

Present:—

Mr. Cracroft Wilson, C.B.,
The Hon. Mr. Crosbie Ward,
Mr. Fitzherbert,

Mr. Renall,
“ Chairman of Committees.

Mr. Weld in the Chair.

Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.

Dr. Featherston arrived at 10 minutes past 11, and after expressing his regret at having unavoidably detained the Committee, proceeded with the cross-examination of Mr. Parris.

Mr. Parris' cross-examination continued.

Mr. Parris
16th Aug., 1861.

132. *Dr. Featherston.*] In the same Memorandum Governor Browne, alluding to the collision between Katatore and Rawiri, alleged to have been induced by Mr. Commissioner Cooper's proceedings, says, “ The case has unfortunately been aggravated by the injudicious zeal of Mr. Turton, a Wesleyan Missionary, whose letters addressed to the Chiefs of other Tribes, as well as those in the newspapers, some of which have originated with him, have alarmed Katatore's people, and revived the old suspicion that the Europeans would not rest until they had slain and taken possession of that which the Maories liken to Naoboth's vineyard.” Do you consider that there was any foundation for this charge against Mr. Turton?—All that I know in the matter is, Mr. Turton did exert himself considerably, but whether injudiciously I am not prepared to state.

133. You cannot state in what “ his injudicious zeal ” consisted?—I cannot.

134. Can you produce any of the letters written by Mr. Turton, and referred to by His Excellency in the extract just read, and can you state what was their purport?—I cannot.

135. Can you furnish the Committee with a list of the Officers of the Provincial Government of Taranaki in 1855, at the time when the charges (to which I have called your attention) were made against the Taranaki Settlers by Wiremu Kingi, Major Nugent and Governor Browne?—I believe I could from memory, but I will furnish a correct list in writing.

136. You are acquainted with the Petition to the House of Representatives of the Provincial Council of Taranaki, dated 19th May, 1858, and I call your attention to the three last paragraphs but one of that Petition.

“ That the difficulties under which both races are now labouring can only be removed by an entire change in the policy of the Government, which shall enforce law and order among the Natives, and give support and aid to such of them as are willing to sell land.

“ That the system heretofore adopted by the Government, of requiring the assent of every claimant to any piece of land, before a purchase is made, has been found to operate most injuriously in this Province, on account of the conflicting interests of the claimants ; and that the sufferers by this system are invariably the men who are most advanced in civilization, and who possess the largest share in the common property. Your Memorialists are therefore of opinion that such of the Natives as are willing to dispose of their proportion of any common land to the Government, should be permitted to do so, whether such Natives form a majority or only a large minority of the claimants ; and that the Government should compel an equitable division of such common land among the respective claimants, on the petition of a certain proportion of them.

“ That, in the opinion of your Memorialists, no danger of a war between the Government and the Natives need be apprehended from the prosecution of a vigorous policy, inasmuch as a large proportion of the Natives themselves would cordially support it, and the remainder would, from the smallness of their number, be incapable of offering any effectual resistance.”

Do you consider the proposal then made by the Provincial Council a just and honourable one?—Not the whole of it ; my meaning is simply this, the Natives at the time were capable of offering effectual resistance. I wish to state that at that particular time a block of land was offered to the Government by a party of Natives who had taken forcible possession of it, who were not the owners, and that their resistance would have been effectual and honourable.

137. Is it not clear that this proposal was meant as the beginning of a new policy, which should enforce the partition of their lands amongst the Natives?—It would appear so from the wording of it.

With reference to question 136, I beg to state the reason why I gave the reply I did, was, the Ika Moana block of land which had been offered was the cause of the continuation of Native feuds, and produced the memorial referred to.

138. Was it not, in your opinion, the intention of the Provincial Council, that a compulsory partition of their lands should be enforced upon the Natives?—I was never aware of it, nor do I know.

139. Did not the proposal clearly indicate a desire if not determination on the part of the Provincial Council to acquire land by any means?—[Mr. Richmond objected to the question as being wholly irrelevant to the subject of enquiry, and relating to a subject on which the witness could have no special knowledge. The Chairman ruled the question might be put.]—I do not know.

The Committee adjourned until Saturday, at 10.30. a.m.