

*The Chairman:* We are not going into that. This is simply a preliminary meeting, with a view to getting evidence. This is all the information you can give the Committee with regard to calling evidence on your behalf?

*Mr. Payne:* Yes.

*The Chairman:* What is Mr. McMaster's Christian name and address?

*Mr. Payne:* Charles McMaster, Merchant, Richmond, Auckland.

*The Chairman:* Was there any one there also with Mr. McMaster in that office?

*Mr. Payne:* No, he was by himself, although Mr. O'Connor was behind the bar and served us drinks at the same time.

*The Chairman:* Did he hear what took place?

*Mr. Payne:* No, no one could possibly hear. We were in a private office.

TUESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY.

*The Chairman* (to Mr. Massey): We purpose taking No. 1 Order of Reference referred to us by the House—"That a Committee of Privilege be appointed to take into full consideration the writing and publishing of a letter, admitted to be written to and received by the honourable member for Franklin, an extract from which letter was to-day read in the House by the honourable member, and a copy of which extract is as follows: 'You may remember my introducing you to young —, son of —, one of my young Catholic party who do not follow Ward. He worked hard and loyally for us in Parnell, Ponsonby, and especially in Grey Lynn. He now assures me that Payne has been squared (£1,000) to support Ward on a confidence motion. So sure is he of the correctness of the information that his dad is offering level money up to £100 on Payne voting against you on such motion, and — does not waste any money on bets without some reason.' That, as the writing and publishing of the said extract has been declared by the House to be a breach of its privileges, the writing and publishing of such letter and such extract, also the question of the truth or otherwise of the charge or charges alleged in such extract or letter, be referred to the following Committee to inquire into and report their proceedings, with their opinions thereon, to the House." Mr. Massey, you appear by counsel?

*Mr. Massey:* Yes. I would like to explain that I only ascertained this morning—and then by chance—that counsel would be admitted. I immediately rang up Mr. Myers, and have not yet had an opportunity of instructing him. If Mr. Myers is to appear for me I think such opportunity should be given.

*The Chairman:* Do you wish an adjournment?

*Mr. M. Myers:* Of course, this matter involves a question of some importance—

*The Chairman:* You appear for Mr. Massey?

*Mr. M. Myers:* Yes; and I would like to have an opportunity of conferring with him and going very carefully into the whole matter.

*Mr. Payne:* As Mr. Massey wants to be represented by counsel. I also wish to be represented by counsel, and for a similar reason.

*The Chairman:* What adjournment do you ask for, Mr. Myers?

*Mr. M. Myers:* I suggest that Thursday morning would be a convenient time.

*The Chairman:* That is too long.

*Mr. Payne:* An hour will suit me, Mr. Hanan.

*Mr. M. Myers:* I presume the Committee does not want to put any questions to me at this stage as to the reason for which I want an adjournment for a particular time. It would be very inconvenient, and I could not say anything more than that before, say, to-morrow.

*The Chairman:* The ground on which you make your application is that you have only been instructed this morning?

*Mr. M. Myers:* You are now putting a question to me.

*The Chairman:* I think you ought to show reasonable grounds. You can hardly expect the Committee to grant an adjournment unless you show grounds.

*Mr. M. Myers:* The position is this: that, even if we did go on to-morrow morning, it is more than likely that I should have to ask for an adjournment until the evening. There is no doubt that we shall be able to go on in the evening.

*Hon. Mr. Millar:* We cannot sit in the evening.

*The Chairman:* You, Mr. Payne, want an adjournment for how long?

*Mr. Payne:* An hour would be long enough for all I have to say.

*The Chairman:* You want an adjournment for an hour in order to employ counsel?

*Mr. Payne:* Yes.

*Mr. Russell:* I would like to ask what the position will be. Immediately the House rises this Committee will cease to exist. In the present position of politics we do not know when the work of the House will be finished. It might be finished this afternoon, and what then will be the position if Parliament finishes its business and prorogues and we find ourselves unable to complete our investigations?

*The Chairman:* That is a matter for deliberation, is it not? The question is for adjournment, and the point you raise—

*Mr. Russell:* The point I wish to submit is this: I do not wish in any way to prevent Mr. Massey having the fullest opportunity to instruct his counsel, but a resolution was passed yesterday afternoon that counsel should be admitted, and it appears to me that Mr. Massey has his evidence and had the opportunity on Friday or Saturday of stating for the benefit of the Committee what witnesses he desires to call. The witnesses are here.

*Mr. M. Myers:* No.