

nansky told me. I did not know of any charges, or anything about them. I thought it would be the means of bringing us work, &c.; but when I found out the real meaning of the petition I asked Rosenansky to strike my name out. When the petition was sent away I was too late to get my name struck out, and I asked Mr. Nicholson to write a letter, saying I wished to have my name struck out. I have no complaints against Mr. Macfarlane about the management of the settlement.

JOHN SPORBA sworn and examined.

I live in the Bay, in the Government houses. I signed the petition. I did not know the contents of the petition when I signed it. Callery brought it to me. He did not read it over to me. I did not understand English. I did not sign my name, I made a cross. I understood it was because Mr. Macfarlane did not give us work enough, and many other things, but the real charges I knew nothing about. I have a complaint so far. I do not think I have had sufficient work allotted to me. I came here on the 22nd of July, 1876, in the "Tui." I am settled in the Smoothwater. I have no charge against Mr. Macfarlane as regards the management of the settlement, or his dealings with the settlers. I took up land in Smoothwater because others did so. I did not look round, but I thought it was all the same. When I took the land at Smoothwater Mr. Macfarlane told me I could get land at the Okuru, but I did not go to look at it.

WEDNESDAY, 26TH MARCH, 1879.

JOHN MURDOCH sworn and examined.

*Charge 2.*—I mean by this charge that, if I had got as much work as I think I was entitled to the first year, I believe I could have supplied myself with provisions elsewhere than at the Government store, but I do not say that cash due to me was ever withheld. I bought goods when I was in Hokitika buying cattle. I had means and could have bought goods, but I consider that as a private matter of my own. In May, 1875, I applied for work, and I was told to wait until the contracts were out. At the end of May or the beginning of June I got a contract. In May, 1875, I had only the contract work at the end of the month. At the end of July I was refused work. My contract in May was for clearing for £16 5s. I remember in July Mr. Macfarlane was getting out some contracts. I was offered a contract in September, but I refused it as too low.

*Charge 3.*—This never occurred to me. I have no further evidence to give under this head.

*Charge 4.*—The settlers asked me to ask the Resident Agent on their behalf, as they received no payments in cash, if he would allow them to take their beef from me as it was cheaper, and for him to pay the amounts for them out of their earnings. I proposed to Mr. Macfarlane that, instead of his supplying the meat through his store, I should kill it at my place and supply the settlers each week, and that he should guarantee the payment for a limited quantity, and pay it out of their earnings. I remember particularly speaking to him of it in May, 1876. He said he would not be responsible for any meat supplied to settlers, except that served through the Government store. I told him my prices—6d. and 7d. per lb. I had offered to supply meat in March, but I did not go so fully into the question. I thought it would be better for the Government and the settlers themselves to get their meat at a cheaper rate than they were then supplied. In May, 1876, one beast had an accident and broke its leg, and Mr. Macfarlane took it off my hands. When I said Mr. Macfarlane would not allow me to supply meat I meant he would not guarantee the debts of the settlers on their beef accounts. I told Mr. Macfarlane that I had cattle which I should be glad if he would take, even through the Government store. He said yes, he might. He gave me 7d. a lb. by the carcase for one cow. In June, 1877, I killed a beast and that went through the Government books at 6d. and 7d. In August I supplied mutton on similar terms at 5d. and 6d. About that time I sold fifty sheep at 5d. and 6d. It was on the 1st of October, I delivered fifty sheep. Total received, £50 9s. 6d. Mr. Macfarlane refused to take any more meat after this on account of some demur about taking a beast to Okuru. Out of other sheep he refused to pay for some. One Lawrence McGlashan said he refused. I heard Mrs. Dwan ask the storeman for some meat, and he said he did not know about it. I was serving meat out up to the 10th of December on a general guarantee given about July. In September I was wishing to kill some bullocks. Mr. Macfarlane said he would let me know when I had better kill. I went in October to Hokitika, and returned in November. I had cattle running, and I brought twenty sheep with me from Hokitika. On my return from Hokitika I spoke to Mr. Macfarlane about the supply of meat. He told me to go on as usual, only arrange with Mr. Robinson about killing. I saw Mr. Robinson. He said he would kill when it suited himself, and take no notice of anybody. I spoke to Mr. Macfarlane about it. I had no objection to make to Mr. Robinson, and said I agreed to it. Let each settler go where he is best served. There was some correspondence between myself and Mr. Macfarlane, and Mr. Macfarlane and Mr. Robinson. I got notice to meet Mr. Macfarlane and Mr. Robinson in Mr. Macfarlane's office. I accepted the appointment, and went again the next day also, but Mr. Robinson was not present either time; but a few days afterwards Mr. Robinson was in the Bay. I went with him to Mr. Macfarlane's office, and Mr. Macfarlane told us he had no time to discuss the matter with us. I know nothing more; but, when I asked about the payment for what had been supplied, Mr. Macfarlane said the accounts would be so much waste paper. Mr. Macfarlane's reason, I gleaned from the correspondence, was because of my not supplying a beast at Okuru. I do not know that there was any understanding that I should have taken meat to the Okuru. I would have supplied it if it had been required in sufficient quantities. There is also a letter of mine to Mr. Patten. I have seen it in the papers before the Commission. I remember coming into the store previous to this correspondence and asking if I could kill some sheep. I had a conversation with Mr. Macfarlane, and he told me Mr. Robinson had made a complaint that he had to do all the outside work—supplying meat to the outlying districts, over rivers, ferries, &c., while I did all the profitable work just round the place. This took place before the letters handed in were written. Mr. Macfarlane told me to go and arrange with Mr. Robinson. I once told Mr. Macfarlane when the guarantee was stopped that all the men in my books were good marks. I do not remember Mr. Macfarlane asking why I wanted a guarantee if they were good marks. Mr. Macfarlane told me that