

25. Then Wylde's statement that the licenses were £50 was incorrect?—Yes; the bank-book will bear me out that the legitimate Borough revenue would be in round numbers about £1,000.

26. Would you mind telling us, Mr. Seddon, what particular part of Mr. Hutchison's statement in the House is incorrect?—Well, when he said that I had an indifferent repute that was incorrect. His statement also that "There was one deficit in the Kumara Borough Council financial statement in connection with the Town Clerk's own salary, and there was another in connection with the wages of an employé, whose name was Nathaniel Seddon. . . ." In respect to N. Seddon it was incorrect. I swear positively that the schedule of the auditors' report in that respect is absolutely incorrect. Then, again, Mr. Hutchison says "on a motion before the Borough Council for the adoption of the auditors' report, Mr. R. J. Seddon who was a member of that Council took occasion to stonewall and block it." I say that is untrue. The assertion that I began to talk at 11 o'clock and talked until 2 is wrong, and the records of the Council's proceedings will show that the proceedings connected with the ordinary business terminated at about 11 o'clock. He says that the talk was in reference to the adoption of the auditors' report. I say no resolution for the adoption of the report was ever before us. Then, in regard to our second meeting he says that I got "my second wind," and the stonewall lasted thirteen hours. I say again that is incorrect. The Council's records will show that the private business was finished only at 6.30 in the morning, and the discussion of the auditors' report then commenced, and finished at 8.30. Finally, I say that the statement in respect to an authority having been received by me for the receipt of moneys, and that I had admitted that I was the person who received the alleged overpayment is untrue.

27. Now, come back to the first point: Putting aside the incorrectness of the auditors' report, did you not think that Mr. Hutchison was merely quoting from the auditors' report (page 63, *Hansard*, top corner, is what I am now referring to)?—Well, the reflections start before that, on the same page, he says " . . . ten years before he commenced the practice of it through the public works of the colony, when he practised the same tactics in the historic Borough of Kumara. . . ." You must commence there; and then he introduces the auditors' report in support of that—that is where the reflection is.

28. But my point is this: Did you not think he was quoting from the auditors' report?—Yes, but he only quotes part of it to sustain his allegation.

29. Then, I ask you whether he quoted correctly from the auditors' report?—The little piece "Nathaniel Seddon We find that after most careful consideration he was paid in full up to the 25th December, 1879, after which confusion begins. He received wages at the rate of £3 a week up to the 5th November, 1881, when his weekly engagement terminated by order of the Council." That is correctly quoted, but the other is not.

30. Which other?—The other on the same page 63: "The same report disclosed that wages had been paid for the period from the 25th December, 1879, to December, 1881, amounting to £510 10s.; but the cruel auditors had reckoned that in the period mentioned there were only ninety-seven weeks, which at the rate of £3 a week would make no more than the sum of £291, so that this employé had been overpaid by no less than £219 10s." I say the report did not disclose that.

31. Then, I think I must refer you to the auditors' report, page 28 (Exhibit E) where it says, "We find on most careful examination that this man was paid in full up to the 25th December, 1879, after which date confusion begins, so we had to adopt a similar method with regard to his wages. This man received wages at the rate of £3 per week up to the 25th November, 1881, when his weekly engagement terminated by order of the Council."

Now, is not that the same as Mr. Hutchison's quotation?—No. Mr. Hutchison says "the same report discloses . . ." Those words are his own. Anyone reading the report would see the ground upon which it was based; but take Mr. Hutchison's statement and it will be seen that he draws an inference from the report that is not correct.

32. The auditors' report contains this statement: "The amount actually paid . . . see Schedule C, Exhibit E"?—Yes, that is so. If Mr. Hutchison had said the same report discloses "as set forth in Schedule C," then he would have been more correct.

33. Now, as to the words, "Mr. Seddon built a stonewall . . . he began to talk about at 11 o'clock and continued till 2 a.m.": what is wrong about that?—Well, I say it is absolutely incorrect.

34. Did not the Council sit until about 8.30 a.m.?—Yes; but the consideration of the solicitor's opinion only occupied a part of the time, from about half-past 6 until half-past 8.

35. Consideration of the adoption of the auditors' report did not come before the second meeting of the Council?—No; there was never any motion to adopt the report.

36. Did not the consideration come up at the first meeting?—Yes, certainly.

37. And the discussion lasted until —?—It lasted until about 1.30 a.m.

38. Until 1.40, according to the report?—Yes, about that; but I did not take up the time or build up a stonewall. There was no blocking of business. We often sat as long as we did that night.

39. You admit that the business of the meeting was the consideration of the auditors' report, and that it lasted until nearly 2 o'clock?—Yes. But there was the other ordinary business, and also the sub-committee's report. There was ordinary business as well.

40. Will you put in the minutes of both meetings—that is, the meetings of the 9th and 16th November?—Yes; I will put them in as appearing in the *Kumara Times*. I say that the business transacted at that time must be taken into consideration, or it might be asked by an outsider why we sat so long.

41. We come now to my third point—that is, the use by Mr. Hutchison of the words, "The trial of the Town Clerk followed, and the right honourable gentleman, who gave his evidence as an expert, attempted to prove the two auditors were all wrong": that is correct, is it not?—I have read a letter stating so. With the sergeant of police, who was an able accountant, I went all through the documents and books, and we could not find sufficient there to support the statements in