

(Telegram.)

26th October, 1895.

IN reply to your telegram, I was not on the wharf at Wellington when the "Hauroto," with Mr. John Murray, arrived. I had no engagement to meet you there then, nor to meet him with you on any other occasion; nor did I once see that gentleman in company with you since his return from South Africa.

Hon. J. G. Ward, Wellington.

H. McKENZIE, Dunedin.

(Telegram.)

26th October, 1895.

STATEMENT made twice in House yesterday by John Duthie that, accompanied by Watson and Henry McKenzie, I had met you on your arrival from Sydney, recently, either on the "Hauroto" or on the wharf. Will you please say whether, by myself, or with either Watson or McKenzie, or both, I met you either on the "Hauroto" or on the wharf on the occasion of your arrival.

John Murray, care of Bank of New Zealand, Sydney.

J. G. WARD, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

26th October, 1895.

STATEMENT that you met me on "Hauroto," on wharf, or in company with any one, absolutely untrue.

Hon. J. G. Ward, Wellington.

JOHN MURRAY, Sydney.

No. 2.

Mr. J. DUTHIE, M.H.R., to the Hon. Mr. J. G. WARD.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 29th October, 1895.

The language in which your letter of the 26th instant is couched would justify me in returning it to you without reply. Unfortunately, however, some Ministers seem to have acquired a habit of using words which it is only charitable to believe they do not fully see the meaning of, and perhaps I should not therefore expect a letter of another tone or language from you. In replying, I must first correct some of your statements.

I never said—and I corrected you in the House when you charged me with it—that in company with Mr. Watson and Mr. Henry McKenzie you met Mr. John Murray. My statement was to the effect that you met Mr. Murray on his arrival, whether accidentally or otherwise, and that the other gentlemen named also met him. My informants adhere to that statement, although there is a not-unusual reluctance to appear to give evidence. The influence of the Government and of a powerful bank, who would voluntarily care to run counter to? I believe, however, that reluctance can be overcome in a sufficient number of cases to enable me to produce evidence. You cannot, however, be serious in asking that I should submit names and evidence to you. I am afraid that, were I to do so, judging by the remarks in your letter, such evidence would not convince you. An investigation, if such is to be held, should surely be before some one who could act in a judicial manner.

I may state that I should accept the evidence of Messrs. Murray, McKenzie, and Watson as of value; and if they intend to make statements it would only be fair to me that I should have an opportunity of putting questions to them. I would like to ask them whether they did meet Mr. Murray on his arrival, and put some other queries to them.

I may add that every statement I made was from information received by me from persons I deemed, and still deem, reliable and honourable. If I have been misled I would feel extremely sorry, and would at once retract my statement that you had met Mr. Murray. That seems to me the issue between us. If you agree, I think the question as to whether you did meet Mr. Murray, and whether I was told so, might be submitted to the investigation of some impartial person, before whom both of us could produce witnesses. If you agree to this course, I can appoint a friend to see you, or any one you may name, to arrange for such an investigation.

Hon. J. G. Ward.

Yours, &c.,

JOHN DUTHIE.

No. 3.

The Hon. Mr. J. G. WARD to Mr. J. DUTHIE, M.H.R.

SIR,—

Wellington, 29th October, 1895.

I am in receipt of your letter of to-day's date, and I note that you find fault—which is not at all unusual with you—with the manner which I have thought proper to address you, and you endeavour to make political capital as against the Ministry upon what is essentially a matter of personal concern to me, as a result of statements made by you in the House during a debate—a statement denied by me, repeated by you, again denied by me, and yet again repeated by you with a declaration by you that you were prepared to produce witnesses to prove your assertion, and which challenge at the time I accepted, and I stated that I was prepared to meet you outside the House on the matter. Accordingly, I invited you by letter to do as you had offered in the House to do, namely, to produce your proofs and clear yourself from the imputation of having promulgated what I declared in the House at the time to be untrue, and which I now repeat is absolutely untrue. I am quite agreeable to have the question submitted to any tribunal you like to name, before whom witnesses could be produced, the only condition being that it should be open to the Press and public. Apart from the fact that the statement made by you can be disproved, it would be at least interesting to know the class of men who are prepared to spy upon a man's movements, and to report them to a political opponent, to be used for party purposes.