

131. Was that the time he was a Councillor?—It may have been at the time; I am not sure.
132. Was he a respectable man?—Yes; I knew nothing against him.
133. Was the House sitting at the time the first petition was sent to Wellington?—I could not say—in fact, the first petition was done rather on the quiet, and not a great many people knew of it.
134. You were in the Council at the time?—Yes.
135. How did the Council get to know of the fact that there was a number of people on the petition who were not ratepayers?—I could not say.
136. And you do not know how those people came to be disqualified?—No, I cannot say.
137. Was a copy of the petition sent from Wellington to the Borough Council?—Do you mean the first one?
138. Yes?—Well, I cannot say.
139. Were you a friend of Simmonds's?—Well, I was on friendly terms.
140. Did you ever act with him in connection with this petition?—I may have signed the first one and the second one.
141. Was there any difficulty in getting signatures to the second petition?—I do not know; some signed to clear Mr. Wylde's character, and some to get an investigation.
142. Do you think that the auditors' report and the conviction of Wylde justifies the action of those who got up the petition?—Well, the end proves that something was wrong, and the man suffered for it.
143. Now, with regard to these motions of the Borough Council, you told the Committee, in answer to Mr. Seddon, that it was not unusual for the Council to sit until 1.30 a.m., or even after that?—Well, we often did.
144. Do you remember any other occasion on which the Council sat after that hour?—No; but there were odds and ends which took the Council a long time to deal with.
145. But I want a definite answer: are you quite clear that on other occasions the Council sat until after 1.30?—Yes, I am quite certain of that.
146. At about the second meeting do you remember the Council sitting until about 8.30 a.m.?—Yes, I remember that.
147. What business were you occupied with during the night?—Well, I remember a claim by a man named Davidson for compensation for gravel removed; that was talked about in the Council that night, and the majority were against it.
148. What was the amount claimed?—I cannot say.
149. Have you read the report of that meeting in the *West Coast Times*?—I tried to look it up in the Borough Council's books, but I found nothing.
150. Is it not a fact that a number of adjournments were moved?—Yes.
151. How many?—I cannot say. I would not be a bit surprised if it were found that I myself moved some of the adjournment motions.
152. And much of the time was occupied in moving these adjournments: was that not the case?—Yes.
153. Do you not think that that was blocking the business?—I do not know. Both sides were moving adjournments.
154. Now, were these adjournments being moved in order to prevent consideration of the special audit business?—No; the idea was to try to convert one another.
155. These adjournments were moved while you were discussing the Davidson business?—Well, some of them were, and members were trying to persuade one another both inside and outside the Council.
156. Some of the Councillors were in favour of paying compensation: was that so.—Yes; and we ultimately adjourned at the late hour—or, rather, I should say, early the next morning, as already stated.
157. At what time did the motions for adjournments come on?—It was pretty late—or, rather, early in the morning.
158. You do not remember how many adjournments were moved?—No; we pretty well exhausted all we could talk about, and tried to persuade one another to come to a settlement of the work.
159. Do you remember an adjournment being moved at about 8 o'clock in the morning, and the question being put?—Yes.
160. Were you present?—Yes.
161. Was Mr. Seddon?—No. Some of the Councillors took advantage of Mr. Seddon and other Councillors being away, and they carried a resolution.
162. Was Mr. Seddon pleased, or otherwise?—Well, none of them were pleased.
163. Did they express themselves forcibly at all?—Of course, they did not like it; but we afterwards went and had a look at some ground—that was after 8 o'clock in the morning, and Mr. Seddon was with us.
164. What, you did that after sitting all night?—Yes; the Public Works Committee did that.
- The Chairman:* There must have been strong men in those days.
- Mr. Massey:* There were giants in those days.
165. *Hon. J. McKenzie.*] To the best of your recollection, is the report of the *West Coast Times* on this meeting correct?—I have not read it lately. I do not know.
166. Of course, you have had a long experience of newspaper reporters: do you think they give true and faithful reports?—Well, the likes of this man Simmons I could not answer for; he may have reported this in the paper.
167. *Mr. Duncan.*] Did they not have a regular reporter on the paper?—No.
168. *Hon. J. McKenzie.*] Is it likely that Simmons may have coloured this report?—I could not say.