

*Sir Julius Vogel* : I would like to say that, in the course of correspondence which took place years ago, Sir George Grey will observe that I made no reference to him individually in the matter. It was not until Mr. Stout spoke the other day that I recollected that I was informed that Sir George Grey had been asked to become a director. I hardly think the evidence I have given shows sufficiently strongly how many members of the Government were aware of the matter. Mr. Larnach was, of course, a member of the Government, and was acting as special agent at Home. Mr. Stout continued to be a member of the Government and corresponded with me. Mr. Ballance went down to turn the first sod of the railway, and after that I distinctly recollect his sending me a telegram saying what magnificent country it was. I am almost sure Mr. Sheehan was aware of it; and Mr. Macandrew certainly was. I put it to Sir George Grey whether, with all the evidence before me, I was not entitled to think the Government would not object to my joining the company. The correspondence I read to-day took place some time after I joined, when, as I explained in my evidence, I formally applied for permission to act as a director; but, certainly, at the time I had every reason to believe there was no doubt that the Government thought the company would be of essential service, and that it was desirable I should give my service.

*Sir George Grey* : To that I reply that the telegrams that I sent to you went with the knowledge and consent of the Cabinet; and how could I possibly have believed that persons who consented to such telegrams going had encouraged you to enter into a position of the kind? I could only judge from the facts.

*Sir Julius Vogel* : This correspondence was months afterwards, Sir George.

*Sir George Grey* : I do not understand that. I simply know that the moment I was aware of what you had done, I took a decided course, which I never departed from. The moment I knew the Agent-General was a director of the company, I insisted peremptorily upon his doing one of two things—either to resign the directorship or the Agent-Generalship. I simply wish to clear myself from the slur that has been thrown upon me. I think one of the letters was from Mr. Fox, and I want to know under what authority the Private Secretary of the Premier acted in writing a semi-official letter to any person in England. What position was Mr. Fox in to write a letter of that kind?

*Sir Julius Vogel* : He was, I fancy, either Private Secretary to Sir John Hall or Secretary to the Cabinet, or both. I am not quite sure.

*Sir George Grey* : That does not quite clear up my doubt. I do not quite understand what right a person in that position had to correspond with you in that way.

*Sir Julius Vogel* : The letter says that his writing to me was because Sir John Hall was not well enough to write.

*Sir George Grey* : Does it purport to be written by Sir John Hall's direction?

*Sir Julius Vogel* : I think, if you read it, you will see there is no doubt about that. The letter goes on, after the passage I have already read, as follows: "Mr. Hall will probably write to you on these points as well as others, but he is far from well, is awfully worried with work, and may be prevented writing. He wishes that something should certainly reach you on the subject. Therefore this."

*The Chairman* (to Sir George Grey) : I should like to ask, in reference to this £40,000, how did that come to your knowledge?—Some one of the Ministers mentioned it. I could not at this distance of time tell who.

You did not take any means of ascertaining the facts beyond mere statement?—No. I was asked to be a provisional director, and I was told that others of the Ministry thought of being so, and then I was told—I could not say by whom—that £40,000 was to be divided amongst the promoters.

*Mr. Samuel* : At the same interview?—Well, there were two or three interviews in the day. Mr. Stout was not the only one who spoke to me. Mr. Sheehan, I think, spoke to me, and I am not sure Mr. Ballance did not.

Did you take it that this amount of £40,000 was intended to be an inducement to you to become a director?—I have no right to say that; but that the promoters would get a division of that amount. Of course I am quite ignorant of these things, but the Committee will know better than I do whether a provisional director would be a promoter. I understand that division would be amongst the promoters, whoever they were. I was told that two of my Ministers had contemplated becoming directors, and I felt grateful that from the moment I expressed an opinion against it there was no recurrence to the matter.

*The Chairman* : Have you any opinion in reference to the appointment of Sir Julius Vogel as Inscribed Stock Agent?—Nothing of that, as far as I can recollect, came within my knowledge. The one thing I recollect is, the moment I heard he was a director of the company, I instantly submitted the matter to the Cabinet, and, as far as I know, there was a general acquiescence in the course I pursued.

FRIDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER, AND MONDAY, 7TH SEPTEMBER, 1885.

Hon. Major ATKINSON, M.H.R., examined.

1. *Mr. Turnbull*.] When you succeeded to office in 1879, Sir Julius Vogel was Agent-General?—Yes.

2. Was there any correspondence in the office in reference to Sir Julius Vogel's position as Agent-General?—Yes; there was a correspondence going on with the Government which we succeeded about the position which Sir Julius Vogel held as a director of the New Zealand Agricultural Company, and it had arrived at that point where the late Premier had called upon Sir Julius Vogel to resign either the directorship of the Agricultural Company or the Agent-Generalship.