

They were canvassing. Whom for?—For Sir John Findlay.” Did you pay for these two men referred to to canvass for you?—Certainly not. I knew nothing whatever about them. And may I add this, Mr. Chairman: the general inference running through this class of evidence is that Mr. Cawkwell took an active part in that election, first on account of my offices in connection with this loan, and, secondly, because he wished to support me. I want to say, first, that when Mr. Cawkwell came to me, and when I sent that wire I did not know on what side of politics he was. I did not know the man, and had not seen him before. I do not know whether he was a supporter of the then Government or the Opposition. There was no mention of politics or the election when he saw me that morning or at the deputation, or was there at any time afterwards any mention of that. And I wish to add this, Sir, and I appeal to Mr. Myers, who must know it is true from his local knowledge: that the reason for Mr. Cawkwell’s activity was not that he loved me more, but that he loved Mr. Dickson less. There was an old outstanding feud between these two men which had almost flourished into a defamation action. Mr. Cawkwell would, I think, have supported any man in preference to my opponent. It was not first and only on my account at all, but because Mr. Cawkwell was an active and avowed opponent of Mr. Dickson in connection with Road Board and other matters before I went to Auckland at all. I went there as an entire stranger; I did not know these people, and I had the disadvantage of being a stranger.

5. Were you aware of the intention of Mr. Cawkwell to address the men at the Remuera Board works?—I knew nothing whatever of it. Whatever he was doing he was doing entirely on his own authority without my knowledge, without my privity, and certainly without my instructions.

6. And without your paying?—I paid absolutely nothing.

7. Was that information sent to you in my reply published in the Press?—No; my recollection is that it was not given out to any one except those I have mentioned. I think myself or my secretary gave it to the Chairman of the Road Board, also to Mr. Semple. I kept my promise that I would give them the reply I got.

8. Your object in putting in your wire, “Send me something I can use,” was for what?—I had stated I would give them your answer. Frequently between Ministers one gets answers he cannot use, and I wanted you to know that whatever answer I got was to be communicated. No use was made of that telegram for any political purpose.

9. And you had no communication with Mr. Poynton at any time in connection with this Board?—The only connection I had from start to finish in connection with this loan was the wire I sent to you. You never received any other word from me in connection with the loan, nor did you ever discuss it. I thought my service was so small that it was no more than getting rid of a red-tape objection. I did not think it would be used. I did not intend it to be used for political purposes, and it never was so used.

10. Mr. Cawkwell said the Road Board paid the wages of these men at the works?—I know I did not. I think if honourable gentlemen are to be placed in the position of being responsible for what any person in an election says, I do not know what is going to happen.

11. *Mr. Lee.*] Who says so?—If you read the statements in the newspapers there is an attempt being made to impute to my knowledge all these happenings.

12. By whom?—By the witness first, and secondly by those here who called the witnesses.

13. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] There is one point I was referring to in Mr. Hugh Munro Wilson’s evidence, as follows: “Mr. Allen: Did he say who would pay for it?—It may have been in a joking way, but he said Sir John Findlay would pay for it.”—That statement, if made deliberately, is a deliberate falsehood.

14. *Mr. Lee.*] You will recollect that Mr. Allen asked you some questions, and I do not think he could give you any names?—I remember.

15. What was it he asked you in the first instance?—As far as I recollect he asked, “Did you pay for certain workmen?” I said, “Were they Government workmen?” He said, “I cannot tell you.” I said, “Well, I ought to be told.” I could not understand what the reference was. Then he said, “I am asking you because some people may say you paid for workmen.” I said, “If there is any imputation I ought to get particulars so that I can meet it.” If Mr. Allen had not the information, then I desire to say that any observations I have made here to-day do not apply. I am proceeding on the assumption that Mr. Allen had proof of what he subsequently referred to. It seemed to me that if he had the information I should have been asked explicitly to meet those charges.

16. Then he asked you in a general kind of way?—Yes, very general way indeed; but he could not tell me whether they were Government workmen or not.

17. And to that general question you gave a general denial?—Yes, as far as I understood the question. It was difficult for me to give a denial to a question which even my questioner did not understand.

18. If the information had been in the hands of Mr. Allen you would have liked the precise details put before you?—I would like to have been asked the specific questions put to me by Sir Joseph Ward—“Did you pay the men for a holiday?”

19. Assuming that the information was not in Mr. Allen’s hands, then you take no exception to the way in which he put his question?—If Mr. Allen gave me all the information he at that time had and gave me then as full an opportunity of meeting the particulars, then I wish to say at once that Mr. Allen has done me no injustice.

20. *Hon. Mr. Allen.*] May I interrupt you to state what my position was. I had heard from somebody that you had paid these men, but I had no direct evidence of it?—I think you were reading from a letter.

21. Yes, but the letter was not direct evidence—the only direct evidence was the witnesses themselves?—But had you not in the letter the information which the witnesses ultimately gave?