

Skipper, John Love, and Courtenay signed afterwards for the balance of £2, for day-labour. With regard to an order for £2 on the 12th of March: I received it from one of the gangers. Mr. Macfarlane refused to countersign it, the effect of which was that it was only negotiable at Mr. Marks's store. This was dated 12th March, 1878. I still hold the order. [Copy of order handed in.] It is signed by the ganger; not by Mr. Macfarlane. Marks's storeman refused to take the order when presented, unless the whole amount was taken out in stores. I once offered to take half cash and half stores, but the offer was refused. I applied once, and was told that I ought to have presented it, and left it with them before pay day, and then I could have got cash. I still hold the order. Some orders were payable at Jackson's Bay, and some at Hokitika. The usual practice was that Mr. Macfarlane did not countersign orders given by the gangers. Mr. Macfarlane would not give orders except on a particular store. I was in debt to the Government store, but I was charged higher prices than I could obtain goods at elsewhere. Simon Lofquist and John Clarke asked me to give evidence as to contracts. Simon Lofquist says he has received moneys for which he has not signed vouchers. Sorenson, at Kumara, has stated to me that he has a complaint to make. There are cases of moneys being stopped. Money due for mutton, to the amount of £2 10s., was stopped in September, 1877. In October I came to Hokitika. On my leaving Jackson's Bay, Mr. Macfarlane said he would pay it when I returned. This was afterwards placed to Collyer's account in Mr. Macfarlane's books, and I was referred to Collyer for it. Afterwards Mr. Macfarlane sold some grass-seed for me from the Government store, which I imported from Dunedin. The price of some of this was stopped from me, and the rest I had to collect myself, and take what I could get. The storeman told me he took the account for the sale of this to Mr. Macfarlane, and he told him to alter it. The name of the storeman was Adam Cronin. Love and Cox complain of similar treatment with respect to accounts. I bought the right to Courtenay's allotment, but it is so flooded in consequence of the bad formation of the road that it is almost useless. Then a house on a section was forcibly taken from Courtenay and used as a stable by the Government. I expect to go back to Jackson's Bay for a short time to bring my family away. I complained to the Hon. Captain Fraser that a man could get an order on a place where he could purchase a bottle of grog, but not where he could buy a leg of mutton; or, in other words, the order was only available at Marks's store. I did not, as a rule, keep a general store, but I could generally sell flour at about 25 per cent. cheaper than at the Government store, and if the settlers required other goods I could generally let them have them at a cheap rate. Amos Nicholson could make statements and give information with regard to the dismissal of men from the saw-mill. [The witness then handed in copies of letters which had been forwarded to Mr. Patten.]

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WEDNESDAY, 5TH MARCH, 1879.

Mr. JOHN MURDOCH further examined.

Between 1st September and 15th December, 1877, Mr. Macfarlane told me if I supplied beef he would see that I was paid for it. On the strength of this I supplied beef to settlers, and Mr. Macfarlane afterwards refused to pay for it. Another man, Antonio Max, Mr. Macfarlane had money of his standing to his credit. Max was to buy a cow from me for £13 10s. Max and Mr. Macfarlane agreed that I was to be paid for the cow out of moneys due from Mr. Macfarlane to Max. Mr. Macfarlane paid me £10 of this, but refused to pay the balance, and stated that he had given Max credit for it. One John Jacques got a cheque for about £3 10s., which he laid out in flour with me. Jacques has gone in the "Stella" to Taranaki. On going to Mr. Macfarlane afterwards for work he was asked what had become of this cheque, and when he told Mr. Macfarlane, he was told to come to me for work. Some time in last September Mr. Patten came to Jackson's Bay, and I waited on him on account of some of the settlers to apply for work. He informed me that there would directly be plenty of work at the Haast Track. I asked for immediate work, as they were on the point of starvation. He said he would see Mr. Macfarlane, and see if he could give them any work before the commencement of the Haast Track. I gave Mr. Patten the names of the settlers who were the most destitute. With one exception, I believe all were willing to work on the Haast Track. An advertisement was issued calling for a list of those willing to work on the Haast Track. I understand they all applied for work on the Haast Track. I put my own name down, but the time never came that it was convenient for me and others to go. Those who went by the "Stella" were some who would have gone. I used to be told that there were others more needy who must go first, or that the work was not ready. When speaking to Mr. Nightingale he told me that the settlers were only a lot of paupers, and other settlers have told me that they were told so also, directly. Mr. McGlashan told me that he was told so, on applying for money due to him. He went to Nelson by the last trip of the "Maori." Mr. Macfarlane said he would very soon root out all who signed the petition. When the "Stella" was at Jackson's Bay in December last, I saw the Captain on board, and, afterwards, Mr. Macfarlane and the Captain together, for the purpose of getting a passage for some settlers destitute, and anxious to get away. Captain McKersie said that his orders were to take away such persons as Mr. Macfarlane ordered. Mr. Macfarlane said these persons had plenty of money to pay their own passages, and that there was work enough if they liked to take it. I was authorized to offer to the Government all they possessed if they could be removed. One of the reasons given by Mr. Macfarlane was, that it would be defrauding the Union Steam Shipping Company to take them by the Government steamer. Only one more went in the "Stella" than those who were telegraphed for. Hevelt, Boveridge, and Ray went on board the "Stella." There are eight families now wishing to get away. The settlers complained, too, that Mr. Macfarlane kept a stock of goods in his office, which he disposed of on his private account—boots, shoes, drapery, &c. He refused to give orders unless the settlers took these goods, though they could obtain them cheaper elsewhere. Generally he was so mixed up with the affairs of the settlement that he could not deal. One settler, Thomas Beveridge, stated that he had money due from the saw-mill, and was informed by Mr. Macfarlane that he could sue and get judgment, but time would be given to pay. Mr. Macfarlane was one of the saw-mill company directors. That is an instance given