

about two years ago. I gave the amount to Gilmour, the collector. I also received rates from Ewen Cameron: these I paid to the collector. Both these cases were rates, I think, of 1882-83. Any cheques paid to Boulton for salary during the time I was Treasurer must have been signed by me. I was not aware till now that I signed cheques for more than one salary per month. I was in the habit, when leaving the district for any length of time, of affixing my signature to cheques, leaving them in the cheque-book, and leaving to the other member authorized to sign to complete the cheque as occasion required. I was informed by Boulton at the time he told me of the burning of the rate-book that he had also burned the butts of the receipt-books. It was my duty to sign all licenses. I know of none being issued which were not signed by me. When the offices of Chairman and Treasurer were combined in my person I signed each cheque twice. Cheques were always signed by a member besides myself. No Auditor's reports were ever received by me which were not laid before the Council. I occasionally looked at Boulton's petty cash and petty-cash book.

10th January, 1877.

FRED. H. DANIEL.

No. 3.—Mr. JOHN BLACK, Engineer and County Clerk, examined, 12th January, 1887.

As to the missing rate-book, I never saw the book. Mr. Boulton did not burn it—if he burned it at all—in my presence. No papers were burned in my presence except some obsolete electoral rolls, circulars, and printed forms of no value. No manuscript papers of any kind were destroyed. We—Boulton and I—read everything, and only destroyed what appeared to be absolutely useless. Boulton never spoke to me about the book until its loss had been reported by the Auditor. He then remarked to me one day in a casual sort of way that it had disappeared mysteriously; but he offered no explanation on the subject, and I did not pursue it. My offices are those of Engineer, Clerk, and Collector. I took office on the 1st April, 1886. Mr. Boulton remained in the office till the end of April to assist me in entering on my duties. His time was chiefly occupied, however, in balancing his account to the end of March, 1886, my responsibility only commencing on the 1st April. The practice of the office now is: As to receipts, I collect all revenue of the county except such as is remitted from Wellington. The receipts given for rates are not at present numbered consecutively as a whole, but are numbered to agree with the several liabilities for rates as entered in the rate-book. I had overlooked the provisions of section 120 of the Act (1876) until lately. It is now too late to alter the practice as regards the present year, but I will take care that the law is strictly complied with in future. Publicans' licenses should, I believe, be signed by the Treasurer; but, owing to the late Treasurer, Mr. Daniel, living at Glenorchy—some thirty-five miles away by road—I have signed two or three "*pro* Treasurer." The present Treasurer, Mr. Butement, is more frequently in town, and no difficulty is likely to arise in future. The dog-tax is farmed: the sum paid was £60. As to expenditure, all payments, without exception, are now submitted for the consideration of the Finance Committee, the same being scheduled in the accounts book. They are first marked by me as correct. When approved by Finance Committee (such approval being signified by a mark on each invoice) they are laid before the Council, and when approved in Council the schedule in the accounts book is signed by the Chairman. Wages to be paid are detailed in a wages-sheet showing the work in hand, the time and place where each man was employed, the rate of his wages, and the sum due to each man for the month. This is certified by myself as Engineer. Wages are now paid by the calendar month, by crossed cheques sent to each individual. The voucher is sent at same time, with a request that it may be receipted and returned. Cheques are payable to bearer. At last meeting of Council Messrs. Boyes (Chairman) and Douglas were appointed to sign cheques in conjunction with the Treasurer, Mr. Butement. Payments, which now mainly consist of wages, are entered in the cash-book monthly. Receipts for rates are entered in the rate cash-book as they occur. The cash-book is not at present written up beyond the 30th September. I propose to write it up as soon as I return from a journey to Wanaka, on which I start to-day, and after that to enter and post it monthly. My duties as Engineer frequently call me away from the office—sometimes at a moment's notice—and I am occasionally absent for a week at a time. This circumstance prevents that immediate attention to the accounts which I should otherwise like to give.

12th January, 1887.

JNO. BLACK.

No. 4.—FREDERICK FINCH, Queenstown, examined, 8th January, 1887.

I have never seen the missing rate-book. I built Mr. Daniel's house. I have heard persons say that it (the rate-book) might be at Glenorchy or it might have been burnt. I have never to my knowledge seen the book, and do not know anything about it. I have never conversed with Mr. Daniel on the subject of the book. I have heard Mr. Daniel say that he wished it could be found. I have never heard him express any opinion as to where it was. I have never spoken to Mr. Boulton about the book. I heard some one say as I was passing Eichardt's Hotel that an affidavit had been made that the book had been burned. I have not heard the matter referred to since.

F. FINCH.

No. 5.—THOMAS GILMOUR examined, 21st December, 1886.

I was first appointed on the 2nd February, 1885. I was informed that I should be required to find security for £250, and I thereupon submitted the names of persons as bondsmen. I heard no more about it. My salary was £100 a year. I received no instructions except from Mr. Boulton, who gave me a list of the outstanding rates of 1884-85. I did not go back beyond that period. I received a supply of rate-collector's sheets, in which I made lists of the sums collected, and accounted for the same every time I came to town. No period of accounting was specified in any instructions I