

1315. Is not this £2,000 requisitioned as "Advance for compensation on the West Coast confiscated lands and lands purchase"?—Yes.

1316. Mr. Batkin, Secretary to the Treasury, appears to have minuted a question asking when the money was actually wanted, and the Under-Secretary appears to have replied that the money was required upon a telegram of the Civil Commissioner. Where is that telegram?—I produce it: "Shall be glad of the £2,000 requisitioned immediately, as I have been drawing on my resources and credit for want of it.—C. BROWN."

1317. How do you show that the item of £1,000 paid to Teira was part of the £2,000 requisitioned for?—In the first vouchers Major Brown sent in for credit of the advance, this £1,000 forms one.

1318. What other vouchers were sent in belonging to the same requisition?—This voucher for £1,000 was returned to the department with several others.

1319. Can you produce those other vouchers?—I furnish a schedule of them. The principal items are as follow: No. 1, £100; No. 2, £100; No. 3, £383 6s. 6d.; No. 4, £1,000; No. 15a, £100; No. 16, £100: the total amount being £1,783 6s. 6d., all of which were charged to the acquisition of the Waimate Plains.

1320. Are the four payments of £100 each described in the same way as in the voucher which you now produce, namely, as "compensation to ourselves and relatives on account of and in consideration of former claims for confiscated land west of the Waingongoro"?—Yes.

1321. They all bear, apparently, the same authority and certificate as the voucher for the £1,000?—They do.

1322. When these vouchers came in, was any question raised with regard to them?—They were submitted to the Hon. Mr. Sheehan, then Native Minister, for his special approval.

1323. Was that approval given?—It was. I produce the Treasury schedule containing the items of these vouchers, with the Hon. Mr. Sheehan's approval, dated 15th August, 1878.

1324. Do you remember Sir D. Bell bringing the matter of this payment of £1,000 under your notice on board the "Hinemoa," and requesting you to be good enough to make some inquiry on the subject?—I do. In consequence, I visited the Civil Commissioner's Office at New Plymouth to inquire whether this £1,000 had been actually paid to Teira and others in cash. Major Brown was not present, and the information I obtained was from his clerk, Mr. Rennell. He produced a copy of the voucher filed in his office. He told me that the money, he believed, had been used to pay for food and other expenses attending the Waitara meeting, on behalf of Teira and his people; and that Teira was aware, when he signed this voucher for £1,000, how the money was to be spent. I pointed out to Mr. Rennell the irregularity of the proceeding, and said I considered that his signature as witness, at the foot of the voucher, was witnessing the payment of money as well as witnessing the signatures. He referred me to Major Brown for further information, but I had no opportunity of seeing Major Brown during that day. Since then (yesterday morning) I received from Major Brown a letter, and, though the envelope is marked private, I think, from the contents of the letter, the writer allows me to make use of it. The letter contains a paragraph in reference to the payment now under consideration. The following is an extract from the letter, so far as relates to the £1,000: "As regards the expenditure that was incurred in the names of 'Teira and others,' they were made aware of the arrangement before they signed at the time. I did not see it in the objectionable light I have seen it in since, when Mr. Rennell pointed it out, and that all the receipts, accounts, and vouchers covered by it should have appeared as they were, and on their own merits, and that he regretted not objecting to it at the time. . . . I availed myself, when the sitting of the Royal Commission was here, to bring the question forward, and, as I said, you had nothing to do with it, and knew nothing about it. What was passing in my mind was, that Sir Donald McLean charged expenditure against blocks in course of purchase which he wanted the funds for, and I inferred that it was done on the signature of Natives concerned."

1325. Then, as you have reason to believe, from the inquiry you have made, that the actual money did not pass into the immediate hands of the Natives whose names appear on the vouchers, do you know into whose hands it did pass?—I do not. I informed Mr. Rennell that it was most probable the Native Minister would write to Major Brown, asking him for the vouchers in support of this payment of £1,000, as I considered they ought all to have been forwarded.

1326. Now that your attention has been called to the matter, do you not think it necessary that the vouchers referred to by the Civil Commissioner in his letter to you, should be obtained by the department itself?—I do.

1327. Will you bring the matter forward in the proper channel so that this may be done?—Yes.

1328. With regard to the voucher of £383 6s. 6d. which you have produced, we find, on examining it, that it is altogether for the erection of a building for the Natives. Was this for the Native meeting at Waitara?—It was.

1329. The money referred to appears to have been paid to J. C. George?—Yes.

1330. Was this one of the vouchers which were submitted for special approval, to be charged to the acquisition of the Waimate Plains?—It was.

1331. You will remember, when speaking to Sir D. Bell on board the "Hinemoa," that he said he had reason to believe that this £1,000 had never reached Teira's hands; these circumstances which you have stated now go to show that he was correct, do they not?—Yes.

1332. What means are taken, then, to make sure that any money which you charge to some particular land purchase, under a vote of the House, reaches the Natives to whom the payment purports to be made; are you usually satisfied with the mere witnessing of the signatures of the Natives?—We are satisfied with the signature to the voucher by the Native, and the certificate by our own local officer that the particulars are correct in every way. If they are not so, I take it the officer would be very severely censured. Apart from that, the Audit requires that the signature of every Native should be witnessed by a European.

1333. But may it not happen in other cases, as well as in the case of the vouchers now before us, that, long after money has been actually paid away and the voucher passed, the formal audit made, and the approval of the Minister to the payment given, it may turn out that the money did not reach the hands of the Natives at all?—It has been proved so, I am sorry to say.