

23. I had no discussion with you personally on this subject except asking you to present the petition?—None whatever: there was no reference whatever to this particular matter between yourself or myself either personally or by letter.

24. *Mr. Armstrong.*] What other matters with reference to the election have you letters about?—I do not know whether the Committee is prepared to go into the various matters connected with the elections that were under your control as Returning Officer or not—I am at the disposal of the Committee.

The Chairman: I think it would be better if Mr. Armstrong would confine himself to some particular point.

25. *Mr. Armstrong.*] He made mention that there were other matters that were not regular—I want to find out from him what these matters are which he refers to?—As you have put the question, and I take the silence of the Committee to indicate consent, I will repeat a statement made by one of the Deputy Returning Officers.

26. Who was it?—Mr. Andrew.

27. *The Chairman.*] Was it in writing or verbal?—Verbal; the statement was that the Returning Officer wished to know which way Mr. Andrew's personal vote would be cast. Another matter that came under my notice was that in appointing scrutineers to act for me at the polling-booths, Mr. Armstrong promised that he would secure that his Deputy Returning Officer would permit the scrutineers whose names I gave him to act. I relied on his statement to that effect. Mr. Armstrong was perfectly well aware that by course of mail it was impossible for a letter to reach the Deputy Returning Officer in time, and yet he sent the intimation by post. Certain difficulties consequently arose on the day of the election. I may mention one particular place called Homewood.

28. *Mr. Armstrong.*] When did you send me in your list of scrutineers?—I am not prepared to state the day I sent in the list of scrutineers; but I have stated what took place between us.

29. Was it not on the Wednesday that you sent them in; the election was on Friday. On the Thursday did you not come to me and ask me whether I had sent the note to the deputy? Did I not tell you that on the receipt of the nominations I wrote out the list? Did you not ask me to write a second note, and I said it would be delivered? Did I not tell you I was too busy to do so, and that if you wrote the note I would see that it was delivered?—You assured me that you would personally arrange with the Deputy Returning Officer, and I took that assurance.

30. You were bound by a certain clause of the Act to send me a list of the scrutineers?—What you stated to me was this: that you would personally arrange with the Deputy Returning Officer that those scrutineers whose names I gave you would be accepted as my scrutineers. It was also discussed between us that the mail would be too late to reach the Deputy Returning Officer before the day of election.

31. Did you not go out to get the notices written, and did you not come back to me in the office, sign them, and send them off?—No; you were to take your own steps to see that these scrutineers were accepted by the Deputy Returning Officer.

32. You state that I was to see the Deputy Returning Officer some thirty-five miles away?—The thing is quite distinct in my memory: it happened as I have said.

33. You mentioned public opinion being strong about my conduct?—What point are you referring to?

34. Will you mention the names of those who expressed an opinion against my conduct?—I made no reference to names.

35. *Mr. Holland.*] Did you put the notices in in consequence of something you saw in the newspapers?—No; the notices were necessary before scrutineers could act.

36. *Mr. Lang.*] Was Mr. Armstrong's name publicly mentioned as a probable candidate?—Yes.

37. Does it state what particular side he was likely to take?—There was no doubt as to the particular side on which Mr. Armstrong would be if he came forward as a candidate.

38. That was before his appointment as Returning Officer?—It must have been, but I cannot give you the exact date.

39. Then, it was in consequence of his being a probable candidate that he was appointed Returning Officer?—It will, of course, occur to Mr. Lang that Mr. Armstrong's name could not possibly have been mentioned as a candidate after he was appointed Returning Officer.

40. *Mr. Armstrong.*] Was it not a "fishing" leader in the *Wairarapa Daily* which published my name?—It is impossible for me to give any answer to that. I know nothing of any "fishing" business.

Mr. COLEMAN PHILLIPS's Statement.

Mr. Phillips: The nominations were closed by Mr. Armstrong on Wednesday, the 25th of November; the proper time to have closed the nominations was Friday, the 27th: he therefore closed them two days before the proper time. I saw Mr. Armstrong on the Thursday morning (the 26th), about 10.30 a.m., in the presence of Mr. Baylis and Mr. Driscoll. He said that he had closed the time for receiving nominations yesterday. I told him that I had been out at the back, and did not know it. He said "You could have seen the newspapers." I told him I had not. I said that the rule to close was seven days before the day of election, as provided by the Act. He said, "I have been advised that the conduct of the election, after the writs are issued, belongs to me." He said he had fixed yesterday. I then said, "Do you refuse to accept my nomination?" He said, "Yes." I said then, "I will post it to you." He said, "It is no use; I will only return it to you." I had the nomination-paper filled in, as my intention was to post it in Greytown. I got three electors to sign it and took it to Mr. Armstrong by 11.15 a.m. I said, "Well, Mr. Armstrong, this is my nomination-paper, and here is a cheque for £10; I am just going to change it to give to you." He replied, "It is no use. You can post it if you like, but I will return it to you." I said, "Very well, then, I will post it. But