

goods gratis, and Jacques and Zimmerman. Many of these goods are not entered. I do not know that these people got offers for work at the Haast Track.

*Charge 18.*—I called on Mr. Macfarlane on one occasion to pay my rent—in April, 1877. There were several females in his office looking over goods and bargaining for them. It was not convenient for him to attend to me. I waited about two hours, and left, and returned again the next day. Mr. Macfarlane was still busy. He asked me to leave the order, and not wait. The amount of the order was entered in the book, and I did not receive the 5s. change over and above the rent. The 5s. was credited to me in the book. The Government refused to supply draperies and goods of that class. On this occasion I heard these females say the goods were too dear. Mr. Crone kept a store for goods of this description. I have never been obliged to take goods of this description. I have no recollection of having instructed Mr. Macfarlane to get me goods of this class from Dunedin.

*Charge 19.*—I have not been deterred from suing the saw-mill proprietors in any case from hearing that Mr. Macfarlane would be likely to give time to pay.

*Charge 20.*—No cheques have been detained from me.

*Charge 21.*—I have no further evidence to offer.

*Charge 22.*—I have no further evidence to offer.

*General Charges on Domestic Economy of Settlement.*—I would further state I wished to occupy one of the empty Government houses to store goods in, and I was told by Mr. Nightingale that I should have to pay £5 for it, and then I should not have complete control. I do not know of any instance of any person being refused permission to put goods into one of the houses for store either coming in or going out of the settlement. Mr. Crone and Mr. Robinson are occupying houses to carry on business rent free. I complain that rent was demanded from me, while others who are carrying on business are occupying rent free. I had no opportunity of tendering for the Government store. The tenders were called for when I was in Hokitika. I think they were called for about the time I left Hokitika. The tenders were sent to Hokitika. I do not know that the tenders were called for before I left for Hokitika. I did not tender for them. I had no intention of tendering. I came here as a settler, with no intention of carrying on business in any way. Robinson's meat account shows his prices at the Arawata. Mutton, 5½d. and 6d.; beef, 6½d. and 7d. I call attention in my store-book to 2 lb. of preserved meat supplied to me in April, 1875, for which I was charged 10½d.; also 2 lb. of butter, 1s. 9d. per lb.; fresh beef, in May, 1875, charged 9d. per lb. Also, May 29, 8¾ lb. mutton, 8d.; May 22, ½ lb. of gunpowder, 4s.; shot, 10d. per lb. March 3, 1877: 1 sheep, £1 5s.; sheep weighed 48 lb. I signed the petition, and I assisted to draw the petition up, with Doherty. I think I had the principal hand in the first three clauses. The fourth was added after I left the meeting. I agreed with the various charges. It was only from what I heard. I had no personal knowledge of the truth of the charges. I had received my information previously. I do not think that the second charge contained in the memorial has been sustained by evidence. I did not authorize Doherty to go to Mr. Macfarlane and withdraw the petition on my account. I think if settlers got about £50 worth of work per year for two years they might settle down upon the land; but there should be some rule as to the results in the shape of improvements done, and there should be some facility for transfer of holdings where good reason could be shown.

ROBERT MCKERZIE sworn and examined.

I am master of the Government steamer "Stella." In December last I remember Mr. Murdoch coming to me and asking me to allow him to pay his passage to Hokitika. I asked him if he was destitute. He said "No." I told him he could go up by the "Maori," due here two or three days afterwards. He only asked for a passage for himself. He never said a word to me about there being people here prepared to give all they possessed to obtain passages. I believe Mr. Murdoch came a dozen times. I think I told him the "Stella" was not a passenger ship. He mentioned that a man named Ray had some luggage on board. He did not ask for a passage for him. He did not say that if he could not get a final answer as to this passage the luggage had better be brought on shore, in case it might be pitched overboard. I did not throw any obstacle in the way of the people getting away, nor did Mr. Macfarlane, when they were destitute. I do not know of any case of any one coming and asking for a passage, and Mr. Macfarlane saying it was not necessary. I do not remember Mr. Macfarlane saying anything about defrauding the Union Steam Shipping Company. I think I used the expression myself.

JAMES NIGHTINGALE recalled.

Mr. Macfarlane told me that Mr. Marks complained that he had to pay rent for his store, while other persons carrying on business were occupying cottages rent free. He then told me, if I saw Mr. Murdoch or Mr. Jackson get goods by the steamer for sale, that I was to tell them that before they could have one of the cottages to store goods for sale they must pay £5 per annum, or one-third what Mr. Marks was paying for his store. I told Mr. Murdoch and Mr. Jackson this. I have seen Murdoch's goods occupying the cottages from one trip of the steamer to another. They were branded with Murdoch's brand. Murdoch told me the goods were sold when they arrived, but Jacques told me they belonged to Murdoch, when he was carting them up. I deny that I told others that they could all have one of the cottages to store their goods together. When Jacques was carting the goods away he told me they belonged to Murdoch. I told the settlers that they could store their own goods which were not for sale, without paying any rent. I was living in a Government cottage at the time. The settlers have come and brought me money, and asked me to get them goods from Dunedin, at the same time that I got my own. I do not know that Mr. Crone has carried on business since the Government store was closed.

THURSDAY, 27TH MARCH, 1879.

GEORGE SMITH recalled.

I signed the petition. I was aware of the charges contained. I am not prepared to prove Nos. 2 and 4 of them by evidence—that is, embezzlement and forgery. [No. 2 read over.] I have no