

Smith was elected to the House? Thirty thousand pounds was paid into the local bodies' account in a small town like Taihape. What for? We were told to-night that among the exceptions is lighting. Why, the Town of Taihape to-day is electric-lighted by some of the money promised shortly before that election. A specific grant, in my opinion—I only give it as my unsupported opinion—but, in my opinion, the grant was made to the electorate, when the public feeling ran high, for the purpose of buying the Town of Taihape." Would you be kind enough to furnish to the Committee a return showing what amount is lent by the Treasury or by the State-guaranteed Advances Office to Taihape during the by-election year, between the death of the late Mr. Remington and the election of the present member, Mr. Smith?—There was no money lent by the Advances Office or by the Treasury in 1909. The Advances Office was not lending money till 1910.

2. Was any money lent by the Treasury?—None.

3. There was no money lent either by the Treasury or by the State-guaranteed Advances Office in 1909?—No.

4. Has any money been advanced by the State-guaranteed Advances Board to Taihape for electric-lighting purposes?—No.

5. Has any money been advanced by the Treasury for electric-lighting purposes?—No.

6. Was a loan of £21,250 that was obtained by the Taihape Borough advanced by the Treasury or by the State-guaranteed Advances Department?—Neither.

7. If the statement is made that that was a loan advanced by a Government Department, that statement is not correct?—No.

8. Now, Mr. Poynton, in connection with the loan to the Remuera Road Board, why was it that that loan was not considered at the Board meeting on the Monday, the 6th November?—The papers were overlooked.

9. Then if there had been any special intention on your part or on the part of the Board to deal with that expeditiously from the point of view of assisting the Remuera Road Board from a political standpoint—which I know you have said is not so—is it likely that the consideration of that loan would have been overlooked at that meeting?—No. I may say, sir, that neither the telegram from Sir John Findlay to Sir Joseph Ward nor the minute from Sir Joseph Ward to me had any effect whatever on that loan.

*The Chairman:* We have had all this before.

10. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] The matter has cropped up in evidence since?—I desire, sir, just to say what the impression was on my mind. I looked upon it as a complaint by a local body to a Minister against the Advances Department accusing the office of obstruction and red-tapeism. Knowing that the fault was entirely with the local body itself and not the Office, I took very little notice of it—in fact, I took no notice of it. The telegram or complaint was not communicated to any other members of the Board. It made so little impression on me that the whole thing was overlooked.

11. Now, as a result of that matter not having been dealt with by the Board, was anything unusual done in getting confirmation by the members of the Board before the next meeting?—No, it was the fault of the Office having overlooked the papers and not having brought them up at the meeting, and therefore it was at my request sent round for the assent of the individual members of the Board, to be confirmed at the next meeting.

12. If the same oversight had occurred in connection with the business of any other local body, would the same course have been pursued?—Yes. It is done by other Boards, the Public Trust Board, the Government Insurance, and by the Public Debts Sinking Fund Commissioners Board. It is the proper thing if there has been an omission on the part of the Board, so that others will not suffer if it is a matter of urgency.

13. Now, had you any knowledge whatever as to what was being done by Mr. Cawkwell or any one else in Remuera in connection with the Parnell election?—Absolutely none.

14. Had you any knowledge of what side in politics Mr. Cawkwell was working in the Parnell election?—I did not know of his existence.

15. You do not know him personally?—No, I do not know him personally. I did not know that Remuera was in that electorate before.

16. Well, may I ask you if you have at any time in connection with your official position taken any active part in connection with political elections?—No, I am neutral in politics. I have my sympathies and ideas, but since I entered the Civil Service I have endeavoured to follow the British tradition of being loyal to whatever Government is in office, and will continue to do so as long as I am in the Civil Service.

17. Mr. Poynton, before you sent that memo. to the members of the Board in regard to the Remuera loan, did you consult or confer with myself or any other Minister before sending it?—I did not. As soon as the clerk brought it to my knowledge, the day after it had been overlooked, I told him what to do. The memo. is in his handwriting, and I signed it and sent it to the other members. I had no communication with any Minister or anybody else. I just followed the usual course, or what I thought to be the right course in such cases.

18. Now, in connection with the business placed before the Board at its September, October, and November meetings, was there anything unusual done to get more business brought up at one meeting of the Board in any of those months with the object of having the business specially dealt with?—None whatever.

19. I understand the business dealt with at the next meeting of the Board was the ordinary business for consideration of the Board?—Yes, there was no special haste for October on account of that time of the year.

20. Now, I come back to the question of the election. In the Journals of the House, 1909, page 1, the Speaker makes the following statement: "Election.—Mr. Speaker communicated to the House