

1888.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF) ON THE PETITION OF ARTHUR OWEN (No. 253, SESS. II., 1887),
TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND APPENDIX.

Report brought up 1st August, 1888, and ordered to be printed.

REPORT.

PETITIONER, who was in treaty with certain Natives for the lease of a block of land on the north bank of the River Mokau, makes serious charges against two Judges of the Native Land Court and others, alleging that they have used illegal means to prevent him acquiring the said land. He prays that no action may be taken by the Government until a full inquiry has been made and justice done.

I am directed to report as follows: That the Committee, having taken evidence on the petition of Arthur Owen, have arrived at the conclusion that the petitioner has failed to sustain his case, and that Stockman's agreement, on which the claim is founded, has no validity. That the signature of Mare Kura, alleged to be a forgery, is genuine, and was affixed to the document before the hearing of the case by the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court. That the charges of corruption preferred against the Chief Judge and officers of the Native Land Court are not substantiated, and are without foundation. That there is grave doubt as to the validity of the certificates issued under sections 24 and 25 of the Native Land Administration Act; but that the Chief Judge, in issuing the certificates, acted in good faith. The Committee has no recommendation to make.

1st August, 1888.

W. KELLY, Chairman.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Petition of ARTHUR OWEN.—Sess. II., 1887.

Evidence taken, Sess. II., 1887.

SATURDAY, 17TH DECEMBER, 1887.

ARTHUR OWEN examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] The Committee will hear what you have to say. Have you any statement to make?—I was going to say that I have been taken unawares in this matter. Sir Robert Stout was to have appeared in support of the petition that no legislation should take place this session in regard to this case. I can show you the telegram in which the Government pledged themselves to Sir Robert Stout that no legislation should take place this session in regard to my case.

2. *Mr. Hutchison.*] Has any legislation taken place with regard to your case?—No. I produce a telegram sent by me to Sir Robert Stout asking him whether he had not obtained a pledge from the Government through Mr. Marchant that no legislation should take place in respect to these blocks (Mangiora and Mangapapa). Sir Robert Stout replied, "Most certainly; otherwise I would have remained to help you."

3. Are there not some proceedings in the Supreme Court relating to the matters referred to in this petition?—There are certain legal proceedings pending, but they have been suspended for the present.

4. Who is the plaintiff? Are you?—Yes.

5. Who is defendant?—Nevil Walker.

6. *The Chairman.*] Then, do you propose to go on with this petition?—I wish to go on with it. The advice I have is that, even if we got a certificate in the Supreme Court, we would have to come to the Government afterwards; therefore I have come to Parliament.

7. Do you wish to make any other statement than those made in this petition?—Yes, certainly. I wish to call on those who possess them to produce the documents relating to this: that the agreement upon which Judge Macdonald granted the certificates for Mangiora and Mangapapa—