

gave me no information, although he had documents before him. I was afforded no opportunity of explicitly and clearly denying the imputations which are suggested in the document from which you are reading, and I submit in an ordinary Court of justice where a witness is on the witness-stand and there is in the hands of the interrogator material which is going to be used against him, he ought in common justice to be afforded an opportunity of meeting it and denying it. I am exposed to this; that after leaving the witness-stand, a witness to whom my interrogator referred was called here and made statements affecting my credit which were given a start of a week, and only at this time am I afforded a chance of defending my name here not as a witness, but as a defendant. I am not here really as a witness to give you any information. I am called to protect myself, and I say that in common justice I was entitled to be asked explicitly with regard to those statements.

*Hon. Mr. Allen :* Sir John Findlay was asked specifically whether he did promise any payment and he said, No. He was given every opportunity to deny it, and did deny it.

*Witness :* I asked if any imputation was meant, and that I was entitled to have it brought to my notice. The matter was dropped there. You will find from the evidence what I was asked and how the evidence was led. If you rule, Sir, that I received common justice, I am bound to accept your ruling.

*The Chairman :* You were called, Sir John Findlay, the day the witness from Auckland made the statement, and you could have replied to the statements made when you were asked to appear later. I think as far as the Committee is concerned you have received quite fair treatment.

*Witness :* Well, you are the judge of that and I must submit, but I must correct you in regard to one point. I got a notice to attend the Committee again about 5 o'clock, and was asked to be here at half-past 5—it was impossible for me to attend then. My point is that I should have been asked when on the witness-stand before the witnesses gave their evidence as to whether those statements were true or not. Sir, I have got your ruling and I submit to it.

*Hon. Mr. Allen :* I think Sir John Findlay has made an unjustifiable attack upon me. I have treated him with fairness. I had no evidence from these men, and I asked him the question whether he had authorized any payment to these men and he said No, and I accepted it.

*Witness :* I should desire, Sir, to make my answer more explicit. I did not authorize Mr. Cawkwell to act on my behalf in connection with my election in any way whatever. I never paid the wages of any men. I never authorized or suggested any holiday being given, and I never bespoke their support for my candidature in any way at all; and I ask your permission to shortly restate my connection and the only connection I had with the matter. A number of witnesses have been called, and I want in self-protection to restate in a very succinct shape the whole of my connection with this alleged impropriety. It rises out of the question put by Sir Joseph Ward, and is essential to my reply. I arrived, Sir, in Auckland, as far as I can recollect, on the 1st November. Either that day or the next day a man whom I did not then know called at the Ministerial office in Government Buildings, Auckland, and told me that a loan had already been granted of a sum of money to the Remuera Road Board—that it had been granted some months before, but I cannot recollect definitely what month. He said that there had been some red-tape difficulties about issuing the debentures in which he said there was little or no substance. He explained what I in fact knew, that there had been a bitter strike, then just concluded; that one of the conditions of the settlement of the strike was that the men should be taken on again on the following Monday; that that offer had been made in reliance upon getting from the State-guaranteed Advances Office a sum of money sufficient to pay the men's wages; that they found now there was a very great doubt about getting the money. They had explained this to the men who were then on strike, and the leaders of these men were suspicious that bad faith had arisen, that there was some collusion between the Board and the State-guaranteed Advances Office, and that the Board was not going to carry out honourably the arrangement which had been arrived at. He asked me whether in those circumstances I would communicate with the Minister of Finance. I did not commit myself then as far as I recollect, and he said a deputation would wait upon me that same morning. A deputation of the members of the Remuera Road Board waited upon me in the Ministerial Office in the ordinary course of Ministerial work. The strike leaders were present, and both sides, I think, were represented. I said that if there was no difficulty about the security, if the loan had been granted and if the only obstacle was some red-tape objection, I saw no objection in communicating with the Minister of Finance. There and then in the hearing of the deputation I dictated the telegram which has been before you gentleman. At the end I added the words "Kindly let me have a reply as early as you can, which I can use." Those were words dictated in the hearing of the deputation. I did that for the purpose I have stated, to give to those people the answer I got, and I wanted the Minister of Finance to understand that any answer I got I proposed to give out. When the answer came I either sent a complete copy of it to Mr. Cawkwell or to the Secretary of the Board, or it was telephoned, and the contents of it were also communicated to the strike leaders. That, Sir, was the beginning and end of my connection with this matter.

2. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.]* Did you know that the Remuera Road Board had obtained a loan or authority for a loan?—I knew nothing of it except the assurance from the Chairman that the loan had been granted. I knew absolutely nothing about it.

3. And you had no connection, direct or indirect, with the provisional granting or obtaining of the loan from the State?—Absolutely not. I had the assurance that the loan had been granted, and that the objection was a red-tape objection in regard to the debentures.

4. There was another question put by Mr. Allen to Mr. H. M. Wilson, as follows: "Were there two men not on the works paid for that day?—Yes, there were two men," I believe, who were not on the works who were paid as well. Who paid them?—It has been paid to the Road Board so far. And with regard to those two men, did he make any suggestion as to who would pay them?—No, I do not remember. Did he say anything about the fighting fund?—No, not to me. And what were these two men doing—they were not working?—No. But they were paid?—Yes. What were they doing?—