

the way it strikes me. Technically, I say, Sir Julius Vogel is out of Court with regard to commission on the Five-million Loan, because, *de facto*, he was Agent-General; but I say, in spirit, No. So with regard to this. If it is said that is a private letter, and any promise to you cannot be brought forward: I do not think that is a spirit the Parliament of any country should take up. It would be different if it was a private letter surreptitiously obtained. But really there are some things that cannot in their very nature be private. If a letter, which is alleged to be a private letter, is brought forward publicly, you get to look upon that letter as public; the mere calling it a private letter does not make it so. If, in the essence of that letter—in its spirit, in its construction, and in the whole tenor of it—it refers to public matters, that is not a private letter. I am speaking freely, because I have no doubt in my mind; but I do not think for a moment that Sir John Hall ever did anything which he thought was wrong. I think it was excessive conscientiousness led him to write that letter. A letter may not have the official seal or official signature, and it may not be copied in the press letter-book, but that does not constitute the difference. I say the whole of that is a public letter. There is nothing private in it. I speak with diffidence on this point, and only express my own very humble opinion. A private letter means a confidential communication that is sacred. Sir John Hall was incapable of anything of that sort—of uttering words of plausibility in a private letter, and in his public acts being contrary: no such thing is he capable of. Every word of this letter is public, although not written as Premier or Colonial Secretary. There is no word of caution to regard the letter as confidential, the whole thing breathes public questions, and with respect to public matters discussed on public grounds.

173. Then, you think this letter should have equal weight as if the matter had been discussed in Cabinet and a public letter sent?—I do. Let me say that my experience of Cabinets is that anything discussed there is as sacred as the honour of woman, or the honour of a man who would rather die than forego his word. Nothing is written down in Cabinets; and if a man does anything contrary to the spirit of what is agreed upon he is not worthy to hold a seat in any Cabinet. Especially that applies to the Premier, who is supposed to specially represent the mind of the Cabinet.

174. *Sir J. Vogel.*] You were Home in 1867, and were well acquainted with the financial world of London, especially its colonial side. I would like to ask whether you consider the failure to reappoint me as Loan Agent was calculated to injure me in the eyes of the people connected with financial affairs in London?—There can be no doubt about it. It was a serious injury, payable by compensation—there is no doubt about it.

175. Are you able to corroborate me in my recollection that you and I have never spoken upon this subject before? I may state this to the Committee: I have, in my position as Speaker of the Legislative Council, kept myself entirely aloof from matters of this sort, and the only license I allow myself is, if people come into my room and ask my opinion, I think there I may and do give my advice. But I have never called upon Sir Julius Vogel, and have never seen him since his return to the colony, except on one occasion in public on the Hutt racecourse, when I thought, as president of the club, it was a civility that I should go and say a word to him. That is the only occasion I have ever exchanged a word with Sir Julius Vogel since his coming out, and then this subject was not even alluded to. I have a high respect for Sir Julius Vogel, although we differ in our policy of finance as widely as any men in the country. I would not like to trust myself to say how strongly I differ from him, and my opinion in this is not the opinion of a person who admires his policy of finance. I say this, that if I do not know something about these matters I ought to know. Whatever ability I have had has been employed in the study of the finances of the colony. I have had fifteen months' intercourse with all the leading men in England connected with the colonies; I have had charge of loans and conversions; and in the inscription of stock I had many interviews with Mr. Westgarth, who was one of the first persons who brought it forward. I think Sir Julius Vogel has done this work admirably that had to be done, and I think he is entitled to that commission upon the negotiation of the Five-million Loan; and as to the injury done him in a commercial point of view through deprivation of office, I say it is greater than I care to name.