

Minister?—What concerned me was neither air nor water. What impressed me was, I saw these strike men. I recognized they were a suspicious body, and that they thought a trick had been played on them, and I felt I should do what I could to prevent a recurrence of that strike which, as you know involved over a hundred men. The main motive I felt in sending that wire was that it would tend to avoid further industrial trouble and relieve the tension, as I said in my telegram. It was mainly for the purpose of settling this industrial trouble.

44. If this loan had not been provisionally approved you would not have sent the telegram?—I knew nothing of the loan except what I was told. It was not in my Department; it came upon me as a new matter.

45. If you had not been informed that the loan had been provisionally approved you would not have sent the telegram?—I did not know it had been approved provisionally. I did not know anything about it. I believed there was nothing in the objection raised by the Department except some slight objection to the debentures, and I did not think I was performing an office that would have the least effect upon any constituency. It is a rude awakening to have it imputed to me as a piece of illegal and political jobbery.

46. *Mr. E. Newman.*] When you sent the telegram you used the words, "Wire me something I may use"?—Yes.

47. Is the Committee to understand that it was not to be made use of in a political sense?—I have already answered that five or six times. First of all, the telegram was dictated in the presence and hearing of the deputation. I told this Committee there was suspicion and a strike on one side and the Board on the other, and it was necessary there should be an absolute disclosure. I telegraphed to the Minister to say I would use any reply I got, and I told those present I would give them the reply I got from the Minister of Finance, and I did so.

48. Did it not occur to you that that would raise suspicions?—I said at first, and I repeat, that the telegram is not sufficiently protected against political misconstruction.

49. *Dr. Newman.*] Was the result of this telegram that matters were expedited?—I cannot tell you. I performed my office in sending the telegram, and it was at an end when I communicated the reply.

50. Did you get a reply?—I read it the last time I was here.

51. *Hon. Mr. Allen.*] I understand you to say you communicated the information in the reply to Mr. Semple?—Yes, he came to me.

52. Who is Mr. Semple?—He is a gentleman who, I believe, is qualifying for the House of Representatives.

53. Was he one of the deputation who waited on you?—Yes.

54. Have you any reason to believe that that gentleman communicated the result of the deputation to the Press?—The deputation was not of the strikers only. I do not know what he did with the information he got from me.

55. It is not likely he kept it in his pocket?—It was not given to him in the shape he could take in his pocket.

56. Was it likely he would keep his tongue quiet?—I am quite aware of the imputation.

57. I want to know whether you have any reason to believe that Mr. Semple did not communicate this information to others?—I know no more of what Mr. Semple did when he left my side than you do.

58. Now, I understand that from the information given you you believed the loan was granted: is that so?—Yes.

59. And that the only other process was to pay the loan over?—The only objection was with regard to the debentures.

60. Are we quite clear that you thought the loan was granted?—Yes.

61. Now I want you to look at your telegram. You say, "If the whole loan cannot be authorized." Is there a doubt as to whether the loan was authorized?—Certainly not.

62. Was it authorized?—Certainly. I relied upon the assurance I got that it was.

63. Why say in your telegram, "If the whole loan cannot be authorized"?—If the payment of the whole loan cannot be made.

64. It is not "payment"?—You are asking me a question, and I am entitled to have my answer, and not yours. My construction of and my meaning in that telegram is what I said, and you can distort it as you please.

65. I want to know what you mean by that in your telegram, "If the whole loan cannot be authorized"?—I was told that the loan had been approved, and that the only objection to the payment was a red-tape objection in regard to the debentures. I wired that if the whole amount cannot be paid, or payment authorized, if you like, that a payment should be made of part to enable the men to go to work on the Monday.

66. I want to know would you not draw any distinction between the authorization of a loan and payment?—That telegram was intended to convey the meaning I have given, which it did convey.

67. Can you tell me whether you draw any distinction between the authorization of a loan and payment of a loan?—The authorization of a loan may be one or the other—its sanction or its payment.

68. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] In that reply sent by me to you, Sir John, the request for £10,000 was refused?—The reply speaks for itself. I think that is so.

JOSEPH WILLIAM POYNTON further examined. (No. 21.)

1. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] Mr. Poynton, there is a statement in a speech made by the Hon. the Minister of Customs in the House of Representatives, *Hansard*, Volume 160, page 587, as follows: "Is it a mere coincidence what happened when the by-election took place at Rangitikei when Mr.