

gravamen of the accusations is contained in that passage. There are other portions of the charges contained in page 64, in which Mr. Hutchison alleges that I have been known on the West Coast by a Chinese name. If members will look at the order of reference they will see that it embraces that. It says, "The references contained in the speech by Mr. George Hutchison." There are two points, one respecting the alleged overpayment and that I had received the moneys, and the other as to my being known by a Chinese name and being a partner with Chinese.

The Chairman: I did not quite understand we had any occasion to inquire into that.

Mr. Morrison: There was no reference.

Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon: The order of reference infers and embraces that. It must be taken as an accusation that a certain name had been applied to me and that I had been a partner with Chinese. There are a number of persons connected with Chinese in mining rights and other matters who might not look upon it as objectionable, but I say this was intended to be so. I will quote again from *Hansard*, page 64. Mr. Hutchison said, "But would it be believed that the right honourable gentleman, while denouncing Sir Robert Stout for being associated even in so remote a way with Chinese labour, was himself once connected with Chinese in business on the West Coast?" Hon. Member, No. Mr. G. Hutchison, Of course not. Bun Tuck was supposed to be a Chinaman, but he was not; he was a politician." What is implied there is pretty clear. It is to say that I was a partner with Chinese. I quote again from page 64: "He (Wong) said Bun Tuck was very clever, but not clever enough. We had plenty of provisions then, and we had much joy, and our perspiration ran very free. One day Wong went away because the constable was looking for him. I went to Bun Tuck, but he raised the wrath matter, and told me I was descended from stupid people. He said, moreover, Wong Shung Wai had got the best of the squeeze. Nevertheless, he gave me 20 taels. This narrator then went far away. I went to China, but have since returned. Bun Tuck is much changed since then, but I know him when I see him. Declared by Tsai Chung as a true history, and signed by him." That letter, which I hope to be able to prove has been a pure fiction, was drafted in an office here in Wellington and sent to a Chinaman to translate, and as it appears in our public records it is a reflection of a very serious character upon me.

9. *Mr. Morrison.*] Are you able to prove that statement, that the document was manufactured in Wellington?—I shall try to prove how and wherefrom Mr. Hutchison obtained this document, and I hope to be able to obtain the names of the persons who gave it to him. There is an innuendo in the portion I have quoted from *Hansard* that I went to the Chinese camp, became partners with them, and gave Wong so many taels—gave him money—to hush the matter up. Of course, some people may think it is a laughable matter. Some portions will be considered as fun, but other portions contain a serious reflection as purporting to come from one who has been a partner with me. I shall be able to prove that there never was such a Chinaman on the West Coast as Tsai Chung, and that I never was a partner with Chinamen, and that the whole thing is a fabrication. At the first reading you might think there was nothing serious in it, you might take it as a mere joke, but perusing it carefully and calmly you would see it contains a very serious reflection. I would suggest now that the Committee should allow me to call witnesses, and should invite Mr. Hutchison to attend the next meeting of the Committee, and, of course, if he proposes to go on with these charges we ought to follow the ordinary course. Let him produce evidence in proof of his allegations, and I will bring my evidence to rebut it.

10. *Hon. J. McKenzie.*] How long would it take for the witnesses to come here?—One is in Kumara; probably we may bring the present Town Clerk. One material point is to get the order referred to by Mr. Hutchison, and find out whether I had signed any vouchers, and for what value, and when that order was given.

11. *Mr. Massey.*] What year was it?—My recollection is that it was in 1879, some time before the audit took place.

12. *Hon. J. McKenzie.*] Before the prosecution?—Yes; that is my recollection.

13. *Mr. Duthie.*] Are any of the Councillors living?—Yes; Councillor Campbell is living.

14. *Hon. W. Rolleston.*] I believe Mr. O'Hagan is dead?—Yes; but his evidence was reported before the Supreme Court at Hokitika. He said there was nothing against us in connection with this matter. I never heard of these charges until Mr. Hutchison made this speech. I never heard of a breath of suspicion upon myself or relative.

Mr. Morrison.] It would be better that Mr. Seddon should hand in a list of the witnesses he would like to call.

Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon: Mr. W. Perkins, the Crown Solicitor, is in Tasmania, but I have written to him.

15. *Hon. J. McKenzie.*] Mr. George Harper is still in Christchurch, is he not?—Yes. You can also get the evidence of Mr. Guinness, who was counsel for the prisoner. Those two would know as much as anybody else of the matter.

WEDNESDAY, 5TH OCTOBER, 1898.

Right Hon. R. J. SEDDON in attendance.

Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon: I want to make it clear that there was a Bun Tuck; but my remarks were that there was no such Chinaman as Tsai Chung, the man who was supposed to have signed the letter produced by Mr. Hutchison. I would suggest that the Committee divide the charges into A and B, as I have marked them in the *Hansard*. A goes down to page 63, and the last interlined portion of B commences at page 64, and goes on to page 65. The whole thing is summed up by Mr. Hutchison when he uses these words: "I wish to say that this is no skit at all. It is a statement of actual fact. . . . I say that the right honourable gentleman was a partner with the Chinese on the West Coast, and that he was known among them as 'Bun Tuck.'" The whole