

212. He was Mayor subsequently?—Yes.

212A. Whom did he contest the Mayoralty with?—He contested it with Mr. Burger, and defeated him.

213. You are a Justice of the Peace?—Yes.

214. If any one said that the character I bore on the Coast was of indifferent repute, would that be correct?—No, certainly not.

215. There seems to have been some irregularity on the part of the Finance Committee: the auditors report that you did not keep minutes of your proceedings?—I believe that minutes were kept.

216. Well, do you suggest that anything has been destroyed, or what has become of them?—I cannot say.

217. Well, they could not be found in 1882 when the special audit was made?—I do not know anything of the minutes.

218. A bill was given on the 7th April, 1880, for £96, with interest added, to Nathaniel Seddon; do you recollect for what term that bill was given?—I know that wages had gone in arrears.

219. Well, did that cover wages to date?—I cannot say.

220. You have no knowledge what term that bill covered?—No.

221. As far as your memory serves, to what extent was the Borough Council in arrears with Seddon's wages?—I think £80 or £90 at one time.

222. At this special time?—A little before.

223. That bill would, I presume, clear wages up to date?—It is likely, but I cannot say positively.

224. Well, say to the end of the month—to the 31st March?—Yes, probably so.

225. The bank-book shows that the Council was in funds at that date: what was the need to give bills when you were in funds at the bank?—Well, I do not think the Council was in funds.

226. On the 31st March, 1880, you were overdrawn?—That might have been so.

227. Did the bank allow any accommodation?—They did so at one time, allowing us to draw up to £500; but I am not sure whether it was at the time you are referring to.

228. Well, usually a Borough Council gets some latitude, and it is most unusual to pay day-labourers by a bill. The two things seem so extraordinary that I can hardly reconcile them?—Well, it was done at the time; there was no other way we could see to get over the difficulty.

229. Would not the bank give you more than £35?—I do not know, but that was what we got at the time. I think the account was shifted on account of the bank not being liberal enough.

230. In the special auditors' report there are various cash payments referred to: do you remember them during the term that this amount is supposed to have accrued?—I cannot say.

231. We find there are several vouchers passed by yourself with your signature attached, but there are no receipts attached to them: that, I suppose, is simply because you had not funds?—That is likely the explanation.

232. Ultimately, having got the authority of the Council, a payment took place; and would that payment be in accordance with the voucher?—Yes, I expect that would be so.

233. But you have no knowledge?—No.

234. Did you again present them *in globo* when the Council was in funds?—All I can say is they were passed and paid from time to time.

235. There are said to be certain vouchers missing—that is, between the time of the special auditors' report and the time of the investigation first taking place before the Council when Wylde was suspended? You left Wylde in charge?—Yes, he was treasurer.

236. He had been questioned by the auditors from time to time in reference to transactions not explained by the vouchers?—Yes.

237. Do you know that of your own knowledge—that he was questioned as to the vouchers?—I cannot say from my own knowledge.

238. But, as chairman of the Finance Committee, you had some experience, I presume?—Yes.

239. And yet you, still as chairman of the Finance Committee, left Wylde in charge of those documents on which so much hinged—those vouchers?—Yes.

240. Were you surprised that several of those vouchers were missing in November?—I was very much surprised when I heard of it.

241. You were very much surprised?—Yes.

242. You are aware that Wylde, in his evidence, blamed O'Hagan for having made away with them?—I think I did hear something of that.

243. O'Hagan's object would be to preserve those documents as evidence against Wylde, would it not?—Certainly.

244. Yet did you accept that explanation of Wylde's as sufficient?—Well, that matter did not come prominently before us. It was a matter of opinion afterwards.

245. But did not you think you were very much to blame for having left Wylde in charge of important evidence?—The proceedings had been taken before we heard of this—at least, before I did.

246. The proceedings I am referring to are the audit because of the suspicion of irregularities on the part of Wylde; yet you, as chairman of the Finance Committee, left him in charge of important documents: was that so?—Yes.

247. Now, do not you think you were very much to blame, on reflection, for having done so?—Well, at this time of day I might think so, but at the time I had no such suspicions.

248. It was a fact you should have acted upon, and put these documents in other custody—that seems apparent to you?—Well, of course, the Council did take the matter up.

249. There is only one other matter I wish to ask. It has been stated as regards Mr. R. J. Seddon that a document was produced in Court to the effect that he was to receive moneys on