

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15TH, 1861.

Committee met pursuant to adjournment.

Present:—

Mr. Cracroft Wilson, C.B.,
“ Russell,
The Hon. Mr. Crosbie Ward,
“ “ “ Mr. Henderson,

Mr. Creyke,
The Hon. the Speaker,
Mr. Fitzherbert,
“ Chairman of Committees.

Mr. Weld in the Chair.

Minutes of last Meeting read and confirmed.

Mr. C. W. Richmond and Dr. Featherston in attendance.

Mr. Parris cross-examined.

110. *Dr. Featherston.*] Will you produce the letter requesting your attendance at this Committee?—I have not with me the letter requesting my attendance before this Committee,—but I can procure it, if the Committee wish. I have no copy of the letter requesting my attendance in Auckland, but I can procure one; it did not state for what purpose I was required,—merely a request for my attendance in Auckland.

Mr. Parris
15th Aug., 1861.

111. How long have you been in the service of the General Government, and in what capacity?—Since June, 1857, as District Land Purchase Commissioner.

112. When did you first proceed to Taranaki as an Officer of the General Government?—I was living at Taranaki at the time of my appointment.

113. When did you first arrive in New Zealand?—In the year 1842.

114. Will you state in what Province you located yourself?—In the Settlement of New Plymouth: it was not a Province then.

115. How many years were you settled in Taranaki?—I was absent from the year 1847 to the year 1852: I believe those are the correct dates.

116. Have you had ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with the opinions and feelings both of the Settlers and Natives in that Province?—I think I have.

117. Do you know the history of that Settlement; and are you acquainted with the principal events that have occurred there since its foundation up to the present time?—Most of them, I believe.

118. Are you especially acquainted with the history of the Waitara?—I am.

119. As Land Purchaser Commissioner, you would necessarily make yourself acquainted with everything that had occurred in relation to that District?—I endeavoured to do so.

120. There are, I presume, few documents relating to that District with which you are not conversant?—Not many.

121. What is your knowledge of the Maori language; are you so far proficient in it that you understand all the Natives say, and the Maories understand all you say?—I believe I understand most they would say; and, in answer to the last portion of your question, I may say I have never found them not able to do so.

122. I place before you Wiremu Kingi's letter of the 8th June, 1844, addressed to Governor Fitzroy; [letter read, see pages 15 & 16.] have you seen that letter before?—Yes, a long time since.

Mr. Richmond enquired of the Chairman whether the Committee had decided that Dr. Featherston should now be permitted to cross-examine the Witness after his (Mr. Richmond's) statement had been put in? If so, whether he was to be at liberty to re-examine the Witness, and to put in a further statement? He did not wish to be understood, however, as raising any objection to the further examination of the Witness. He submitted to the Committee that, as he was an accused person, the Committee was in strictness bound on broad principles of justice to conform to the ordinary modes of a judicial procedure; at the same he was perfectly ready to waive any advantage which such a mode of procedure would give him.

The Chairman replied, the Committee understood that Dr. Featherston should be permitted to cross-examine the Witnesses; at the same time they were perfectly agreed on Mr. Richmond's having the privilege of re-examination and rejoinder.

Mr. Chairman of Committees desired to append the following note:—

The mode of taking evidence before a Select Committee is entirely at the discretion of the Committee, subject only to the rule contained in the Standing Orders of the House; and that it is usual to give to both parties the unrestricted right of examination and of cross-examination, at any convenient periods of the proceedings.

Mr. Richmond hereupon reiterated his assertion of his rights as an accused person, independently of any Standing Orders applicable to the ordinary proceedings of Select Committees,—but declared his perfect willingness and desire to waive any such rights.

Dr. Featherston stated that he wished the Committee clearly to understand that he was not present to substantiate any charge, but merely to state the grounds on which his suspicions rested. He wished to add that his present course of cross-examining Mr. Parris was owing to an expressed wish of the Committee.