

962. And the date of the interview?—The 5th July.

963. Previous to this interview with Rora, or on any previous day, did you have any conversation with Mr. Sutton about bringing Rora to your office or to any other place?—I had not the slightest conversation of the kind.

964. Have you ever given him to understand that it was an advantage for him to do so?—Never.

965. Had you any conversation about a compromise of the action?—None whatever.

966. You say that you had not any conversation about bringing Rora to this office. I want to make myself clear as possible as to whether there is anything kept behind?—I had never asked Mr. Sutton to bring Rora, and had never thought of such a thing.

967. Then the Committee is to thoroughly understand that there has been no attempt to get Rora to withdraw proceedings?—There has not been the slightest attempt.

968. Any statement of a contrary nature is untrue?—Absolutely false.

969. Is that plea in law, leaving it open afterwards to plead upon the facts?—Yes; it is a plea in law.

970. And if that was decided, the matter of fact would not be decided?—I did not apprehend that matters of fact would arise in that action. I apprehended another action at the suit of Davie.

671. *The Chairman.*] Will you leave the document with the Committee?—Yes. The Committee will see that the statement in that action was very different from the statement in the petition. In the action it was admitted that Paora signed the deed. In the petition it is alleged that it was forged.

972. *Colonel Trimble.*] Have you had any other interviews with Rora, at any other time?—She was never in my office before or after.

973. The Committee understand that she was only in your office once?—Yes.

974. And she had no children with her?—No; nor, to the best of my recollection, Natives of any kind. I only remember Rora. I feel perfectly sure I am right. There might have been one small child. I believe that there was only Rora, Mr. Hamlin, Mr. Sutton, and myself in the office.

MONDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER, 1879.

Mr. J. P. HAMLIN sworn and examined.

*Mr. Hamlin.*

24th Nov., 1879.

975. *The Chairman.*] Do you know the purport of a petition sent to Parliament by George Davie?—No, I am not aware of it.

976. [Petition read.] Having now heard the petition read, can you give the Committee any information respecting the subject-matter of it?—None whatever. The petition refers to what took place before my time in Hawke's Bay Province.

977. Do you remember on any occasion being in Mr. Cornford's office when Mr. Sutton brought a woman called Rora Nonoi or Poneke into the office?—I do.

978. Was she brought there in any forcible or unfair way?—No; she walked into my office, which was under the same roof as Mr. Cornford's. Rora came in along with Mr. Sutton. I was sitting at my table at the time. She accompanied Mr. Sutton in.

979. Can you inform the Committee the object of Rora's visit?—As far as I can remember, she came into my office along with Mr. Sutton. Mr. Sutton told me that Rora had told him that she had never authorized Mr. Rees to bring any action against him (Mr. Sutton)—referring to some action in which a writ had been issued by Mr. Rees against Mr. Sutton.

980. Was that all the conversation that took place?—That was all the conversation about that. The conversation then turned upon some reserves that she was entitled to. I asked her one or two questions, when Mr. Cornford came into my office.

981. Have you any further statement to make?—I asked Rora some questions. I forget exactly what they were. They referred, however, to some reserves. Mr. Cornford asked me to write this document out into Native, which I did. After it was written out I read it over to Rora, and asked her if it was correct. She replied that every word of it was perfectly true. I then handed her the document which I had written in Maori, and told her to sign it, seeing that she said it was all quite true. Rora replied by saying, "I want to be paid for signing my name." I interpreted what Rora said to Mr. Cornford and Mr. Sutton, and Mr. Cornford replied by saying that he would not allow a single sixpence to be paid to her; and he turned to Mr. Sutton and made the same remark. There is one remark I missed. When I asked Rora to sign this paper, I asked her why did she expect payment for signing the document, when she said it was perfectly correct. She said that it was the law that the Natives should be paid for signing their names. I told her that I was not aware of any law that said they should be paid for signing their names. She then said that myself and others had concealed this from her; and that Mr. Henry Russell and Mr. Sheehan had enlightened them on the point, and that the Natives were entitled to payment for signing their names. As far as I can recollect, that was all that took place in my office. Rora got up, and nothing more transpired.

982. Were the questions asked of Rora, either by Mr. Sutton, yourself, or Mr. Cornford, taken down at the time?—I believe that Mr. Cornford took down the questions at the time. I do not remember taking them down. I wrote the translation afterwards, and handed it to Rora to sign, as I have already stated.

983. Was there any request made to Rora to withdraw the action, or any sum of money offered her to do so?—Not a single farthing-piece; on the contrary, when she asked for money Mr. Cornford said that he would not allow the request to be entertained of paying her even a single farthing-piece.

984. Is the Committee to understand that Rora came into your office with a view of consulting you about the case, or the alleged promise of 350 acres?—I believe that Mr. Sutton met Rora outside the office. They came together into my office, as I have already said. I believe it was with regard to the reserves that they came. Rora told me that she had never authorized the action to be brought by Mr. Rees against Mr. Sutton.