

*Hon. W. Rolleston*: I asked you yesterday to allow me to have them.

*Right Hon. Mr. Seddon*.] I said I would produce them, and then you could refer to them.

*Mr. Massey*.] Would it not be possible to obtain copies of the *Kumara Times* of 1882 for the use of the Committee?

142. *Mr. Duthie* (to witness).] You have heard the explanation about the *Kumara Times*?—Yes.

143. Can you suggest any other paper where the Committee would get a more reliable report than this?—I do not think there are any. You asked me what was the preliminary business at that meeting, and I suggested that the *Kumara* paper would probably give it, as it usually gave the routine business.

*Mr. Duthie*.—I do not like this report because it is incorrect.

*Right Hon. R. J. Seddon*.—If you had asked the Clerk for the file it would have been lent to you.

144. *Mr. Duthie* (to witness).] As regards this stonewalling, would you not recognise it as stonewalling if the meeting were prolonged till 8.30 in the morning by some person?—Yes.

145. Was not the principal business which was expected to come before that meeting the solicitor's opinion in reference to the auditors' report?—Yes.

146. And that did not come on until past six o'clock in the morning; is that not so?—If you say so I believe it. I cannot dispute it. Possibly it is correct.

147. Up to that time the business was in the direction of blocking that report coming on?—The meeting lasted over the night, and *Mr. Seddon* himself, with one or two others, kept the meeting going all night.

148. Was it his desire to have a committee examination into the accounts?—He took that attitude from the first, and eventually a motion was carried to have a prosecution straight out.

149. When that had been decided the solicitor's opinion was then forthcoming?—Yes.

150. Well, then, he could not have been blocking it with a view to acting upon it, since the committee was willing that another course should be decided upon?—Yes; but the other course was not decided upon till half-past 8 o'clock in the morning, when it was resolved to prosecute.

151. The business was to read the solicitor's report?—Yes, I believe so.

152. And the obstruction, which lasted up to that hour, was to prevent that report being read?—The meeting lasted until 6 o'clock, and up to that time the whole question was whether we should receive the solicitor's report.

153. Up to that time the solicitor's report had not been opened?—I cannot say.

154. The question was whether the Council should adopt the solicitor's report?—It was to settle the question. The question which had been raised was if the committee was to proceed with the examination of accounts.

155. You say that that would be considered on the 9th November or the 10th November?—Yes; but they never made any examination. We wanted an explanation.

156. But at that time the committee was non-existent, and the matter could not be referred back to them?—The motion which was carried to refer the matter to the borough solicitor put the committee out of existence.

156A. I see your meaning. You mean that the fact of the matter being referred to the Crown Prosecutor, who was also the borough solicitor, put the committee out of existence?—My impression was, from first to last, *Mr. Seddon* wanted the inquiry to go on into these matters, and to get the Clerk to make a statement.

157. He occupied the Council all the time upon that subject?—Yes.

158. Then, you admit that that might be regarded as stonewalling, even in *Kumara*?—I suppose so. About 8.30 o'clock, after a short adjournment, the motion to prosecute was put, and carried on the voices.

159. In the absence of *Mr. Seddon* and *Mr. Campbell*?—Yes, but I was not there myself.

160. You admit that there was obstruction on the part of *Mr. Seddon*?—Well, preventing the course I desired to take.

161. Was not *Mr. Seddon's* relative charged with being overpaid, and would not the obstruction of the report be to prevent that coming out? If that were done, would you consider it a proper thing?—I do not think that was *Mr. Seddon's* purpose.

162. But that is the effect?—That was one thing the committee might have seen into, as to whether *Mr. Seddon's* relative had any explanation to make; if his relative had received the money, but he never had any opportunity of explaining. The committee never made any inquiries, and never sat to investigate the matter.

163. *The Chairman*.] You mean the matter of *Nathaniel Seddon's* alleged over-payment?—Yes. If *Nathaniel Seddon* had received the money he never had any opportunity of explaining anything about it.

164. *Mr. Duthie*.] The fact is, the Council decided upon taking another course. The majority were apparently satisfied that the committee, after two days' sitting, were not going to elucidate. Is not that so?—You have the resolution of the Council, which it carried at the meeting.

165. To bring things to an issue?—As Mayor, it was my duty, in conjunction with the borough solicitor, on behalf of the Council, to take the necessary steps to deal with the serious matters involved in the auditors' report.

166. The Council agreed to that?—Yes.

167. That was the resolution carried by the meeting?—Yes.

168. In that report were there allegations that *Mr. Nathaniel Seddon* had been overpaid?—They did not assume anything like that, as you put it now. No member of the Council at that time took it seriously that *Nathaniel Seddon* had received a penny over what he was entitled to. I was completely opposed to *Mr. Seddon*, as you will see all through. But there was nothing to