

go and look at for work for a contract. Mr. Nightingale came and asked me if I had seen it. I told him Yes. I asked £1 5s. per chain. He said it was too much. Next day he let it out for £1 10s. to McArthur and another. I was fourteen days longer out of work in consequence. Afterwards a man came to open a silver mine up Jackson's River. I was engaged for £3 per week. I told him to see Mr. Macfarlane. I spoke to Mr. Macfarlane. He advised me to take the offer. I went up, and we were four days without food up there. When I came down I had a bad hand and could not work. When I afterwards asked for work Mr. Macfarlane told me to bring the money I earned from Sinclair. I told Mr. Macfarlane I had already spent the money earned from Sinclair for clothes in the stores supplied privately by him. I asked for a little provisions to start to work again. Mr. Macfarlane gave me a little at 4s. a day for myself and 4s. to be stopped at the store. Some settlers gave me some flour for my family. I was for three months without meat. I asked my wife to go to Robinson and try to get a bit of meat. This was about three years ago. My wife got 8 lb. of meat. She was asked for the money. She said "I have none." Robinson took the meat away from her, and she came back without it. Next day I asked Mr. Macfarlane for a little bit of meat, and he gave me an order for 12 lb., but there was none to be got. I went twice and told Mr. Macfarlane that I and my family had not enough to eat. I asked for flour, and I could not get it. It was either two or three months after Sinclair had gone that I was kept short of goods. Sinclair only stayed two or three days after we came down again to the settlement. When I took up my section Mr. Mueller was there looking for pipe-clay. He told me my soil was very good, and my land should be drained. Mr. Nightingale laid out a drain. I cut it, and it flooded my land. My wife fell into the water, and suffered in her health from it. When my wife was ill, and going to Hokitika, I was told that Mr. Macfarlane said she must not go without his consent. He said she was not fit to go. I earned some money from the survey. I wanted to pay some money for my wife to go to Hokitika. Mr. Macfarlane refused me the money, and credited the amount of my cheque for the survey work to the store account. I got about £3 advanced by Mr. Nightingale on account of work I had done. I complain that Mr. Macfarlane did not pay for my wife out of the £22 I received for the survey. I also complain that my wife was not sent to Hokitika at the Government expense. After we were working clearing a section, on the 4th of January, 1878, Mr. Macfarlane came and said, "You will soon finish." I said, "Yes, to-day." He said that Mr. Marks had taken the Government store, and that he would not give provisions without cash. I asked if I could have some money out of my contract. I wanted some flour. He asked if 100 lb. of flour would be enough. I said "Yes; and 12 lb. of sugar, 2 lb. of tea, and a packet of candles would do." He told me I could get it from the store. I went to the store and got the goods. I worked on my section four days after New Year's Day as part of my contract. There was no time specified for the contract to be finished. I complain the earnings for this four days was put to my credit in my book instead of being paid to me. Ray, McKinnon, Nolan, and Lebindow were paid for their work done after New Year's Day, but I was not. [Contract produced.] This is the contract I signed. By that the contract should have been completed in thirty days from the 5th of November, 1877. I had not got it finished till the 4th of January. I worked with Ray and Franklin just before Christmas, 1877, and we did not get paid. It was contract work. When I took the contract at the cemetery Mr. Nightingale did not tell me that the money would be put to my credit that month. About £20 was collected by the settlers for the purpose of paying for my wife to go to Hokitika.

EMIL NERGER sworn and examined.

In the latter end of January, 1877, I collected £21 2s. for the purpose of sending Mrs. Burmeister to Hokitika for medical advice and attendance. £2 of this was refunded, and £19 2s. paid to Mrs. Burmeister. Mr. Adams got back £1, and, I think, Mr. Smith £1, because she did not go. I am a settler here; I live at Okuru. I have no complaints to make.

JOHN MARKS sworn and examined.

I am a storekeeper at Jackson's Bay and the Haast. When the Government gave up the store here I tendered for it, and became the purchaser. I never heard of any system of giving orders direct on myself for supplying the settlers with goods. I never saw a certificate of work addressed to me. In the conduct of my business no such certificate was ever presented to me. Sometimes an order came signed by the Resident Agent or Mr. Nightingale. I gave goods for these orders just as I thought right. I am not aware that it could make any difference to Mr. Macfarlane whether these orders were presented at my store or any other. They would be paid on pay-day. I never had reason to believe that Mr. Macfarlane would not recognize them if they came through other hands than mine. I have heard of instances where they were recognized in other cases. If I received such an order I kept it till pay-day, and then the man in whose favour it was drawn had to acknowledge it. The orders were handed in to Mr. Macfarlane with a statement of accounts. The ganger sent in his statement of accounts also. As a general rule I got a cheque. In cases where men disputed the orders I had to get the ganger to prove that he had issued the orders. I have, in some instances, got those who presented the orders to indorse them. I have given part goods and part cash for orders; and, sometimes, an IOU instead of change when I was short of cash. Sometimes the IOU would be returned almost immediately, and the cash asked for. No one interested in the Government works was in any way interested with me in the store. Thomas McFelerick had been a partner, but the partnership was dissolved before the Government store was purchased by me. McFelerick was never in the Government service.

NEIL NEILSON sworn and examined.

I live at Arawata. I have a section in Waitototo. I signed the petition. Rosenansky was up in Klempel's house. I came there on business. He had the petition on the table, and Klempel was signing it. He asked me if I was going to sign it. I said, "What is it about?" He said, "We want to have more money spent by the Government, and it will be paid in cash, not by cheques." I said, "You had better wait till I come to Malam's place, for Jimmy Stout to read it or Malam, and then I