

79. So that you did not know what the liabilities were when you were giving evidence to-day?—No.

80. You did not know what the overdraft was within a few thousand pounds, and did not know the liabilities at the time the interview took place?—No, not from memory.

81. So that your evidence on that point is general and cannot be accurate?—Yes, that is so.

82. You were a member of the Board, and you are now Chairman of it?—Yes.

83. Did you know that employees of the Board were working in your interests at that election?—Yes, I knew employees of the Board were.

84. You took no exception to that?—No, as long as they did not do it when working.

85. Do you consider it wrong for a Chairman or member of the Board to take an active part in elections?—No, not so long as it does not interfere with the Board.

86. My question was, do you think it is wrong for the Chairman or member of a Board to take an active part in connection with elections?—No, I do not.

87. Have you ever while a Chairman of a Board interviewed a Minister of the Crown in Wellington in connection with Board matters?—Yes.

88. Have you upon each of the occasions you have interviewed a Minister of the Crown in Wellington had a minute of the Board authorizing you to do so?—Yes.

89. On every occasion?—Yes. We have been instructed to see a Minister when I was down on certain things in connection with certain matters in the district.

90. What was the rate of interest you paid for the Drainage Board loans in London?—4 per cent.

91. What was the amount of discount?—It was 98, I think, for the last.

92. So that you lost 2 per cent. on the £100,000 loan in London, and in addition you paid for the brokerage and commission?—Yes.

93. Do you know what the amount was?—I could not say what the exact amount was. That was the Auckland Drainage Board loan, and nothing to do with Remuera.

94. Did you pay any members of the Remuera Board or any other members to canvass for you?—No, I had no paid canvassers.

95. You ran your election on what is called the "never-never"?—No; I paid my election expenses myself and put in returns.

96. Was any more than the amount in the returns expended on the election?—

*Hon. Mr. Allen:* I object.

[Question ruled out.]

97. *Dr. Newman:* With regard to this deputation that was got up to Sir John Findlay, who composed it?—I could not say. I know that three members of the Board were there who were working for Sir John Findlay.

98. Were you a candidate for the district at the time?—Yes.

99. And you got no notice of the deputation?—No.

100. Although you were a member of the Board?—Yes.

101. *Mr. Pearce:* A point has been made of the fact that you got this £10,000 at certain interest. Did you have use for the whole of it, or did you have to retain some without getting interest on it?—We had to retain about £9,000.

102. Then, in that case you would be paying the Government 3½ per cent. and getting nothing for it?—Yes.

103. So that it would be an actual loss to the Board?—Yes, in that way.

THURSDAY, 24TH OCTOBER, 1912.

(No. 18.)

*Hon. Mr. Allen:* I have no desire, Mr. Chairman, to prolong the proceedings, and therefore I will not put any further questions to Sir Joseph Ward.

*Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward:* I should like to say before finishing, Mr. Chairman, that I want to put in a letter I have received, dated the 4th October, from the Town Clerk of the Birkenhead Borough Council. I have not communicated with anybody about these proceedings, but this letter has been sent to me. [Letter produced.] In conclusion, I desire to say that I have not at any time asked a member of the State-guaranteed Advances Board or anybody connected with the Board to consider a loan from a political standpoint. I have never asked any member of the Board to grant a loan at any time prior to the period during which the general election was approaching, or immediately prior to or during the currency of an election. I have not at any time suggested any reply of any kind to be given to me to be sent to a Minister of the Crown or anybody else from the Superintendent of the State-guaranteed Advances Board, and I have not at any time in my administration over the whole period I was in office ever asked the Board at any time for a Department, individual, or local body to favourably entertain a loan or consider a loan, having laid it down as a rule throughout my administration that the important State lending institutions of this country should carry on their business as business men without interference from the Minister in any way whatever, and of my own knowledge I know there are thousands of people in this country who were not on my side of politics receiving loans from the State lending institutions, and I have not at any time endeavoured to help an application of either an individual or local public body for an advance from any Department. That is all I wish to say, sir.

*Hon. Mr. Allen:* I have just seen this letter that Sir Joseph Ward has put in, and I do not see why it should go in. It reflects upon the Minister.