

this meeting, Mr. Russell was present, and I have been told by the Natives since that after I retired he incited the Maori chiefs against me. I am told positively that there was nothing whatever said about the petition by the meeting, and that it was not till the 10th that papers were forwarded to the meeting requesting that signatures should be obtained on sheets of paper, and that a petition would be attached to the papers in Napier.

274. Do you know from whom this intimation came?—I was told it was by letter from Mr. William Grace.

275. Was Mr. Grace present at the meeting?—I saw him there on the 8th and 9th; but I am told he returned to Napier on the evening of the 9th or the morning of the 10th, and then sent these papers. There were some Ngatiraukawa Natives at the meeting, who returned to Manawatu, and I asked the Chairman of the Committee of the Legislative Council to allow two of them to be called and give evidence. They did so, and their evidence will be found printed with the other evidence. Nerehana and Wirihana te Ahuta are the witnesses I allude to. They state clearly that there was no petition brought while they were there, but simply columns presented for signature. I was struck by one of these men stating that he signed under the impression that it was a protest against some meeting at Taupo. He said, "You will find my signature third or fourth from the bottom of the page," and on the Interpreter turning over the leaves he found the man's name fourth from the bottom. This statement agrees with what the Natives told me in Hawke's Bay.

276. You have seen the duplicate petition to this in the Legislative Council?—Yes.

277. Do you think it bears internally evidence that it is a Maori petition?—No; I have no hesitation in saying it is an English petition translated into Maori.

278. *Mr. Rolleston.*] How many children are there in the school?—There are thirty-six on the books.

279. What kind of an arrangement is there with regard to payment for the maintenance of these children—for their food, and so on? You say the cost is about £20 a year: in what way do you receive the money?—Provisions are ordered and paid for as delivered.

280. Paid for by whom?—From the funds of the estate. I expend the money, and render all accounts to the trustees.

281. There are regular accounts kept?—Yes, and have been from the commencement.

282. Do these go to the Diocesan Board, or what?—I render the accounts to the trustees, and they have to place them before the Diocesan or General Synod, or both. I have had some difficulty in getting the accounts audited. For the past three years they have been audited by a General Government officer, the Commissioner of Stamps, in Napier. Previously to that they were audited by Mr. Henry Russell, and then by Mr. Stokes.

283. The rent paid is £500 a year?—Yes.

284. Does that cover expenses?—No. For the last two years we have had a grant of £200 a year from the Government.

285. *Hon. Mr. Fox.*] The trustees have had a grant?—Yes.

286. Not you personally?—No.

287. *Mr. Rolleston.*] That covers expenses?—Yes. But there is a balance which I have advanced myself, but not a great deal.

288. Is there any understanding between you and the trustees as to what is to be done at the termination of the lease?—None whatever. I stated in 1875 that I put in no claim. I believe I might claim a large sum of money, but I have no wish to do that.

289. *Captain Russell.*] You say there are some Europeans attending the school?—Yes.

290. Do they pay anything towards the school expenses?—No; they are children of poor parents, who are not able to pay school fees.

291. Then they are exactly on the same footing as the Natives?—Yes. They are supposed to derive the benefit from the Government land.

292. You said you had five Europeans in the school. Have you limited the number of Europeans in proportion to the benefit Europeans might be supposed to claim to derive from the school?—I have not felt myself at liberty to take in more than five, because the estate is only supposed at present to support twenty scholars, in addition to other expenses which we have been obliged to meet. The schoolmaster's salary has been paid from funds outside the estate, and the Government grant has been purely for the support of Native and half-caste children.

293. Out of what funds was the schoolhouse built?—Out of private funds, in the first instance; but that expenditure has been reimbursed from the income of the estate.

294. We have had it stated here that the Wairoa and Ngatiporou children pay £20 towards their board and maintenance?—I have never received a sixpence from any children. Their clothing is paid for by the parents; I have nothing to do with that.

295. It is not true, then, that the Ngatiporou children pay?—It is positively false.

296. I understood you to say just now that you had leased the property for £500, but, in addition to the rent you paid, you had spent large sums in improving the land. Was that part of the lease?—There was a discussion as to what I should pay. There was a difference of opinion as to the value of the estate, and the trustees offered it to me for £500. I told them I should like to spend £100 a year upon the estate, if possible, but I did not see my way clear at the time to get £600 a year out of it. My object was to benefit the estate. If I had wished to benefit myself I should not have stopped there. The estate was in a peculiar position: a poor man could not take it, because he would not be able to find the necessary money to work it to advantage, and a person having means would not take it because he would expect to make something out of it, and eventually make the estate his own. I did what nobody else would do. In saying this, I refer to the whole period of my connection with the estate until it was let.

297. There was a verbal understanding, but no written agreement?—Yes.

298. Have you spent that £100 a year?—Yes, I have spent a much larger amount.

299. I do not think it has been distinctly said, but the Committee have been led to understand