

Judge Fenton. our regret that the success of the Government up there had been so great. We thought they had denuded the Natives of their lands to a much greater extent than they ought to have done. I think so still; but I suppose that does not concern this inquiry.

Aug. 24, 1880.

1289. From your own knowledge of Mr. Nelson do you believe him to be an honest and truthful man?—I have no reason to say the contrary. I have the same reason to say that he is truthful as he has to say that I am. That is about the position of things. I know no more than I have seen myself.

1290. But so far as you have seen?—Yes.

1291. And you have heard nothing in the Courts in your official capacity to the contrary?—No; I do not remember anything.

1292. *Mr. Bowen.*] Mr. Nelson told us Arama Karaka was an untruthful man: can you give any evidence as to the character of Arama Karaka for truthfulness?—No; I think I can tell you nothing. I know very little of him. I knew him better in 1854 than I do now. We were both younger then, of course, and we used to go shooting together at Otamatea and Oruawharo, and perhaps we have both changed since then.

1293. *Sir William Fox.*] You have frequently interpreters in your Courts, I suppose, besides Mr. Nelson?—I do not remember that Mr. Nelson ever appeared as an interpreter.

1294. Then persons who appear as witnesses, or in whatever capacity he appeared in your Court. You know him from your experience of him in Court?—No; I think he never appeared before me in Court; but he has constantly come to the office. I am not only Chief Judge, but Official Administrator of the Statute, and he has been frequently in the office to look after titles, to get declarations of freeholds, and matters under the Act of 1873, and I have had frequently to see him on those matters. I may have seen him in Court, but I do not remember.

1295. I presume you are brought into contact with other persons as well as Mr. Nelson to perform the same duties?—Yes.

1296. Do you generally find they commit perjury much?—They cannot; they are not on oath.

1297. Are they generally men of untruthful character?—The Government Land Purchase Agents?

1298. The persons who appear before you in the same capacity as Mr. Nelson: are they generally great liars?—I should not like to speak of them as a class at all. One was up in the Supreme Court the other day.

1300. In fact, your knowledge of Mr. Nelson's character is rather of a negative description?—You mean that I have not seen him do anything wrong?

1301. Precisely?—Yes; I have not.

1302. *The Chairman.*] Do you know the Rev. William Gittos?—He is a clergyman at Oruawharo.

1303. Do you know him personally?—I think if I met him I should bow to him; not much more than that.

1304. Do you know anything of his personal character?—No.

Captain Colbeck,
M.H.R.

CAPTAIN COLBECK, M.H.R., sworn and examined.

Aug. 24, 1880.

1305. *Mr. Sheehan.*] You are a settler residing in the Central Kaipara District, I presume?—Yes.

1306. You know Mr. Nelson, Native Agent and Land Purchase Officer?—Yes.

1307. Have you had any experience of, or business dealings with, Mr. Nelson?—Yes, on two occasions.

1308. What is your opinion as to Mr. Nelson's character as to honesty and the carrying-out of his work?—In the two particular cases to which I refer, the Committee will pardon me for saying I had a strong prejudice against him: but I had a difficulty with the Natives, and he kindly came forward and offered his assistance, and through his aid I got over the difficulty with the Natives; and I may further say he refused to take any payment for it.

1309. Then your experience of Mr. Nelson warrants you in considering him to be a truthful and honest man in his business?—So far as I know.

1310. *The Chairman.*] Do you know Arama Karaka?—Yes.

1311. What is his character?—Of course I have heard in the Committee since I came here that there have been insinuations made against his honesty; but I have had dealings with him, and I think, so far as I know, the mistakes into which he has fallen were in consequence of his ignorance of what was going on. I know, if I may venture to make the statement, of the case in which he was charged with having obtained £100 improperly; but my impression was that the £100 was not improperly obtained by Adam Clark. Of course, my knowledge is obtained from local sources, and from the Natives themselves. Whilst he bore the blame of that £100 the Otamatea Natives got it; and my impression was that Arama Karaka did not get it.

1312. Of course you cannot speak from your own knowledge. What character does he bear for truthfulness or honesty in the neighbourhood?—I know no charge against him with the exception of the one referred to.

1313. You know the Rev. W. Gittos. I see you presented the petition. What character does he bear in the neighbourhood? What do you think of him?—I think he is a very worthy man. If he tells an untruth it is not knowingly. I think, whilst he is very determined, and that whatever course he pursues he does it rather determinedly, I believe he is perfectly honest, and is seeking the best interests of the Natives in our district. I have a very high opinion of Mr. Gittos.

1314. *Mr. Sheehan.*] You reside near the parties, do you not?—Yes.

1315. Does Mr. Gittos take an active interest in the affairs of the Natives there?—He manages them altogether.

1316. Especially in relation to Adam Clark?—Yes.