

Witness was discharged from further attendance.

Mr. C. W. Richmond

9th Aug., 1861.

Mr. C. W. Richmond continued his statement.

I feel ashamed to argue that no attempt to put a pressure upon His Excellency Governor Browne was made by myself or by any of my colleagues. Any one who knows Governor Browne is aware that any such attempt would have been fruitless, and I trust that the papers already before the Committee will satisfy them that the late Ministry throughout the whole of these transactions, left the initiative to be taken by His Excellency, with whom it properly rested. But I go beyond, saying that neither I, myself, nor any of my colleagues ever urged the matter with the Governor. I declare that we never even suggested a single step in the proceedings. In proof of this, I here quote from the Ministerial Memorandum dated 25th May, 1860, signed by myself. [1860, E—1B., Page 5,] the following passage :—

“The insinuation that the war is one of aggrandisement, that it is undertaken for the sake of acquiring territory, is quite untrue. The proceedings which have led to it were under the immediate superintendence and control of the Governor. His Excellency will confirm the statement that those proceedings were not, at any stage urged upon him, *or so much as suggested to him by the Responsible Ministers.*”

This, and other public declarations to the same effect, have received Governor Browne's tacit concurrence, and will, I doubt not, be expressly confirmed by His Excellency, should the Committee think it necessary and proper to seek such a confirmation.

The Committee will also observe that pressure, whether upon the Governor himself, or upon any of the Officials in positions intermediate between His Excellency and Mr. Parris, must ultimately have been exerted upon Mr. Parris, who was the Agent actually dealing with the selling Natives. Now Mr. Parris unequivocally denies that any pressure was put on himself, and his evidence establishes, that the negotiation with Teira's party was allowed to take its natural and legitimate course.

Since I commenced this statement I have looked through the documents adduced by Dr. Featherston as the grounds of what he now terms his “suspicious.” I will notice these supposed grounds under four heads.

1 The alleged opinions of some of the more violent settlers at Taranaki, and what are termed by Major Nugent “inflammatory articles” in the Public Journals of the year 1854, are alleged as evidence against me. Such a ground of accusation ought, I submit, to be at once rejected. It is not even pretended that I am in any wise connected with, or responsible for, the utterance of the opinions and the publication of the writings which are referred to. I may state to the Committee (though it is more than I could be fairly called upon to do), that I have never had any share in the conduct of either of the two papers published at New Plymouth, and that since I have been in office, *i.e.*, since June, 1856, I have not contributed a single line to either paper with the exception of one article, written in 1857, which in no wise related to the acquisition of land or to Native Affairs.

It is not my business to defend the conduct of the Taranaki newspapers. I have strongly dissented from opinions occasionally advocated in those publications. But I take leave to say that, when the extraordinary causes for irritation and discontent which have been so long at work in the settlement of New Plymouth, are fairly considered, the sentiments of the settlers, as indicated by the general tone of their public journals, will appear wonderfully temperate. Due allowance always made for the trying circumstances in which they have been placed, the settlers of New Plymouth are entitled, I maintain, to the warm approval of their fellow-colonists, whilst any who, for a political purpose, have sought to defame them in the hour of their misfortune, deserve to be covered with lasting shame. The argument of my accuser is, that the people of New Plymouth desired and intended the spoliation, if not the extermination, of William King and his people, and that I, as one of the Representatives of the place, must have participated in this desire and intention and have forwarded it by all the means in my power, however illegitimate. No man would dare to state the argument in this form, but this is what is meant. I reply by utterly denying the truth of the imputation upon the people of New Plymouth; and as regards their influence for good or for evil upon me as their Representative, I declare that I was returned to the House of Representatives in 1855 without opposition, and unfettered by any pledge whatever as to my future line of political action, and that my Constituents have ever since left me free to take my own course, and have abstained from every kind of attempt to influence me. They appear to have considered that when I became a Member of the Government I ceased to represent their special interests: at all events, they have acted as if they thought so.

2. The second ground of suspicion is derived from Mr. Parris' private letter to the Bishop of New Zealand, dated 26th August, 1853. Mr. Parris in his evidence before this Committee, and also in his letter to the Private Secretary, dated December 21st, 1860, [1861, E—4, p. 3,] has explained that his statements in that letter implicated no Member of the Government, but referred to certain comments made upon his conduct by the press and by some of the Settlers. Mr. Parris has further shown that he never made the charge which it has been attempted to foist upon the House of Representatives as an accusation preferred by him against the Settlers, namely, that they “were combining for the purpose of exterminating William King and his Tribe at the Waitara,” and has explained that the phrase “dishonourable and treacherous treatment of William King and his people to exterminate them from the Waitara” refers solely to the ambush at the Karaka Pa, planned by King's Native adversaries.

It is true that Mr. Parris was severely censured by persons at New Plymouth for interfering in the Native feud, and that, in his letter to the Bishop, he alluded to this censure with strong feeling. It can, however, be shown, that Mr. Parris wrote under a misapprehension. The Settlers, generally, were ignorant at the time, that Mr. Parris had been the medium of effecting a truce