

253. Oh, it was not a long time?—No; I think it appeared in the newspapers.
254. And you saw it in the newspapers?—I cannot say I saw it; somebody pointed it out to me.
255. Was this what you saw in the newspaper [extract produced]?—No; I never saw that.
256. Have you read it?—No; but I am sure I never saw it.
257. The only part that would interest you is somewhere near the end?—No; I do not think I ever saw that.
258. Was it something different you saw?—I do not say I saw it in the papers. Somebody else told me, as far as I can remember.
259. You said it was pointed out to you in the papers?
- Sir R. Stout*: He did not say the actual paper was pointed out.
260. *Mr. Haggitt*.] You see it does appear in the paper that you were the purchaser of the run at £380 a year?—That is so.
261. According to your account of this matter you made no inquiries about the run at all?—None. I had perfect confidence in the National Mortgage and Agency Company.
262. You made no inquiry whatever?—None.
263. As to what was going to be done, or anything else?—I did not care a button.
264. You lent your name that the run might be purchased?—Yes.
265. And you signed authorities to apply for it and to purchase it in your name?—I believe I did.
266. You made no stipulation as to the price to be paid?—None whatever.
267. And you made no stipulation as to being indemnified, or anything else, against the consequence of what you did?—No; I made no stipulation.
268. And you were to be paid for something or other, you do not know what?—Oh, yes; for lending my name to be used.
269. But you did not even stipulate what you were to be paid?—No.
270. Mr. Ritchie never at any time said anything about indemnifying you, I understand?—No; I do not think he did.
271. And beyond a general expression from Mr. Henderson that you told us of, there was nothing said at all about indemnifying?—No; there was nothing said.
272. Now, how long was it after you purchased that you found out that there was some responsibility attaching to the use of your name?—Not till after the Timaru incident—the Timaru summoning. When I saw that in the newspapers about dummyism, at or about the end of May; when I was summoned at Timaru for the rabbits.
273. That was about three months after the run had been purchased?—Yes; somewhere about that.
274. When did you sign the lease?—I really could not remember; somewhere between March and May, I suppose. I really could not remember when I signed it. I took no notes.
275. Have you the lease here?—No; I do not know where it is. I have never had it.
276. You left it in the office?—I signed it and left it. I do not know who has got it.
277. And it began to get troublesome about that time—the time the notices came in?—I did not see any trouble about it till when that appeared in the papers. That is what wakened me up.
278. That is, about dummyism?—Yes.
279. And what were you frightened of then?—I do not know. I was not very frightened. I simply went over and asked Mr. Henderson whether it was all right, and he said it was.
280. You asked if it was all right?—As I told you, I pointed out that the thing had got serious; it looked bad. He said, “Oh, it’s all right,” and he assured me they would see me through it.
281. It was on that occasion he assured you they would see you through it?—On one or two other occasions he gave me that assurance.
282. Now, it is almost useless to ask you after what you have admitted—you have not said that on the first occasion Mr. Henderson said anything about seeing you through it. Did he say so at the first interview or not?—At the first interview he certainly assured me that the responsibility was not mine.
283. But what did he say?—I cannot remember the exact words. He assured me they would see me through it in the same way he has always done.
- Mr. Haggitt*: No; this was the first occasion.
- Sir R. Stout*: He said, on the first occasion connected with this run. He used words to that effect.
284. *Mr. Haggitt*: He said nothing of the kind. I have taken every word he said. [To witness:] Whereabouts did that come in in the conversation?—I really could not remember. Very little was said.
- Sir R. Stout*: I have it here, your Honour.
- His Honour*: Yes, that is so. “He said it was all right, that I was to act for them—to hand all the correspondence to them; do nothing myself; submit everything to them. I do not think anything more was said. They were to pay the rent.”
- Sir R. Stout*: He goes on, “I did not know the length of the lease.”
- His Honour*: Yes; “I did not know the length of the lease, but Henderson said he would see me through it. They were to take the whole responsibility.”
- Sir R. Stout*: That is what he said before, “Henderson said he would see me through it.”
285. *Mr. Haggitt*.] Now, I ask him at what stage of the conversation that took place. Will you swear that those were Mr. Henderson’s exact words?—No, I will not.
286. And Mr. Henderson said this without your stipulating that anybody should see you through it—it was voluntary?—I asked him if there was anything “crooked” about it, and he said no, it was all right.