

339. What was the reason why you were appointed interpreter?—I understood they could not trust any other interpreters residing in the district.

340. Did you know, on your arrival in Napier, that Te Aute was a piece of land to the management of which exception was taken?—I heard a great deal of discussion with respect to the management of the Te Aute estate.

341. In the discussions that took place respecting that land, were you present as interpreter?—At all meetings and discussions since I have been there, I have always attended and acted as interpreter.

342. Were you requested to be present at Te Hapuku's meeting?—I was sent for.

343. What to do?—To act as secretary. They wanted a report of the proceedings to be published, and also it was their wish that notes of all their discussions should be kept.

344. Did you see Mr. Williams at that meeting?—I did.

345. Was Mr. Williams present when the speeches were made?—Yes, he came into the place after the discussion had been going on for some time—for about an hour or more. He then came in.

346. Will you state to the Committee what took place?—They had several subjects to discuss, and they had commenced the discussion on these matters when Mr. Williams came in. As soon as he came in, or a few minutes afterwards, Renata jumped up and said he was very glad Mr. Williams had come there, because he was going to talk about the Te Aute estate, and that was one reason why he was very glad he was present, so that it could not be said that any statements he would make were made behind his back. He then went on to give his reasons why he found fault with Mr. Williams in the management of the Te Aute estate. He said that when they wanted information from Mr. Williams as to what moneys were accruing from that land they could never find out; that in many instances, when Mr. Williams went to their pas to preach, he (Renata), with others, had often asked him about the Te Aute estate, and what moneys there were; and they could never get an answer. Two or three years ago (in 1873) the Maoris thought they would support schools of their own, and they thought also that some of the moneys accruing from Te Aute would help them greatly in the advancement of these schools at Pakowhai and Omaha. Besides that, Mr. McLean, who was then Native Minister, had informed the Natives that for every pound collected by the Natives towards these schools the Government would give £2. The Pakowhai Natives, it is stated by them, raised very nearly £1,000. The money from the Government they never got, and they exhausted very nearly all the money they raised in building the school. From want of funds the Pakowhai school collapsed; the Omaha school has collapsed for want of a schoolmaster. At this meeting of Te Hapuku's, Renata said some very severe things to Mr. Williams. He said he had misled them; that he came there as a minister of the Gospel, and they had gone to him as their adviser, and the result of it was that they had all been deceived; that they had determined to have the management of the Te Aute estate altered; and that, if they could not get satisfaction in that way, they would try and get the land back into their own hands.

347. Who spoke?—Renata, Henare Matua, Paora Kaiwhata, Harawira Tatere, Hapuku, and Tareha, and a few others besides. A great number of them at other times, on different discussions, also stated their reasons for distrusting Mr. Williams.

348. Was any conclusion or understanding arrived at?—Mr. Williams went away soon after that. In the evening there was another meeting, and they resolved that a petition should be drawn up; in fact, they said two petitions.

349. When was it suggested by the meeting that the petitions were to be drawn up?—It was after Mr. Williams left that it was resolved the petitions should be drawn up.

350. Did you hear what resolutions it was proposed to bring forward at that meeting?—They had several resolutions on land matters, and so forth.

351. Can you state what were the resolutions proposed to be brought forward?—The resolutions were handed to me. I got them in Napier. They also resolved that they should act together as one man against the late Government and get a new Government.

352. And after Mr. Williams had gone the petition was gone into?—Yes.

353. Who are the people that talked about it?—Renata, Hapuku, Tareha, Harawira Tatere, Paora Kaiwhata, Henare Matua, and most of the leading chiefs there took part in it.

354. Could you give the names of the chiefs who were present at that meeting?—I could give a good many of them. There was Hapuku, Tareha, Renata, Urupene Puhara, Henare Matua, Harawira Tatere, Paora Kaiwhata, Manaena Tini, Petera Rangihiroa, Meihana Takihi, Waka Kawatini, Peni Uamairangi, and others. There were Natives there from all parts of the district.

355. When the questions relating to the petition were being discussed were you the only European present?—Yes, except when Mr. Williams was there.

356. How many persons were present at that meeting, do you think?—400 or 500, I should think, including women and children.

357. Where was the petition finished?—I was not present when the petition was signed, but it was drawn up at Mr. Sheehan's office, in Napier. It was signed after I left for Napier, and I think Henare brought it down to Napier after the meeting broke up; I am not sure.

358. How many petitions were there?—Two, one for the Upper and one for the Lower House.

359. Did you bring down the petitions with you?—No; Mr. Russell brought them down here, I think.

360. *The Chairman.*] Do you know anything directly about the management of the Te Aute estate?—All I know is that an agitation was made in the papers at that time, and I have also had conversations with different people on the subject. That is all I know about it.

361. You do not know anything of your own knowledge?—I do not know how it is managed.

362. Have you been on the estate?—I have passed along a road running through it.

363. Do I understand you to say the petition was drawn up in Napier previous to this meeting?—Henare Matua had the headings made out in Maori at the meeting. I sent them down to Napier by train. The petition was written out in English, and the headings by Henare Matua, and was also returned for signature. I read the petition over to Henare Matua, and asked him if that would do, and he said