

401. You say that Mr. Russell brought the petition down to Wellington?—I think he did, unless it was sent through the post.
402. I understand that this petition was never read at the meeting?—Not that in Maori.
403. What was read?—I presume Henare Matua's notes, and the explanation I made to him of the English.
404. Did not the English document arrive the morning after the meeting?—It arrived before those names were signed. Neither the English nor the Maori was read out while the meeting was going on.
405. *Captain Russell.*] I understood you to say that you acted as interpreter because they said that none of the others were trustworthy?—Yes.
406. Then you are, so to say, retained by the Maoris?—Yes; I receive a salary, and I presume it is paid by the Natives. It comes through Mr. Sheehan's hands to me.
407. As you are retained by the Maoris, would it be part of your duty to act for and advise as against Europeans?—I do not consider it part of my business to advise in anything.
408. You consider the Maoris have a prior claim on you?—Yes.
409. Is that proper, considering your position as an interpreter?—If retained, it is perfectly proper for me to act for them.
410. Is it not the duty of an interpreter not to be a partisan, but to act simply as an interpreter?—Right throughout the Island interpreters are engaged by parties. At that meeting I was acting as the Natives' clerk.
411. Then your position is partly that of a secretary?—Yes; I do general work in the office as well.
412. And you think that is compatible with your duties as interpreter?—Certainly; I presume I can do any work. I could not make a living as interpreter alone.
413. Have you ever looked into the management of the Te Aute estate?—No.
414. Never made any inquiries?—All I know is principally from what has been published in the papers in Napier.
415. I understand you to say the schools are not now at work?—Yes.
416. And you imagine that is from want of funds?—The Pakowhai school decidedly.
417. Is there a trust fund for the Omaha school?—Yes; they lost the teacher recently.
418. You say you are sometimes employed in Mr. Sheehan's office?—Yes.
419. Do you know the details of the work that goes on in the office?—Yes.
420. Can you tell the Committee whether Mr. Sheehan is likely to be paid for drawing up this petition?—No; he is not paid.
421. I suppose you are thoroughly acquainted with the Maori language?—Yes.
422. Is that good Maori in the petition?—It is very good Maori, and every word of it could be understood.
423. Is the idiom Maori?—I consider it is good Maori, therefore the idiom must be good.
424. Is it so worded and expressed that a Maori could understand it without very considerable assistance from Europeans?—I consider it good Maori, and easily understood by any Maori.
425. I think you stated it was only from hearsay you knew the trustees were re-leasing this land to Mr. Williams?—Yes.
426. Who told you that?—It is the conversation of nearly every European in the Town of Napier, and the thing has been discussed in the newspapers.
427. Do you believe everything that appears in the newspapers?—Not always; but this, I know, caused a great deal of agitation in Napier.
428. Have you taken steps to find out whether it is true?—Not personally; it did not concern me at all.
429. Have you read the evidence given before the other Committee?—No; I have read my own: it was sent to me for correction.
430. *Mr. Williams.*] Do you know the contents of this letter?—At the other Committee the interpreter commenced to read it.
431. Do you know to whom it is addressed?—To Dr. Buller. I know the Natives that signed it were not at the meeting at all.
432. How do you know this is that letter?—Because I know it by the appearance.
433. *The Chairman.*] If I understood you rightly your statement went to support the allegation of this letter—namely, that the persons signing that letter were not present at the meeting?—Yes, that is so.
434. *Mr. Taiaroa.*] Do these people live at Te Aute?—At Mokowhiti, near Te Aute.
435. Do you know any special reason why they were not present?—They never attend any public meetings called by the chiefs. They are considered nobodies, almost. At the time of the meeting they were down at Napier attending the Commission on the *Waka Maori* libel case.
436. Were they the original owners, or had they interest in this Te Aute estate?—Other Natives told me they have no interest in it whatever.