

47 *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward*] When the request was made by you, Mr. Whitlock, to Mr. Jennings to have an interview with me, where did you desire to have that interview?—In Wellington. I came down for the purpose of having an interview with you in Wellington.

48. What was the answer given by me to you, through Mr. Jennings, as to your request to have an interview with me in Wellington: did I not refuse it on account of my being too busy? You sent out word that you were very busy, and wished to know when I was going back. I think that was the message Mr. Jennings came back with.

49. The answer you got was that I could not give the interview in Wellington?—Yes.

50. Where did the interview that you have referred to take place?—Soon after the train left Palmerston.

51. Do you recollect whether on that occasion, as the outcome of a late night's work, I was taking it easy in the train going from Wellington to Palmerston—that I was asleep?—I did not see anything of you between Wellington and Palmerston, but you were lying on the couch when I went in.

52. In the interview that you had with me on the train near Palmerston North, what request did you make?—I cannot tell you exactly the words.

53. I only want the subject-matter of the request?—That the paper should be reinstated on the list.

54. And what answer did you get from me?—You stated that you could see no reason why the paper should not have the advertisements.

55. Did I ask you to make formal application in the ordinary way?—I do not remember you asking me, but I think you did.

56. As a matter of fact, did you, after the interview with me, apply for the paper being put on the Government list in the ordinary way?—Yes.

57. And the result of that was?—That we received a letter shortly afterwards stating that the paper had been placed on the list.

58. Can you tell the Committee what the amount paid to the *Stratford Evening Post* was for that year, 1905?—It would be a considerable amount. We printed the electoral rolls that year, and there were the usual Government advertisements.

59. If I said that the amount was £118 18s. 6d., a higher amount than was paid at any previous election in that district, would you contradict me?—No, sir, I would not.

60. Do you know that the *Stratford Evening Post* received advertisements relating to both the Patea and Egmont Electorates?—Yes, I know that it did.

61. Now, Mr. Whitlock, when did you see that letter of the 4th October from Mr. Symes to Mr. McCluggage?—Just before I came down to Wellington. I know that that was the letter that brought me down.

62. The contents of that letter indicated that it was private?—Yes, to a certain extent. I had to show it to the directors.

63. Now, what I want to ask you is this. In a letter which has the following words in it, "You are at liberty to make use of this privately with manager and directors, but not for publication," if your directors had requested you to show a letter marked 'Private and confidential' for a special purpose, would you look upon it as a proper thing to hand that letter over to a third party to read?—No, sir, I should not.

64. Then, if your directors had requested you to make use of a letter of a private and confidential character such as that, would you as an honest man have handed me that letter to read?—I do not think so. It is worded rather broadly. Permission is given me to make use of this letter privately—there is a certain permission given.

65. Well, as a matter of fact, Mr. Whitlock, did you show me that letter?—I do not remember having shown it to you, sir. I distinctly remember showing it to Mr. Jennings.

66. If you remember having shown it to Mr. Jennings, and if you had shown it to me, would you remember it or not, in all probability?—I think I should remember just as well as I remember handing it to Mr. Jennings, or more so.

67. You see the suggestion is, according to the statement made by Mr. Hine in the House, that this is a matter of 'Tammanyism,' and his counsel in putting questions to the previous witness appears to suggest that I had seen that letter before.

*Mr. Allen* Oh, no! not that I know of.

*Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward* Pardon me. The question was asked as to whether I had not seen that letter, or whether the contents of that letter were sent to me, and, seeing that I stated I had not seen it—

*The Chairman* You have had the witness's answer to the effect that he has no recollection of showing you the letter.

68. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward* (to witness).] You received the authority for the Government advertisements in the reconstructed company, but that did not in any way change the policy of the paper. The *Egmont Post* previously had not received the Government advertisements, but with the reconstructed paper, which absorbed the *Egmont Post* and became the *Stratford Evening Post*, you received, upon application to me as Minister in charge of the Department, the whole of the Government advertisements without any condition of any sort or kind?—Absolutely without any condition.

69. As manager of the paper, I should like to know from you, Mr. Whitlock, whether any attempt on my part or on the part of the Government was at any time made to influence your paper as to the line of policy it should adopt prior to the general election in 1905 or 1908 with regard to any candidate?—The question of the policy of the paper never occurred either at any interview or in any correspondence.

70. Or treatment of candidates?—Or treatment of candidates.