

as a track for the cable to Lyell Bay, and which was not wanted any longer in consideration of our giving them, I think, a  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre for it upon a suitable site, and doing certain work. I had that conversation with him. I may say that Mr. Strauchon, the Commissioner, was rather opposed to the thing. I had to go back again because Mr. Strauchon did not seem to be letting the matter go through, and Mr. Kensington advised me to write a letter not to the Minister, but to the Under-Secretary, and he said they would practically take it out of Mr. Strauchon's hands, and he would see about it. He said it would have to go to the Minister. On another occasion I went to see if things were all right. These were the only occasions on which I ever entered Mr. Kensington's room, and they were in October and November of last year. So far as speaking to him goes—of course, I knew him by sight before that—he was previously a stranger to me. I should like to say that if I could bring my recollection in line with Mr. Kensington's I should be delighted to do it, because there is no reason why I should not have gone to see him on the subject he mentions—to get this arrangement carried out—if it was my business to do it. But as a practice in regard to municipal matters I do not go to see officers unless as a sort of last resort. I go to see the Minister with regard to anything where he comes in, and in regard to these cases I try the Corporation officers first. Now, I will just give my recollection of the whole concern. Twelve years ago, when Mr. Bell was Mayor, I suggested, when they were putting up the concrete steps in Woodward Street—I suggested then to the Engineer (I was not a member of the Council; only a citizen)—but I met the Engineer and suggested to him that, instead of spending money as was contemplated at that time, it would be much better to construct that street—to try to get it widened and construct it as it is now. So that I had that idea for very many years. After I became Mayor I suggested to Mr. Morton, the City Engineer—it was too late for the year that I became Mayor, and we had not funds, the funds being pretty well loaded with other things—but I suggested to Mr. Morton to get a survey of this road and see if it could be improved. He made the survey, and reported that it would cost about £870 to carry out the work. When the time came around, I got £870 put on the estimates, the £870 including nothing for compensation for land to be taken. Some months afterwards—of course, these works are taken in their rotation—Mr. Morton stated that he would like to get on with the work after certain other works in hand were finished. Then I instructed the City Solicitor in September, 1906, to ascertain how the title stood. I am not quite sure what the report was, but I know it was ascertained that this was Maori land. The City Solicitor had the matter in hand, and the Engineer wrote to the Town Clerk on the 26th November, 1906, as follows: I propose to soon make a start with the proposed alterations to Woodward Street. Please inform me if all arrangements have been made with the owners of property respecting the erection of a retaining-wall along their boundary, and give a small portion of land to the Council as shown on plan which was prepared some time ago. I understand from His Worship the Mayor that the City Solicitor has had this matter in hand.” I may say that I was rather staggered originally at the amount which the thing was going to cost, and I was puzzled in my mind whether, considering the requirements all round the city, especially in the newer parts, we were justified in spending so large a sum upon this work. The City Engineer reported that it would be advisable to take a piece of ground, and to cut through a building on the ground. I saw that we might—if we proceeded to take it under the Public Works Act—be landed in a considerable amount extra, because, no doubt, then, as all who know municipal matters are aware, under the operations of the Compensation Court, buildings which may be of a very inferior order become palaces when the evidence for the claimants comes into Court. And I said to the Engineer and City Solicitor that we must try to arrange to get the corner piece, if not for nothing, at all events for a very small sum. Then we found that there were difficulties with regard to the title, and I was determined not to go into the Compensation Court. I would not risk taking it under the Public Works Act. The Engineer's letter was forwarded to the City Solicitor by the Town Clerk, and he replied on the 29th November, “This matter has had to stand over on account of the illness of Mr. Kennedy Macdonald. Now that he has recovered, I shall take it up.” Well, it was reported to us some time afterwards—I cannot say how long—that the relation of the parties was being altered. Mr. Macdonald had arranged, I understand—in fact, I know that part of the business, because it was arranged in our office on account of our acting for one of the parties—he had arranged for the purchase of the lease which was in existence to a woman named Mrs. Thornley. The assignment of the lease, I believe, was not absolutely concluded until after the purchase of the freehold, but I am not sure, as I had personally nothing to do with it: Mr. Macdonald will know. But, at all events, the purchase of the lease was commenced some time either after or during the time that Mr. O'Shea was writing this letter. We thought it would be better to await further negotiations until that purchase would be completed, and I thought it would be completed because of something that was told to me. Prior to that we had tried to get the Loves to agree. We had not cared much whether we got an absolutely legal title or not, but we tried to get them to agree that this corner should be taken, and that we should be allowed to take the retaining-wall around the point. I felt inclined to take the risk of that, because I felt that if we put a retaining-wall in there it was not likely that any person would disturb it afterwards, and I thought the licence we should get would be a good licence, and that when it was acted upon by carrying out the erection of the wall it could not be recalled. However, after consideration of the matter, we thought it would not do to run that risk. The Loves lived over in the South Island, and they were interviewed once or twice in regard to it. I once spoke to Love himself: I happened to meet him, and his wife was with him. He seemed suspicious—he is a half-caste, I think, or a Maori—he said he did not like to have his land interfered with, and, after the style that, no doubt, some members of the Committee are acquainted with—in Maori fashion—he would wait for what he could get. However, I was determined that we would not undertake the work unless we were absolutely certain, and that it would be fixed up at a small ascertained amount. We then waited, and the vote lapsed on the 31st March. The rule is that if a work is commenced during the year