if you would kindly inform me at the earliest opportunity whether papers in connection with application for loan of £84,000 are in order, and if debentures have been issued for same, as the Board are anxiously awaiting a reply, being desirous of expediting the various works."

253. So that prior to the deputation interviewing Sir John Findlay, who was then a Minister of the Crown, asking him to expedite the loan or to apply for £10,000, the Board had made direct representations to the State Advances Department?—Yes.

254. Did you receive a reply from the State-guaranteed Advances Department to that letter?—Well, I do not recall it. We had a lot of correspondence.

255. Are those the papers you have here now that you had when you waited on Sir John Findlay?—Yes. We sent down the papers on the 23rd September to the Advances Department all in order, and one month later we wrote and said we were anxiously waiting a reply as we wished to expedite the various works. Then we received no satisfaction, and we went to Sir John Findlay, and then we received a wire stating that they wanted a plan. In computing the loan we omitted to put in an extra 10 per cent. for interest and sinking fund, so that cut the loans down.

256. The reply Sir John Findlay received from me in reply to the wire he sent to me as a result of the deputation was not handed to the Press?—Not by me.

257. Was it published in the Press in Auckland?—Honestly, I do not remember. I did not give it to the Press.

258. If Sir John Findlay says he did not give it to the Press, then no one did?—Then I suppose it would be in the office.

259. As far as your knowledge goes it was not published?—Not as far as I am aware. As far as the Clerk is concerned, he is a very reticent old fellow, and would not give any information to the Press without authority, and he never asked me for any authority. It was not given by him.

260. Was Sir John Findlay in New Zealand at the time of the application for the loan by the Remuera Road Board to the State-guaranteed Advances Board?—According to the Press report, he was thirteen thousand miles away.

261. Have you at any time communicated with any Minister of the Crown in connection with the Remuera loan?—No.

262. And, excepting the official interview that you had with Sir John Findlay by way of a deputation asking that the money should be expedited, and asking for an advance of £10,000, there have been no representations of any sort or kind made by you or anybody from your Board?—Absolutely none. The application was sent by me in an official way and replied to officially. Sir John Findlay was the only man spoken to in connection with the matter.

263. There was some employee of the Remuera Road Board working at that election in the interests of Mr. Dickson?—Several of them.

264. And no exception was taken to it?—I think practically the whole staff did.

265. I understand that the temperance advocate who was frothing at the mouth was a supporter of Mr. Dickson?—No. I think he worked for Sir John Findlay, and eventually he worked for Mr. Mack.

266. Is it within your knowledge that members of local bodies in your part of the country take an active part in connection with elections?—Yes, we cannot hold them back.

267. Have you seen any objection to a man taking an active part in politics because he happened to be on a different side in politics?—No, never.

268. Or taking an active part in elections on a different side to the Chairman?—No.

269. Is there any difference between men receiving a holiday or portion of a holiday, as in your case at Remuera, and men in public positions throughout the country receiving a holiday to go to elections?—None whatever. In fact, in local bodies we never interfere with men politically.

270. There was no interference upon either side in connection with your employees?—No, absolutely none. I have got quite a clear conscience on the matter.

271. *Hon. Mr. Allen.*] Except in the case of Mr. Cromwell's?—No. I said to Mr. Cromwell, "Understand in no way do I desire to influence you to depart from supporting any candidate, but as a friend." He was one of my adherents.

272. *Dr. Newman.*] You say you never used any political influence with the men?—No.

273. Never?—Never.

274. When you went up to address them that morning was not that using political influence?—I see your point.

275. Did you not go up with the object of influencing them politically?—That is a psychological question. I was not able to know whether my words fell on barren ground or not.

276. What was your object in interviewing these men?—To point out the good qualities of the Government.

277. Was it not to help Sir John Findlay, who was a candidate for that district?—Yes, I thought the influence would go that way.

278. Then you have used your position for influencing elections?—If you put it that way, I did on this occasion, on behalf of the Government. I did not mention Sir John Findlay's name or Mr. Dickson's name. It was a general statement in regard to the Government, and not for Sir John Findlay.

279. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] What I was asking for was any pressure brought to bear on any of those men to influence their votes personally as an employee?—No, I would not use my position like that.