

the expenses. I said he might take it for granted that it would cost about £50. The Council he said, would not grudge £50 as long as that amount was not exceeded. I then said that for £50 I would do the work, and take the risk of what work there might be in the matter. He then placed a large number of documents in my hands, which I went through with very great care, and compared the suggestions contained in them with the existing laws; and I subsequently had a conversation with him on the matter. Whether the Town Clerk was present or not I am not aware. At any rate, we went over the whole matter, and he pointed out what the wishes of the Council were, and I was fully informed as to what work was required to be done. Mr. Tonks then told me that he had been in communication with Sir Julius Vogel, the Premier, on this subject, and that Sir Julius Vogel had spoken of a probability of the Government bringing in a measure to amend the Municipal Corporations Act generally. Therefore, it might be the case that that Act of the Government might contain such provisions as would do away with the necessity for a Bill specially to meet the wants of Auckland. He instructed me to see Sir Julius Vogel when I came to Wellington, on behalf of the Corporation, and to find out whether Sir Julius Vogel intended that such a Bill should really be brought in, and if that Bill would remove the necessity of introducing the Bill which I was to prepare for the Council. In the meantime, and before I left Auckland, I had drafted a Bill which I thought would meet the wishes of the City Council, and which, I may say at once, I intended to bring in and endeavour to get passed, for I was not aware at that time that there was any reason why I should not do so. I may mention that the Mayor had also told me that it was the intention of the Corporation to apply to Parliament for power to borrow £25,000 more for waterworks purposes. He did not ask me to prepare the Bill for the purpose, but said that such a Bill would be prepared, and that he would feel obliged if I would undertake to look after it in the House. I said I would do all in my power to assist the Corporation. On the 15th of June I got to Wellington; that was the day on which the Assembly was formally opened. I saw Sir Julius Vogel, and I arranged with him a meeting to go into the whole question of the Municipal Corporations Bill the following morning. We had a meeting, and he then told me that it was the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill, and he should be very happy to see how far it might be made to meet the special wants of the City of Auckland. It was then arranged that he should get a copy of the draft from the Solicitor-General, or whoever the draftsman of the Bill was, and that we should go through the Bill so as to compare it with mine and see how far the two coincided. A few days later another meeting was fixed, and we went at very great length through the two Bills, and we found that some of the provisions of my Bill were included in the Government Bill, while some others were not so included. As to the latter, he said he would consider them. He did so, and after a few days he informed me that some of the provisions not included in the Government Bill were such as they would desire to see in the Bill, but there were others to which they had objections. However, the result was that the provisions asked for by the City Council of Auckland were for the most part agreed to be put into the Bill. The Bill was brought in, and, as honorable members are aware, it passed through the House; but with its passage I had no more to do than any other member of the House. Now, with reference to the other matter, I may say that after I had been down here for a few days, having ascertained what the Standing Orders provided, and what was supposed to be the Parliamentary practice, I telegraphed to the Mayor of Auckland to say that it was entirely impossible for me to act as agent for the Council in reference to the Waterworks Bill; it would not be a correct thing for me to do, and I could not do it; but that if they wished to have the interests of the Council looked after, an agent must be sent down to do it. Three weeks after, or about that time, Mr. Stevenson was sent down from Auckland to act as Parliamentary agent on behalf of the Council. I saw him and explained how the matter stood, and he brought to me a Bill which had been drafted by himself for the purpose of giving effect to the wishes of the Council in respect to the borrowing of £25,000. I believe the Bill was in his own handwriting, although I am not certain of that, but I know he drafted the Bill. He placed that Bill in my hands, and I on one or two occasions saw Sir Julius Vogel and discussed the merits of the security offered by the City Council. Sir Julius Vogel stated that the Government were perfectly willing that it should be passed. The Bill was brought in by myself and passed by both Houses. I had nothing to do with the other House I may say. I believe that Mr. Stevenson obtained some member to take charge of it in that branch of the Legislature. With regard to the account (Appendix C) which has been read before the Committee, dated the 16th October, I may say that must have been sent in at the time I was in Wellington. The letter referred to is also dated October, and must have been sent while I was in Wellington. The circumstances in connection with this account were something as follows: I presume Mr. Beale, who is my partner in Auckland, was not aware of the peculiar arrangement made between Mr. Tonks and myself that a certain lump sum was to be paid for the services agreed to be rendered by me in drawing out the Bill. He supposed that there was no arrangement, and sent in a bill charging the ordinary price. As to the letter, I never heard of that before I got back to Auckland, although it was signed by Mr. Beale for me. When I returned from the meeting of the Assembly in November, the Mayor met me one day and said, "With regard to the bill sent in, it was not in accordance with the arrangements we made. You have charged a larger sum than was agreed upon." I said, "If this is so it is owing to a misunderstanding. I agreed to do the work for £50, and £50 only would be expected." He said, "Very well, there will be an end of it; I will pass the matter through the Finance Committee, and it will be paid." The £50 accordingly, as appears from this entry, was passed through the Finance Committee, and it was paid to me. I was not aware, until this moment, that any charge was made on that account in respect to the Waterworks Bill, and it is clearly a mistake, because I did not draft it, and could not possibly have charged for it—the thing is absurd. I could not have made a charge for work I did not do; that clearly was a misunderstanding on the part of Mr. Beale. He supposed that I was acting for the City Council in regard to both Bills. That was a mistaken impression, because I had nothing whatever to do with the Waterworks Bill, excepting that it was introduced by me. I may say that I telegraphed to Mr. Tonks, late Mayor of Auckland, yesterday, asking for the facts of the case. This is the telegram I sent him, and this is the reply he sent to me. I will read them, and put them in. (Appendix D.)