

account of Nathaniel Seddon: do you remember such a document being in existence?—No, I have not heard of it.

250. Were you examined in Court?—No.

251. *Mr. Duncan.*] You stated that the Finance Committee kept minutes, or entered minutes of their meetings?—Yes; that was the duty of the Town Clerk.

252. Was Wylde present at the Finance Committee's meetings?—Yes.

253. And he took minutes?—Yes.

254. With regard to the payments to Nathaniel Seddon being behind so long, did Nathaniel Seddon press the Council for his wages when they were due at the end of each month, or did they stand over occasionally?—He allowed them to stand over; he knew that the borough funds were very low sometimes.

255. And he let you pay on later dates?—Yes; I never knew him to press for his wages.

256. Were his circumstances such that he could afford to wait for his money?—Yes.

257. *Mr. Morrison.*] You were chairman of the Finance Committee for some considerable period?—Yes.

258. Can you give any idea of the term: were you chairman in 1880?—I think so.

259. How long did you hold that position?—For about twelve months. It was usually for twelve months.

260. Were you not re-elected?—I do not know. I cannot say from memory. Generally the chairmanship was passed round.

261. There are vouchers here bearing your signature in 1880 and 1881, so that it follows you were chairman more than one year?—Yes.

262. You have stated that minutes were kept and written up by the Town Clerk?—Yes.

263. Was it the custom of the chairman of the Finance Committee to sign vouchers such as these where there are certain blanks? Is that your signature?—Yes.

264. You are satisfied that these are all your signatures?—Yes, I think so.

265. You will see by this voucher that it is examined and certified as correct, and passed for payment by order of the Finance Committee, and signed A. C. Campbell; Was it your usual habit to set your signature to such a voucher?—I do not know.

266. Can you give an explanation of this: Here is a voucher, 13th May, £18, paid to Nathaniel Seddon, receipted on the 17th November, 1880. What is the reason of payment being held over so long?—I do not know of any explanation except the want of funds.

267. Are you not aware that the balance-sheets of the Kumara Borough Council show credit balances generally?—I do not know that I can give you any explanation of that, it is so long ago.

268. *Mr. Graham.*] It is quite possible that you may have been short of funds during the six months, although you had a credit at the end?—Yes.

269. *Mr. Morrison.*] There are two vouchers for four weeks—Nathaniel Seddon, £12; and one to Keenan for £7 5s.—with your signatures attached, but there is no receipt: can you give any explanation?—It was the Town Clerk's duty to get receipts. I did not pay away the money. I signed the voucher as a matter of form.

270. But it was part of your duty to put in the date?—Well, we were new to municipal matters at the time; that is all I can say.

271. In fact, the whole matter was left in the hands of the Town Clerk—you had every confidence in the man?—Yes, that was so.

272. You have no reason to believe that Nathaniel Seddon received any overpayment?—No.

273. What sort of a character had Nathaniel Seddon?—He had an excellent character, and was a good servant to the Council.

274. He was not a man who was hard-up and pressing for money?—No, not at all; he never pressed for money.

275. *Mr. Massey.*] Did not you tell us that the Borough Council had an arrangement with the bank for an overdraft?—Yes; but I cannot state from memory when that was.

276. You do not know whether it existed just prior to the trouble?—No.

277. You said you scarcely thought that Wylde had had fair-play: do you think he was guilty of the offence with which he was charged, and for which he received twelve months?—The Supreme Court has decided that question. It is scarcely right to offer my opinion. There was a strong party feeling in the Council at that time. One party was for criminal proceedings, and the other for an investigation by the Council. I thought it was rather hard on Wylde, and to me it seemed that he scarcely got fair-play.

278. Did you sign a petition for the special audit?—I cannot say.

279. Do you remember who got up the petition?—I remember a man named Simmons having something to do with it.

280. Did he take an active part in municipal affairs?—Yes.

281. Was he a Councillor?—Yes; but he contracted to do certain work for the Council, and thereby lost his seat.

282. Do you remember at whose request Simmons furnished certain chimneys?—At the Council's request.

283. Did the Town Clerk give an order to Simmons for this work?—Yes, by order of the Council.

284. You are quite clear that the taking of this work was the reason of Simmons being disqualified as a Councillor?—Yes.

285. Then, if the Committee were told that Simmons was disqualified because he was a defaulting ratepayer, that statement would not be correct?—Well, I think he was a defaulter.

286. You are not quite clear?—I think now that that also had something to do with his disqualification.