

confident belief that no explanation is possible; but, having given an explanation which it is not possible to get over, I am asked to throw in a spray of apologies—a *la* Galileo. The prisoner [that is me] is put upon his trial. He is honourably acquitted by a chorus of witnesses. The prisoner will now please kindly apologize to the prosecutor. Through all the business this is the most comic stroke of all. The apologies and regrets may come from some one else. If at the beginning I had been asked simply to say that as a Minister I regretted having had anything to do with the case, and the request or communication to me had not gone beyond that, there would have been no difficulty. Then there was involved no point of dishonour. That was a matter that might have been discussed fairly between gentlemen—between man and man. Instead, suddenly, and without warning from any one, I am brought face to face with the criminal charge that I lent my aid and co-operation to secure the escape of convicts. A question of propriety is comparatively an unimportant question: a question of dishonour is a fight for life. So Bryce thought. Has any one outside of myself realised the seriousness of the charge? And does any one recognise that I have a character to maintain? The time, you should know, has been a painfully anxious one to me, for I have been acutely grieved. However, I have vindicated my honour, and that is sufficient for me.—GEO. FISHER."

That letter expressed the feelings which I did then and still entertain. The correspondence being in print, I obtained a number of copies for my own use, all of which, except six, have since remained under lock and key in my own house. Parliament, however, has now ordered the circulation of the papers, and, that having been done, I have, in this matter at all events, obtained all the justice I desire.

I am, &c.,

The Editor.

GEO. FISHER.

No. 9.

[Extract from the *Evening Post*, Saturday, 20th July, 1889.]

THE GASPARINI CORRESPONDENCE.

SIR,—

20th July, 1889.

During the discussion in the House upon this correspondence these words (quoted from *Hansard*) were used: "Mr. Fisher.—Did you receive at New Plymouth a copy of the printed papers? Sir H. A. Atkinson.—No. I received a copy of your memorandum; but that is not printing 'the papers' at all. Mr. Fisher.—I am so staggered I cannot believe my ears. With your permission, Sir, I will put that question to the honourable gentleman again. Is it true, or is it not true, that the honourable gentleman at New Plymouth received from me the correspondence complete in print? Sir H. A. Atkinson.—Absolutely untrue." After diligent search I have discovered the papers, complete, in print, as they were sent to New Plymouth. They are corrected, in the handwriting of Sir Harry Atkinson, as they were returned to me. This fact I announced to the House on Thursday; and now, as I also then stated to the House, I desire to make no further reference to the matter.

I have, &c.,

The Editor.

GEO. FISHER.

No. 10.

[Extract from the *Evening Post*, Friday, 9th August, 1889.]

MINISTERIAL VERACITY.

THE Premier is extremely unfortunate in his contradictions. He either suffers from a terribly bad memory, or he is utterly reckless as to whether his contradictions are true or false so long as they serve a temporary purpose. The terrible exposure of the incorrectness of his statements and denials in regard to the printing of the Gasparini correspondence is still fresh in the public mind and in the recollection of the House. It has been dealt with very tenderly, and, although it must have shaken confidence in the accuracy of his memory if not in his veracity, it might have been allowed to be forgotten were it not that, unfortunately, it does not stand alone. Last night another instance occurred. Mr. Hutchison, referring to the Chemis case, said he understood that Mr. Jellicoe was refused permission to see the prisoner alone until he applied to the Governor. The Premier gave this assertion a direct denial as being "absolutely inaccurate." Those who knew the facts listened in astonishment, for they knew Mr. Hutchison's statement to be absolutely accurate. Whatever inaccuracy there may be is entirely on the Premier's side. We have seen the correspondence in which Mr. Jellicoe made his complaint to the Governor, the latter's reply, and several subsequent communications which passed between Mr. Jellicoe, the Governor, and the Ministry before the privilege of seeing Chemis alone was conceded to Mr. Jellicoe. We trust some member will obtain this correspondence and have it placed on record in *Hansard*. It will form an interesting addition to the facts already on record in the Gasparini case as to the value of Ministerial denials or assertions.

No. 12.

[Extract from the *Catholic Times*, Wellington, Friday, 2nd August, 1889.]

IN the disagreements which occurred between Mr. George Fisher when he was a member of the Cabinet and his brother Ministers Mr. Fisher was, it will be remembered, invariably checkmated by being flatly contradicted when he ventured to make any statement of fact. If he attempted to defend himself by asserting that he acted in this or that matter because certain other things had been done or said by his colleagues, those gentlemen, with a unanimity little short of marvellous, simply met him with the knock-down blow of flat denial. They declared that the certain things