

Mr. Robson.

18th Sept., 1871.

You kept watching him as he came along?—I saw him as he came along.
By Mr. Fitzherbert: What sort of a clock is it you have?—An eight-day dial. It is a very good one, and keeps time pretty well.

Who is the maker?—It is a London clock; I do not know the maker's name. It was purchased by the School Committee some years ago.

What has been the time it kept generally; has it been a losing rate or a gaining rate?—I am not prepared to say.

Has it ever stopped?—Yes, for want of cleaning.

Is it such a clock as you can depend on to a minute?—Yes; it is a clock I am most accustomed to. I call it Moutere time; I am particular to keep the time.

The poll, you say, opened at 9 o'clock; this is a question of half a minute past 4; can you be quite sure that seven hours and half a minute elapsed?—I feel sure it was over seven hours; I have not the least doubt about it.

By the Chairman: When did you regulate the clock before?—Really I could not say; it kept regular time.

By Mr. McGillivray: I should like to know whether it was fully 4 o'clock when you saw Starnes coming?—Oh yes. I saw him through the window, coming up to the door. It only required half a minute for him to come from where I saw him to the polling place. It might not have been exactly half a minute.

By Mr. Fitzherbert: Have you been Returning Officer before?—Yes, for many years.

Have you any form by which to declare the poll closed; do you shut the door?—The way in which we declare the poll to be closed is to turn the key in the lock.

Had you done so on this occasion?—I had not.

Witness withdrew.

Mr. Gibbon.

18th Sept., 1871.

William Gibbon sworn and examined.

By Mr. Travers: Your name is William Gibbon?—Yes.

You reside at Motueka?—Yes.

What is your occupation?—A sheep farmer.

Were you acting as scrutineer on the part of Sir David Monro, at the late election for Motueka?—Yes.

At what polling place?—At the Lower Moutere.

Who was acting as Returning Officer?—Mr. Robson.

Was there a scrutineer present on the part of Mr. Parker?—Yes, there was.

What was his name?—William Coppins.

Do you know Stephen Starnes?—Perfectly well.

Did he vote on that occasion?—Yes.

Now, will you state the circumstances under which he gave his vote in regard to time?—Yes; I will do that. About a few minutes to 4 o'clock, we were waiting for the voters to come up, and we did not see any more coming. Accordingly, Coppins and I went out from the schoolroom on to the road, and we saw a man coming. We did not know who he was, and we waited till we saw it was Stephen Starnes. He was some distance from us. As soon as he was sufficiently near, we cooed and beckoned to him. We called out to him, if he did not make haste he would be too late to vote. He came up running as quick as he could, and Coppins and myself took him into the polling place. I went in first, and then Coppins and Starnes. We were all there together.

When you entered the schoolroom, did anything take place?—As soon as we entered the school room, Mr. Robson says, "Gentlemen, it's past 4 o'clock." He said that to the three of us.

Now, did you see the clock?—I did.

Was it or was it not past 4 o'clock?—It was past 4 o'clock.

Well, what took place then?—A consultation took place between me and Coppins and the Returning Officer, to know what to do. We, to oblige Starnes, let him vote. Mr Robson said immediately afterwards it was past 4 o'clock then.

Did Robson say anything to Starnes?—Yes, when it was agreed between Coppins, myself, and Robson, Mr. Robson sat down and stamped a paper, and turned round and said to Starnes, "Who do you vote for?" Starnes immediately said, "Parker." Mr. Robson immediately rose, and said, "Dear me, I have made a mistake." He took the man behind the curtain, and what was done there I know nothing at all about.

Did Coppins on that occasion refer to his watch?—He had a watch; whether he referred to it or not I do not know.

Was there any discussion as to whether it was or was not past the hour?—No, not any.

This was to oblige the elector?—Yes.

Did you know at that time how he was going to vote?—Not exactly.

By the Chairman: Whose scrutineer were you?—Sir David Monro's.

By Mr. Allan: Had the voting been slack about that time?—Yes, very slack.

You and Coppins went out to see if there were any more electors coming?—We did.

You did not know, of course, before you went out, that Starnes was coming up?—Certainly not.

Did you look at the clock before you went out?—Yes.

What time did you make it before you went out?—It wanted a few minutes to 4.

How far off was Starnes when you saw him first?—Well, as far as you can see a man plainly, and not know who he was exactly.

Have you good sight?—Very good sight.

How far off could you see a man, without knowing plainly who it is?—Well, knowing Starnes as I do, I might know him if I saw him about 300 yards off. I recognized Starnes by his dress; I supposed it was Starnes.