

99. Did you make any representation to Mr. Kensington which would lead him to infer that you were acting for the Council?—Looking back at the position now, I put the matter plainly that the Corporation wanted this done. There I began and left, but it is only fair to Mr. Kensington to say that the impression must have remained in his mind that I was interested with the Corporation in the question. And so I was, because they had come to me about the matter of the improvement, and I pointed out the whole position.

100. You mean “understood” in the sense that you were acting for them?—No, I had no commission from them in the matter. They had been to me as part-owners.

101. You misunderstand me. Did your questions convey that you were acting for and on behalf of the Council?—They were not intended by me to do so. They were a recital of the position that the Corporation was anxious to have this done, and I dare say I emphasized very fully their anxiety, because they had wanted to do it for two or three years.

102. If Mr. Kensington assumed that you were agent or acting for the Council he would be justified?—Looking back at the position, he would be justified. It is only fair to say that.

103. Now, in regard to the letter of the 2nd May. Did the Mayor, Mr. Hislop, know of that letter or see it before you sent it?—No, it was written in my office.

104. Did any one from the City Council see it or know of it?—No.

105. You have read that letter lately, I suppose?—Yes, I have got it here in front of me.

106. Does not that letter bear on the face of it the inference that you were acting on behalf of the Council?—I do not think so at all for a moment; it does not say so. It was not intended by me to convey such an impression.

107. But would it bear the inference?—It may; but, you see, when you are writing a letter you do not think of reciting more than the bare facts in most cases, and this was a recital of the position—that the city wanted to carry out certain improvements. They had been to me and were urging me to get it done, and I held the key to the position, and I was not anxious to put them to any expense. I was anxious to do the fair thing by the city, and I was under the impression at that particular time that they were going to take from me something I was not prepared to give—unless there was a *quid pro quo* in the shape of land. Of course, that was a knock on the head and quite a revelation to me when I learned that all they wanted was a small piece—a few feet.

108. You say in your letter of the 2nd May, “The Council are desirous of creating a low-level street in Woodward Street”: would not that convey the impression that you were speaking for the Council?—No, it was a recital of facts. You see, they had been at me about the matter.

109. In your opinion, you do not think so?—I do not think so for a moment.

110. And did not intend so?—And did not intend so.

111. There is a subsequent letter: the next correspondence between Mr. Kensington and yourself was on the 23rd May—Yes.

112. And then, again, he wrote on the 29th May?—Yes.

113. You did not get that—it is to the Minister of Lands. Of course that does not affect you. There undoubtedly Mr. Kensington says what his impression was because he writes “Messrs. Macdonald, Wilson, and Co., on behalf of the Wellington City Council”?—I can quite see that he was under the impression that we were acting as agents for the Council judging by his letter; but that was not so. I want you to clearly understand that the City Council could not move without me in the matter.

114. I am talking about what led up to it—It is a pity that in some sense the thing was not put a little more clearly.

115. And you are quite confident that there was no one present with you during April when you saw Mr. Kensington—and especially that the Mayor was not there with you?—Absolutely certain. Otherwise it is about time I was translated to a lunatic asylum.

116. State to the Committee what was the first date on which you spoke to Mr. Hislop as Mayor of Wellington in regard to this whole transaction?—I should think about three or four years ago.

117. Before he was Mayor at all?—After he was Mayor. As I stated in the opening of my evidence, “Some few months after Mr. Hislop’s election as Mayor I learned—I forget whether by conversation or by reading of the matter in the newspapers—that it was intended to improve Woodward Street.”

118. How long ago is that?—Three years ago.

119. That statement of yours “Some few months after Mr. Hislop’s election as Mayor” is most indefinite because it might be this year or last year?—He brought the matter forward two or three years ago and put a sum on the estimates for the improvement.

120. Would it be correct to say that some three years ago you had a conversation with Mr. Hislop with regard to this particular matter—to improve this road?—No, I would not say that.

121. What would you say?—No. I was asked some question about it—whether it could be done.

122. What could be done?—Whether the Loves would give the land required for the improvement of the street. And I said I would make some inquiry. I did inquire and they were absolutely averse to doing anything. Next, the Loves were in my office and Mr. Hislop came in about something else.

123. How long after?—I cannot tell.

124. Some considerable time?—More than a year; and he spoke to them himself about the matter. He wanted to get the land, of course.

125. When did Mr. Hislop first learn from you that you had been in communication with Mr. Kensington on this matter?—I do not know. I never communicated directly with him—never specially conveyed that I had had an interview with Mr. Kensington about the matter.