

*Hon. F. D. Bell.* interests." Mr. Harrison then stated that he immediately said, "Then I have been entrapped here under false pretences." And it was, I think, at that point of the conversation that Mr. Harrison repeated that he had been asked to maintain secrecy with respect to the conversation, and he asked me whether, in my opinion, he was bound to maintain that secrecy. I told him that, in my opinion, such a proposal was a disgraceful one to make, and that he was, in my judgment, not bound by any secrecy with respect to it; but, at any rate, having made that communication to me, I was not going to be a possessor of such a secret, and that it was necessary he should take one of two alternatives—either to write me a letter stating officially what he had then stated to me, or be prepared for me to report to the House what had taken place. I expressed an opinion that it was creditable to him to have at once put a stop to such a proposal; and that if he would write me a letter, I would lay it before the House. I did not receive any communication from Mr. Harrison that day, nor until the next morning. Then I found the letter from him which I afterwards read to the House, on my table, and I had hardly read it before Mr. Harrison came into the room. I pointed out to him that there was one paragraph in it which was different from what he said to me, in this way: The paragraph said that "it had transpired," in the conversation between him and Mr. Holt, that he was expected to use his influence as a Member. I said to him, "That is not the statement that you made to me yesterday: you said Mr. Holt had said so, not that 'it transpired;'" and then Mr. Harrison took the letter, and corrected it by making the statement, "It was intimated to me by Mr. Holt." It was only on reading the letter afterwards again, that I noticed that the letter was different in two points from the statement which Mr. Harrison had made to me, and I therefore returned the reply to him which has been printed, pointing out those differences. I was especially struck by the statement in the letter, which had not been made to me verbally, with respect to Mr. Stafford's maintenance in office; because no party question had ever crossed my mind in the course of the interview with Mr. Harrison. I think that is all that took place, so far as I remember. I then brought the matter before the House.

263. I observe, Mr. Bell, in the letter which was written to you by Mr. Harrison, and in your reply, that there is a statement, or rather there are two statements, which do not tally. Mr. Harrison says, "It was specially intimated that, whilst I need not commit the *Wellington Independent*, of which paper I am the editor, to any direct support of the present Government, nor that I should vote in that direction in the House." Now I observe that, in your reply to Mr. Harrison, you say that "What the Speaker understood Mr. Harrison to state was, that the condition of the proposed agreement between Mr. Harrison and Messrs. Brogden was to be that Mr. Harrison should vote in the House in such manner as was necessary for Messrs. Brogden's interests." Do you still observe the same difference, or has anything taken place which enables you to reconcile the conflict between these two statements?—I cannot see that there is a conflict between the two statements. The one statement is a statement which Mr. Harrison made to me, that he was to be expected to vote in such a way as was necessary for Mr. Brogden's interests. The other statement in the letter is, that he was to vote to retain Mr. Stafford in office. The statement in Mr. Harrison's letter is, that he was not to be committed to any direct support of the Government, nor to vote in that direction in the House. The two questions are quite different, one question being as to voting in such a way as was necessary to Mr. Brogden's interest, and the other question being as to voting for Mr. Stafford's Government. These questions might in fact be antagonistic. I only pointed out to Mr. Harrison, in my reply, that the statement of "voting" as was necessary for Mr. Brogden's interests, and that of "using his influence" for the same purpose, was not exactly the same, although I did not think there was a material difference.

264. I understand the words in Mr. Harrison's letter—"It was specially intimated that, whilst I need not commit the *Wellington Independent*, of which paper I am the editor, to any direct support of the present Government, nor that I should vote in that direction in the House." Well, Mr. Harrison gives it to be understood there, that it was no part of the bargain, if there was a bargain with him, that he should vote in a particular direction; but I understand, from your answer to him, that, when he had the interview with you, he told you that he was expected to vote in a particular direction?—Not in the direction of supporting Mr. Stafford.

265. Mr. Harrison says he was not expected to vote in any particular direction?—He says he was not expected to vote in the direction of supporting Mr. Stafford's Government.

266. I think you point out a conflict in the statements; you point out that his written statement does not agree with the verbal statement he made to you?—What I pointed out is this: Mr. Harrison, in his letter to me, says, "It, however, was intimated to me by Mr. Holt that, should any agreement be made between myself and the firm of Brogden and Sons, it was to be a condition that I should, as a Member of the House, use my influence to further the interests of the firm." I pointed out to Mr. Harrison that what he had said to me was, that the condition was to be that he (Mr. Harrison) should "vote in the House" in such a manner as was necessary for Messrs. Brogden's interests. I pointed out that, although that was somewhat different from the condition as stated in the letter to me, it did not appear to me to be a very material difference. That is quite a different thing from the question of his voting to maintain Mr. Stafford's Government in office. It might or might not be essential, in Mr. Brogden's opinion, for his interests, that Mr. Stafford should be retained in office or turned out of office. Although the inference from what is stated is, that Mr. Holt considered Mr. Brogden's interests would be secured by Mr. Stafford remaining in office, I could form no judgment on that, for the simple reason that nothing of the sort was said to me.

267. *The Hon. Mr. Gillies.* Would it have made any difference in your advice to Mr. Harrison had he disclosed to you, in the first instance, that the offers made related to the maintenance or defeat of Mr. Stafford's Government?—I do not think it would have made any difference; I should have considered that any proposal by Mr. Brogden's representative, which interfered with the action of a Member in that respect as well as the other, would have been a disgraceful one to make.

268. When Mr. Harrison laid the matter before you conversationally, in the first instance, did he inform you that he had previously consulted any other person on the subject?—Yes, I think so; I think he told me he had spoken to Mr. Vogel. I am sure that Mr. Harrison told me that he had