

22. Only a rumour of what they were alleged to have said?—If Mr. Allen had not the information which I thought was in the letter, of course you will understand, Mr. Allen, that merely getting information is one thing and having proof of what witnesses were going to say is another. If Mr. Allen had a note of what it was I might have been informed of it.

23. *Mr. Lee.*] Then, assuming that Mr. Allen had not sufficient information to examine you specifically, you consider that then you should have had an opportunity of being before the Committee when those witnesses came to give their specific evidence?—I do not lay so much stress upon that. If Mr. Allen had not the information which I assumed was in that letter, then I have very little to complain about, but if the information in that letter told Mr. Allen what was going to be said against me, it was his duty then to have given me an opportunity of denying it.

24. At that time you said you would like an opportunity of saying something if there was any such imputation?—No. I said if there was any such imputation against me I ought to know what it was then and there.

25. And you should have had some right to appear before this Committee when that evidence was forthcoming?—If I had known what was to be given I should certainly have asked to be here. You know, as a lawyer, that when a man is charged—I take it I am here under a charge—he is afforded an opportunity of at least cross-examining his accusers.

26. Now, what was the intimation conveyed to you at 5 o'clock in the evening?—A telephone message. I got back from the Court of Appeal at 5 o'clock, and my clerk told me that a telephone message had come from the clerk of this Committee to say that the Committee could hear me at half past 5. I think it was at my house I heard it. I could not attend then, and I did not know then what had been said.

27. Nothing had been said then?—They had given evidence in the morning. When I went up into my study I found the evidence in the newspapers.

28. You did not understand then that the Committee were endeavouring to give you an opportunity to meet the statements?—They had given their evidence in the morning. I do not know what had been said. I understood they would hear me in regard to some evidence from Auckland. I did not know what the evidence was. The evil, however, had been done: it was published in the evening Press and so had got the start of me.

29. You recognize this: that this Committee is set up for inquiry, is it not?—Yes.

30. And this Committee is perfectly justified in hearing any witnesses that may appear?—I take it this Committee will conform as far as it can to the traditions of British justice.

31. But you would not suggest that this Committee could not hear a witness because that witness may say something which may be detrimental to yourself?—Certainly not; but as Mr. Allen knew what that evidence was to be—

32. *Hon. Mr. Allen.*] I did not know what that evidence was to be?—If he did know he might, through the clerk, have given me the opportunity of being present.

33. *Mr. Lee.*] You have heard the evidence which Wilson gave put to you by Sir Joseph Ward?—I heard what Sir Joseph Ward read.

34. And that you entirely deny?—Yes; and I put it to you, Mr. Lee, as one who ought to be able to guide this Committee on a question of this kind: Until I was connected by evidence with what Mr. Wilson swore to, his evidence was entirely inadmissible. The point is this: if Mr. Wilson's evidence is admitted before this inquiry, without a scrap of evidence connecting me with it, then every chatter at the street-corner in which my name was involved could equally well have been given here. The first principle you follow is this: if you are going to make a man responsible for what you are alleging has been done, your duty is to show his connection with it and give him an opportunity of meeting it.

35. Your knowledge of parliamentary Committees is sufficient to let you know that that is the sort of evidence which is continually before them?—I will not pass any opinion upon that.

36. Then I put it to you now—I am dealing with your comment that you have not been properly treated by the Committee?—But you agree with me that if my assumption is right that Mr. Allen had the information, then you agree with me that I had cause for complaint.

37. Would you care now to have the opportunity of having Wilson called before this Committee again for the purpose of examination by yourself?—It is very kind of you to suggest it, but Mr. Wilson has given his statement, and I have given mine, and I am perfectly content now to let the matter go before the public of this country.

38. Yours being a general denial of his?—He says the remark was made jokingly. I do not know whether that is taken seriously. I am quite content that what I have said now meets his contention.

39. You have no suggestion to put before the Committee to remedy what you say your grievances are—that you have not been properly treated?—No. The only suggestion I would make now is that it be recognized that before a man can be made responsible for an imputation by another he ought to be connected with it, and until there is a connection with it it should not be accepted.

40. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] Further, should he not have an opportunity of being present and cross-examining?—I have said so, Sir Joseph.

41. *Mr. Myers.*] Reverting to just prior to the election, as a matter of fact you were to a large extent carrying on your Ministerial duties?—I attended my Ministering office in Auckland every morning.

42. And you were receiving deputations from outside your electorate continually?—You will find I probably received a dozen deputations during the first fortnight—deputations which had nothing whatever to do with Parnell. The deputations were from all the surrounding electorates. In my Departments I was receiving deputations pretty well every day, and this particular deputation came just in the same way as any other deputation. I did not regard it differently in any way.

43. And recognizing the urgency of it—namely, sanitation and water-supply—and having regard to the sense of responsibility as a Cabinet Minister, you desired to facilitate the granting of the loan as a