

Started Club Fire to Hide Theft Say Police

Although firemen sieved the debris in the club storeroom no money was found, it was stated in Sheffield yesterday when a 35-year-old former club steward was charged with setting fire to Woodseats Social Club, Woodseats Road, setting fire to a cash box at the club and stealing £80 from his employers.

Prosecuting, Mr. P. T. Hamer alleged that the steward, Vincent Broadley, of Palmer Street, Sheffield, had misappropriated club money, and, "like others before him," endeavoured to conceal the defalcation by going to the races at York.

"He was lamentably unsuccessful in that venture, and when he returned to the club he was short of £80," said Mr. Hamer. "For some reason club members were suspicious, and on the day of the offence Broadley was told there would be a stocktaking the following day".

"Later that night, the premises were found to be on fire and were seriously damaged."

Mr. Hamer alleged that Broadley had said in a statement that knowing his cash shortage would be discovered the following day; he had set fire to his cash box. "The result was, to burn the entire club not quite to the ground, but very nearly," Mr. Hamer said.

Taxis £22 5s.

Chairman of the club Finance Committee, Sydney Herbert Hooton, said that Broadley had been employed as a steward from March 5 this year.

The committee was not satisfied with Broadley's return for May 13, as it was less than normal.

A taxi-driver said that in the week beginning May 15 Broadley paid him a total of £22 5s., in fares and tips.

Leading Fireman Haslam said that when the fire brigade arrived at the fire the fire was centred in the storeroom and bar of the club.

The case was adjourned until Monday, Broadley's bail being renewed.