

5. In the opinion of the Committee, provision should be made, in granting a rehearing in respect of any of the said blocks, that the rights of the lessees respectively should not be prejudiced.

6. The memorandum of the Hon. Sir Robert Stout would appear to have conveyed to Mr. Fenton the impression that, in coming to the decisions that he did, he was actuated by improper motives; and that he had been influenced by friendship, and had unduly favoured certain parties. The Committee have to report that, in their opinion, there is nothing in the evidence to show any such partiality or favouritism on the part of either Mr. Fenton or Mr. Rogan; and that the Hon. Sir Robert Stout, in his second memorandum (page 81), states that he at least did not intend to charge corrupt conduct.

7. Several serious charges have been made against Dr. Buller in the course of the inquiry, as to which, that gentleman being absent and unrepresented, the Committee offer no opinion.

8. There has no doubt been much irregularity in the proceedings of the Native Land Court; but the Committee are of opinion that it would not be right to judge that Court by such a strict standard as might fairly be applied to other Courts.

9. That, from the evidence, it appears that Mr. Fenton, in addition to the work which devolved on him as Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, performed various executive duties; and he states that his letters and telegrams referred to in the memorandum of the Hon. Sir Robert Stout were written in his executive capacity.

EDWARD T. CONOLLY,
Chairman.

13th August, 1886.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

TUESDAY, 22ND JUNE, 1886.

THE Committee met pursuant to notice.

Present: Hon. Major Atkinson, Hon. Mr. Bryce, Mr. Conolly, Sir G. Grey, Mr. Holmes, Mr. Menteath, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Seddon, Mr. W. D. Stewart, Sir R. Stout.

Orders of reference read.

On the motion of Hon. Sir R. Stout, *Resolved*, That Mr. Conolly take the chair.

Hon. Sir R. Stout read a series of issues which he proposed submitting to the Committee.

The petition of F. D. Fenton read.

On the motion of Hon. Sir R. Stout, *Resolved*, That a copy of the departmental papers on the subject be obtained by the Clerk for the perusal of the members of Committee. That a copy of the issues suggested by the Hon. Sir R. Stout be handed to each member of the Committee. That Mr. Bell, as solicitor for Mr. F. D. Fenton, be allowed access to the copy of the papers.

On the motion of Mr. Montgomery, *Resolved*, That the Committee at its rising do adjourn till Wednesday, the 30th instant, at 11 o'clock.

Resolved, That notice of such meeting be given to Sir G. Grey, the member presenting Mr. Fenton's petition, and Mr. H. D. Bell, solicitor for Mr. Fenton.

The Committee then adjourned.

WEDNESDAY, 30TH JUNE, 1886.

The Committee met at 11 o'clock.

Present: Mr. Conolly (Chairman), Hon. Major Atkinson, Hon. Mr. Bryce, Sir G. Grey, Mr. Holmes, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. W. D. Stewart, Hon. Sir R. Stout.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Two letters from Mr. H. D. Bell, dated the 23rd and 24th instant, were read by the Chairman.

On the motion of Mr. W. D. Stewart, seconded by Hon. Sir R. Stout, *Resolved*, That the Clerk of the Committee obtain from the Native Land Office the files and books (minutes) referred to in Mr. Bell's letter of the 23rd. That the said documents be indexed, and that Mr. Bell be allowed to see the said documents in the presence of the Clerk of the Committee.

Mr. Bell, who was in attendance, was called in, and stated that he appeared for Mr. Fenton and Mr. Rogan.

On the motion of Hon. Sir R. Stout, *Resolved*, Whereas Mr. Bell, as counsel for Judges Fenton and Rogan, requests he may see minute-books and documents referring to blocks other than those included in the Bill referred to the Committee, to show the practice of the Native Land Court, that Mr. Bell be called to name the blocks regarding which he desires to obtain information.

Mr. Bell, being recalled, stated that he should not be able to name any particular blocks, but could name the year and place of investigation. He undertook to see the Chief Registrar, and apply again to-morrow.

Copy of letter from Mr. Cuff was read by the Chairman.

Petition signed by Hiraka te Rango and five others was also read.

The Clerk was instructed to acknowledge the receipt of the copy of Mr. Cuff's letter, and state that should the Committee require to examine any of his clients due notice will be given.

On the motion of Hon. Sir R. Stout, *Resolved*, That the Clerk inform, by telegram, Renata Kawepo and five others that the Select Committee is now sitting to investigate the Bill providing for the rehearing of Owhaoko-Kaimanawa Blocks, and that if they have any evidence to give to come at once.

Judge Fenton was now called in and examined by Mr. Bell.