

what result? To give back to a man whom you denounced as a systematic defrauder of the revenue the plant and material with which he carried on his systematic fraud. And, further, mark this: Having it now in your power to do so, you did not compel him to pay either fine or duty on the offence for non-entry of the fifty sacks malt. Truly a memorable conclusion for men to marvel at. What is gained by the result? Undying strife and hatred engendered for what? Mr. Gilmer, in his letter to the Government, offered to pay any penalty a Magistrate could compel him to pay. He placed himself unreservedly in the hands of the Government. If the Government had asked him to pay £300 or £400, by the terms of his letter he was bound to pay it. But do not let us be misled. The present result is not the result intended. It was only when public sentiment became shocked by the merciless persecution being practised against this man that the spirit of the craven replaced the grip of the oppressor. If it were not for the sickening hypocrisy of the thing it would be intensely amusing to hear you say that "the defendants have expressed their "satisfaction at the consideration and leniency shown them." Have you forgotten the charge you make against me? It is this: "You interfered in one case, and in one case only, "with the course of justice, and this one offender you attempted to screen was not only the worst "offender of them all, but also, as it turned out, a personal friend of your own." Here is "the "worst offender of them all." It is you now, not I, who have screened him from the full effect of the course of justice. Why? Because, as I have already said, the public mind was becoming shocked at the revengeful persecution to which this man was being subjected, and you shrank from the natural consequences of the cruelty you were practising. I told Mr. Bell that this was no ordinary prosecution—that it was an extraordinary persecution. I knew what were the moving influences working from behind. I knew that Mr. McCarthy had publicly declared that he would crush the Junction Brewery—that he would have it closed; and that he had used other language of a similar kind. When Mr. Gilmer threw himself upon the clemency of the Commissioner of Customs, feeling that he was in the grasp of merciless persecutors who would stop at nothing, and offered to pay any fine a Magistrate could impose upon him, I felt that in common justice nothing more should be demanded of him, and I desired particularly to discuss the subject with you. Even in the lapsed case of non-entry of fifty sacks malt he offered payment of fine and duty, which you refused to accept. Why should not the duty in this one case have been accepted, as it was accepted in Staples's case? Evidently because you had secretly determined in your own mind to base upon the non-entry a charge against me.

(R.) My answer to the statement that Mr. Gilmer is a personal friend of my own is that he is a common friend in the sense that he and I have been brought together in rendering assistance in many cases of pitiful distress in this city. The fact that we have been brought together in this way, or in any similar way, is, I presume, to a person of your cast of mind, sufficient ground upon which to base a charge of collusion. As to the nonsense about the Government being impeached for the omission on the part of a brewer to enter fifty sacks malt in his book, I think it much more likely that the Government will be impeached on several other much more serious matters which will "come out upon inquiry, if not in debate."

(S.) This paragraph deals with my alleged differences with my colleagues. I cheerfully quote from it this passage: "Of course I am not denying that there were differences of opinion between "you and me, and between you and other members of the Cabinet; but what I say is, that they "were not more serious or more marked than the ordinary differences which inevitably arise between "independent men who attempt to act together, and we were all of opinion that they had as they "arose been amicably settled, and that the settlement had been cheerfully accepted by you." Amidst all your reiterations I am glad you reiterate this statement, because gladly I hold out to the world this proof that Mr. Fisher is not the "impracticable man" some persons persistently represent him to be. Throughout I have treated the deliberations of the Cabinet and the opinions of its members with great deference and respect, always remembering that, as a member of the Cabinet, I was merely a unit in an impersonal whole. You have indeed frequently given me credit for exhibiting great courtesy and forbearance, and I thank you for this further tribute to the pacific and peaceful nature of my general bearing in Cabinet.

(T.) It is hardly necessary now to discuss this matter further. I have the knowledge that my case was discussed at meetings of Cabinet at which Messrs. Hislop, Fergus, Mitchelson, Richardson, and yourself were present, but from which I was absent, and at meetings at which none but yourself and Messrs. Hislop and Fergus were present. Again, I say, I have particularly good reason for making the statement that had the matter been discussed in full Cabinet, and in my presence, a different result would have been arrived at. But I raise this question: I was a member of the Government, having the right to be present at every Cabinet meeting to protect myself against wilful or unintentional misrepresentation. Was it fair or honourable to discuss such an important matter affecting me in my absence? I objected to meet the Hon. Mr. Hislop to discuss again with him that particular brewery case. The question of my resignation from the Ministry was a question transcending in importance any question relating to breweries or brewers.

(U.) (V.) (W.) I have already gone over this ground at very considerable length.

(X.) I also must enter a strong protest against the statements contained in your concluding paragraph. I am sure His Excellency the Administrator will do me the justice to believe that I would be the last person in the world to offer him any disrespect. His Excellency is too much respected to admit of the possibility of any act of discourtesy or disrespect being offered to him by even the meanest of Her Majesty's subjects in this colony. It is true that a hundred copies of my reply to you were printed on Saturday, the 6th April; but for what purpose? I had already suffered sufficiently by the dissemination of the slanders promulgated by you; and, if proof is needed of what these slanders are, one has only to read your letter to me of the 23rd April, to which I am now replying. His Excellency was engaged in the discharge of his official duties in a part of the colony far from the seat of Government, and, although, upon the dictum of Gladstone's "Kin