

MR. WARBRICK to the Hon. the ATTORNEY-GENERAL. Mount Eden Gaol, 8th April, 1880.

SIR,—I have the honor to inform you that I am at present a prisoner in this place through not appearing to answer a precept of Mr. Batkin, Assistant Controller and Auditor. I have, since my incarceration, considered carefully and seriously my position, and feel sensibly now that I made a great mistake in not appearing and affording such information as was required of me. I feel deeply sorry for having transgressed my duty, and am desirous that Government should favourably consider my case, and allow me an opportunity of rendering every information which lays in my power to explain the transactions of the Land Purchase Department at Tauranga, and any other information connected therewith. I am a very old settler, and the father of a large family, who are dependent upon me; and, being desirous of condoning my offence, I wrote to J. A. Churton, Esq., the Audit Inspector, who has had to do with these accounts, asking him to receive such information from me as I was prepared to give: this he informs me that he was unable to do, on account of the instructions of Mr. Batkin, and the matter having gone out of the Audit Office's hands. Under these circumstances, I thought it advisable to write to you, as Attorney-General, requesting the Government would be pleased to give me an opportunity to afford the information required. I believe the information which I am prepared to give would assist the Crown on the case of *Regina v. Young*.—Hoping that my case may be favourably considered, I have, &c., A. WARBRICK.

STATEMENTS by MR. WARBRICK.

*Abraham Warbrick re Maria Maraki and Nuku Paoro.*—These vouchers I know were not signed by the parties; but I do not know who signed them. I knew this at the time that Mr. Young directed me to fill the vouchers in. I got these two vouchers out of the portfolio. I drew Mr. Young's attention to this. I found out on Sunday that Young had included in the imprest accounts these items, and on the same day I went to Mr. Young to tell him so, and asked him to telegraph to Mr. Gill about it. I did not know at the time I filled the vouchers up that the moneys had not been paid, but the accounts had been previously charged. The error arose through the bank-book being so badly written that I could not make the name out. The No. 2 account of mine at the bank was strictly an official account at the bank. The way business was transacted was this: A Native would come and want an order on a storekeeper. Young would say to me, "Give the Native an order and make him sign a voucher." Usually the plan was to get the signature in duplicate. The voucher, when signed, would not be filled up, but would be put away by Young's order in the portfolio, and would be used just as occasion wanted—that is to say, if Young were to say to me, "I want a voucher for £50 for such-and-such a man," I would take a blank voucher bearing that man's signature, and would fill it up by Young's directions. He dictated to me the amount, and generally the block; but sometimes he would leave to me to find out the names of any block the Native was interested in, and I would then fill in the name of the block. I had such confidence in him that I would do as he told, fill the voucher up, attest the signature, and hand it to him. This was the course pursued in Retireti's, Hohapata's, and Nuku and Maria's cases. I had no knowledge whatever in these particular cases that the money was paid. In some cases I had a knowledge that money had been paid, but as a general rule I did not know of the payment. Young had a pocket-book in which his "refund" accounts were entered. I never had the pocket-book. He used to open his pocket-book and read out names and amounts, and direct me to search in the portfolio for blank vouchers bearing those names, when he would direct me to fill them up in the manner before stated. Retireti's voucher for £51 was filled up by me in Young's presence. He particularly requested me to insert the name of the block Waiparapara. It was a blank voucher bearing Retireti's signature. Hundreds of pounds have been treated in the same manner, and, although I attested the signatures, I was very seldom witness to the payment. I have filled from the portfolio over a hundred vouchers in one evening, which had been signed in blank. I always did this by Young's orders. He and I would go over the monthly schedule to be forwarded to the Government as an imprest account, and which was made partly from the bank-books and partly from Mr. Young's pocket-book. I would then, by his direction, obtain from the portfolio vouchers signed in blank, purporting to be by the Natives whose names were in the schedule. I would then fill these up from the information supplied by the schedule. Young would then certify to these, and he himself would forward them to Wellington. I have done this in hundreds of cases—in fact, the vouchers which were signed for stores were seldom used for that purpose, but almost invariably put into the portfolio.—A. WARBRICK.

*Re Retireti-Tapihana.*—I believe the voucher for £51 was one of those signed in blank, and at one time placed with other blank vouchers in the portfolio. No person had any access to the portfolio but myself and Mr. Young. When the schedule was being made out for the accounts in which the £51 was included I usually went to the portfolio to get the vouchers; but in this instance, I not having taken any interest in the matter of the £200 for the Tapsells, I set my face against it. I told Young he would be a sufferer; that the Tapsells would sell him. Mr. Young got the voucher out. I saw him searching the portfolio for it. He said: "There is one of Retireti's vouchers here." There were none but vouchers signed in blank in this portfolio. Mr. Young, in going through his pocket-book, said: "Here, I've given him £1 myself. Alter the £50 pencil-mark—make it £51." I did so. The voucher was in blank, but the signature was witnessed by me before the blanks were filled in. I filled up this blank voucher for £51 by Mr. Young's direction. I then attested the signature. I did not see the £51 paid to him. I cannot say that Retireti signed this voucher or that he did not. The £125-cheque was cashed at the Bank of New Zealand by Mr. Young, and the money in notes placed in an envelope (official) and brought to the office of Mr. Young. Mr. Young asked me to take care of it—to put it in the iron box. He said, "They are going away in the morning, and they'll want the money." Early in the morning the day after the cheque was cashed, one of the Tapsells—I think Philip—came to my house and requested me to come to the office to give them this money. I was very annoyed, because the morning was so cold; but I came to the office, in a bad humour. Philip had met Hans at Young's house. I went at once to the office, got hold of the envelope containing the money, and brought it down without stopping. I met Mr. Young and Hans and Philip Tapsell at Robertson's