

*Mr. Myers.*] Who was the gentleman to whom you spoke?—I do not think that is of importance, Mr. Chairman.

Will you tell me please what price you offered her at?—Well, now, I would not be sure of that. I merely told him that the boat was for sale, and if he wanted to make an offer he could make it.

Do you pledge your oath that that is the substance of what happened?—That was the main substance. I do not say it was all the substance.

Are you one of the gentlemen who have been agitating politically for a Producers' Shipping Board?—Yes, I have done so for years, and we could demonstrate by this boat that it was warranted.

Did you when you were talking to that gentleman in 1923 propose to him that his company should take over the "Codrington" at £160,000 or £170,000?—I do not think any sum like that was mentioned. I think it was nearer £300,000.

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*The Chairman:* Perhaps there may be confusion as to the identity of the gentleman.

*Mr. Myers.*] I will put his name on paper [counsel writes name on paper and hands same to witness]?—Yes, that is the name.

[Mr. Myers hands paper to Chairman.]

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I will ask you again. Did you not put up a proposal to him that his company should purchase that ship at £160,000 or £170,000?—I do not think so.

Will you swear you did not?—I think it was nearer £300,000. It was an informal discussion, and I simply told him that the boat was for sale, and I said, "If you people like to buy it you can have it."

Did you not put up the proposal to him that as the price of your not assisting or promoting a Shipping Board Bill his company should take over the steamer at £160,000 or £170,000?—I did not.

Did you not tell him this, or to this effect: that if they did not purchase you would press for a Shipping Board Bill, which the Liberal and Labour parties would support, and that when the Board was formed your company would unload the "Codrington" on to the Board at £150,000?—Mr. Findlay referred to that matter, and I told him distinctly that if it ever came up in the House I would have to support it.

What do you mean by that?—A shipping line; and I said that if he did do business with us it would be on the distinct understanding that if it came up in the House I would support it and would not go against it.

I will put it to you again. Did you not put up the proposal to him that his company should take the ship over at £160,000 to £170,000, in which case you would desist—I am not using the *ipsissima verba*—from your agitation for a Shipping Board Bill?—I never said anything of the sort. Mr. Findlay brought up the question of the shipping concern, and I gave him clearly to understand that it would not affect me in the House in that matter, because I considered it was essential.

Did you tell him that if his company did not purchase you would press for a Shipping Board Bill?—I never did it in that way at all.

In what way did you do it?—He intimated that if they took the ship over, then the necessity for my pressing would not arise.

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And I said I would not compromise my position in the House in that matter at all. I said, "If you take the ship you take it."

Did you tell him that if a Shipping Board was formed your company would unload the "Admiral Codrington" on to the Board at £150,000?—I have no recollection of that. Very probably I would tell him. I told Mr. Jones that. I did not say that we would unload it. I said that we would offer it to them at market price—at valuation.

You had some conversation with Mr. Findlay, and, of course, you can have no objection to Mr. Findlay giving his version here?—None whatever.

In addition to the conversation with Mr. Findlay, did you not, on the 3rd August, 1923, inform Mr. Jolly of your conversation with Mr. Findlay?—I did, and that is where you are getting it from.

You do not blame us, do you, after your attack upon the bank?—Certainly.

Did you not—I am going to read now from Mr. Jolly's note—did you not inform Mr. Jolly that you had put up a proposal to Mr. Findlay that as the price of your not assisting or promoting a Shipping Board Bill Mr. Findlay's company should take over the "Admiral Codrington" at £160,000 or £170,000, but that if they did not do so you would press for a Shipping Board Bill, which the Liberal and Labour parties would support, and when the Board was formed the Poverty Bay Meat Company would unload the "Admiral Codrington" on to the Board at £150,000? Did you tell Mr. Jolly that?—No, I did not.

Although Mr. Jolly may have immediately taken a note and produces it now, you say you did not tell him anything of the sort?—I told him that I had, in a conversation with Mr. Findlay, told him that the boat was open for sale.

Did not Mr. Jolly tell you that you were mad to make such an offer to any one, and that if such a Board were formed he was satisfied that neither the Board nor the country would stand for such a deal?—No. Mr. Jolly told me there was no hope of a Board.

That is what Mr. Jolly will say?—Let him say it.