

WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENDANT.

16A. PATRICK ALPHONSUS BUCKLEY, K.C.M.G., examined by Mr. Rees.] I am Attorney-General. Have been so with the present Ministry since its formation.

17. Can you state whether the laws regulating Native land and Native Land Courts are in a state of safety to the public?—I have stated openly that they are a disgrace to the Legislature. I have tried to rectify them as much as I could.

17A. Is it not a fact that when you have been asked by the Chief Judge to take charge of a Bill you have asked the Judge to give you a memorandum?—Will you say what Bill?

18. The Waikouaiti Reserves Bill. My object in asking is that the Native land-laws had got into such a mess, you wanted a memorandum?—Yes; commonly I got an explanation of a Bill from the Native Office.

18A. Did you advise that good measures of reform as to past and future transactions in land were required?—There is no doubt about that. I remember the appointment of a Commission in 1891 after the first short session.

19. Was the report of that Commission brought before the Cabinet?—I have no doubt it was. You remember your report was not completed—not signed by Mackay. I do not think I have seen Mr. Mackay's report.

20. During the session, 1891, were you present with Messrs. Cadman, Carroll, and myself drafting certain clauses about tribal dealings?—You are referring to incorporation?

21. Yes.—You spoke to me frequently about it; but I do not remember who were present. [Exhibit No. 1 of defendant, Native Land Bill, 1891.] That is the Bill of Mr. Cadman's, brought before the Joint Committee. I attended this Committee three or four times.

22. Do you remember the Natives objecting to part of that Bill?—I do. So far as I could understand, they wanted delay. I spoke against delay, and a resolution of the Joint Committee was passed, I believe, that the Bill should be proceeded with.

23. Had you any knowledge that Mr. Cadman, while Minister, was engaged in purchasing Native land?—None. The first intimation was a memorandum you have, addressed by you to me (this was that of the 10th of March), after the 10th of March.

24. After receiving that did you see Mr. Cadman?—I do not think I did.

25. Can you say whether any statement had been made by Mr. Cadman to any of his colleagues about his purchasing Native land?—He made none to me. I am unaware that he did to others.

26. In your opinion, is it a proper thing for a Minister to purchase Native lands?

Sir R. Stout objected.

27. Did you have any conversation with Mr. Cadman as to holding an inquiry into the subject of the matters in the memoranda?—I had some conversation with him. I think I said those were charges he could not rest under.

28. Did you suggest a parliamentary inquiry?—I made no suggestion of the kind of inquiry. I thought he had better be advised by some outsider.

29. Are you aware of any other general Native Bill brought in by Mr. Cadman other than this one?—The West Coast Bill would have been brought in by Mr. Cadman; but Mr. Ballance knew all about the matter. There were other general Bills—the Validation of Titles Bill. I remember the appointment of Mr. Carroll to the Executive.

30. Do you know of two Bills brought in by Mr. Carroll towards the end of last session?—(Sir R. Stout says he will get these for Mr. Rees.)

31. They seem brought in by Mr. Cadman?—I cannot say from memory; most likely they would be. [Two Bills put in on behalf of defendant. 2. Native Equitable Owners Act 1886 Amendment Bill, 1892. 3. Native Committee Act Amendment Bill, 1892.] I do not recollect anything about these Bills.

32. Can you say why they were not proceeded with?—I do not know.

33. You say I often spoke about these matters to you?—You were very anxious to push on Native matters. I had interviews with you and Mr. Seth-Smith; I could not get Mr. Seth-Smith to move fast. Mr. Cadman was also anxious to move on; but I could not get you and him to agree. Yes! it was arranged that the differences of the two Bills should be arranged by me; and I thought that Mr. Rees's clauses should be incorporated in Mr. Cadman's Bill. It was left to me. Mr. Rees came to the Cabinet. The Premier asked me to see what were the differences between Cadman and Rees. Difficulty was about making certain incorporations in Cadman's Bill. I think Part 15 (page 46) contains the clauses Mr. Rees wanted inserted.

34. *Cross-examined by Mr. Sainsbury.*] The clauses referred to appertain to a Board and a Chairman; Mr. Rees's name was suggested by some persons; Wi Pere's name also mentioned.

35. *Re-examined by Mr. Rees.*] Did not the clauses I contended for have reference to appointment of a committee amongst tribes?—Yes. By my recollection the difficulty was about Administration Boards.

36. GEORGE HENRY SWAN, Member of House of Representatives for Napier, examined by Mr. Rees.] I have been M.H.R. for Napier during three Parliaments.

37. Can you speak of the state of the present Native land-laws?—Yes.

38. Can you state whether, amongst the members of the House of Representatives, it is thought that radical reform in the Native land-laws is necessary?—Most decidedly.

39. Do you know that during the last two sessions efforts were made by me for such reformation?—Yes; I can say you made efforts in both those sessions, and urged the Government to take action in the matter.

40. Do you remember the Tahoraite Bill being before the House?—Yes.

41. Do you remember the discussion as to whether it was a public or private Bill?—You contended that it was a private Bill; but it was admitted by the House as a public Bill; and I think the House refused to send it back to Committee. I should have been specially referred to on that question.