

on Tuesday, though we might reasonably infer from other circumstances Mr. Harrison had made public property of the whole affair before he conferred with Mr. Vogel. Counsel went on to say, that looking at the evidence given by Mr. Harrison on his cross-examination, there was cause for still further wonder. Mr. Harrison tells us that he saw nothing whatever in the proposition for the use of his professional services that was derogatory, but that after he had seen Mr. Tribe he discovered that an attempt had been made to influence him as a Member of the House. He states most distinctly that at the time the proposition was made it did not strike him as being an improper one. In support of that theory, Counsel referred to questions Nos. 75 to 83. It would thus be seen that all that he (Mr. Harrison) said was, according to his own showing, that the conversation had better be dropped until after the end of the Session. If the conversation was dangerous and improper, why drop it merely until after the end of the Session, unless, indeed, Mr. Harrison intended to cease being a Member of the House. Mr. Harrison's evidence, 84 to 94 was then read and commented upon by Counsel, who then proceeded to say,—From this it would appear that there was nothing in the language made use of by Mr. Holt which led him (Mr. Harrison) to conclude that the proposition was an improper one, beyond the fact that he looked upon him (Mr. Holt) as acting in the capacity of an agent for the Messrs. Brogden. That fact is plain from the answer to question No. 95. There Mr. Harrison is asked—Am I to understand, then, that it was the circumstances of the supposed agency that you laid the great stress upon? The answer made by Mr. Harrison is, "Exactly so." Here we are told in effect that there was nothing in the language used at the interview that could in the slightest degree be regarded as implying an improper overture; whilst the simple circumstance that he looked upon Mr. Holt in the character of an agent, induced him to suppose that an attempt had been made to influence him unduly. This is quite inconsistent with Mr. Harrison's communication to the Speaker, in which it is positively stated to have been made a condition of the employment that he should use his vote in the House for the furtherance of Mr. Brogden's interests. On that point the evidence given by the Hon. the Speaker was perfectly explicit. At page 11 of the evidence, he (the Speaker) says that Mr. Harrison told him that after some conversation on the subject of employing his professional services, he (Mr. Harrison) said to Mr. Holt, "I suppose, then, that there is nothing more?" whereupon Mr. Holt said to him, "That it must be understood he was to give his vote in the House in such a way as was necessary for Mr. Brogden's interests." On this point the words of the Speaker were most distinct; and whilst he was giving his evidence, honorable Members would recollect that Mr. Harrison stood by, and never asked a single question to show that the words and language were not such as the Speaker had stated. Having allowed Mr. Bell to make that statement, and not having made the slightest attempt at an objection, he (Counsel) submitted that, under this circumstance, he must be held to have acquiesced in what the Speaker said. He (Mr. Harrison) then distinctly says that if the communication was made by Mr. Holt as a private individual, he could no longer consider that an attempt had been made unduly to influence him politically, but that he would simply regard the conversation as that of a private individual. Now Mr. Brogden, in his evidence, denied that Mr. Holt had any authority from him in the matter at all. There was some slight discrepancy between Mr. Holt's evidence and the evidence given by Mr. Brogden regarding the intention of employing a person in the capacity suggested by Mr. Holt. That, however, was explained by the fact that Mr. Holt, in the evidence he gave, treated Mr. Henderson as a member of the firm. He would submit that the statements of the affair, as made by Mr. Harrison, were entirely at variance with each other. He assumed that the Speaker was entitled to full credit in the matter; and he (Counsel) submitted that Mr. Harrison having failed to cross-examine him upon the various points on which these statements were at variance, placed Mr. Harrison's conduct in a very equivocal light indeed. Apart from the actual object of the inquiry, its results must to some extent affect the position of Mr. Brogden. Although the actual punishment of any guilt would no doubt fall upon Mr. Holt's shoulders, the transaction must nevertheless exercise some influence upon the character and position of Mr. Brogden. If the suggestion of Mr. Harrison were well founded, the view taken by the public would no doubt be that he (Mr. Holt) was simply made use of as an instrument by Mr. Brogden to make improper proposals to Members of the House for their political support. A charge, or even a suspicion of that kind, could not but be painful to a gentleman in Mr. Brogden's position. Counsel next referred to the telegrams as published in the *Southern Cross* newspaper. These sensational telegrams, he said, had been despatched immediately after the letter to the Speaker had been placed in possession of the House. Those telegrams went home by the steamer, and would in all probability reach Mr. Brogden's firm before he had an opportunity of contradicting them. He believed that he was not betraying any secret when he said that it was a positive instruction of Mr. Brogden's firm that its members should not identify themselves with any political party, but simply deal with the Government of the day in connection with their business transactions, and Mr. Brogden had stated to the Committee that he had taken no part whatever in politics, so far as regards the position of parties in the House of Representatives. He would ask the Committee, in coming to its conclusion, to take into consideration the position in which this gentleman finds himself placed by these proceedings, and to free him from any complicity in the matter. Had evidence similar to that given by Mr. Harrison before this Committee been given in a Court of law, he (Counsel) would have felt justified in characterizing it by much stronger terms than he could do before a tribunal of this sort. He concluded by submitting that there was nothing whatsoever in Mr. Holt's conduct to show that he had been guilty of the impropriety attributed to him, and that the Committee would be justified in reporting to the House accordingly.

The Attorney-General said that it appeared to him that the point which merited their attention was not so much as to whether Mr. Brogden's authority was given to the negotiations, as to prove whether or not Mr. Harrison's evidence was reliable, and as to whether or not he was justified in looking upon what took place as an attempt to influence his conduct as a Member of the House. It might be true enough that Mr. Brogden's authority was not proved. Mr. Brogden himself denies that he ever gave any authority to Mr. Holt to negotiate for the employment of Mr. Harrison's services at all. Mr. Holt himself gives similar evidence. Mr. Harrison has no other evidence to produce before the Committee that Mr. Brogden did. According to the evidence that had been given, Mr. Holt had for a week or two previous to the occurrence suggested to Mr. Brogden that Mr. Harrison should

Mr. Travers.

16th Oct., 1872.

Attorney-General.

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