

*Mr. Rees.*

4th Nov., 1879.

114. *Mr. Sutton.*] Did Mr. Rees give Rora a cheque on the day she instructed him to go in for this business?—I have given Rora Nonoi small sums of money from time to time. I cannot tell whether I gave her a cheque or not on the particular day referred to. I can easily produce my bank and account books. Any money I have given will be shown there.

115. Does Mr. Rees say that in none of these cases has he paid the Natives for the business?—Never in a single instance have I paid Natives under such circumstances.

116. Did not Mr. Rees give money to Paremene and another Native when he (Mr. Rees) started the case against Mr. Kinross?—I have never given a Native any payment whatever for anything he had done for me in these matters. I have never asked a Native to be allowed to bring any proceedings. I certainly have never given a Native anything in order to allow me to bring any proceedings against any persons for them. I have done nothing that I am not prepared to have gone into before the Supreme Court or any other tribunal. I am ready to produce my books whenever called upon to do so.

117. Then, if Rora Nonoi says that you gave her £20 on the day you got instructions in this matter, she would be stating what was untrue?—I never gave her £20 to do so. I am perfectly certain she will never state anything of the sort.

118. *Mr. Moss.*] I should like to know whether Mr. Rees ever paid Rora Nonoi to be allowed to do this business. That was the inference intended by the question just put?—No.

119. I apprehend that was the inference—that you had paid Rora Nonoi to be allowed to proceed in this matter?—Yes; I apprehend that that was the inference. I have never done anything of the sort, either with European or Maori.

120. Who are Mr. Rees's clients?—Davie and the two girls.

*Mr. Sheehan.*

4th Nov., 1879.

JOHN SHEEHAN, Esq., M.H.R., sworn and examined.

121. *The Chairman.*] Have you seen this petition of George Davie?—Yes.

122. Can you give the Committee any evidence upon it?—Yes, I can. Perhaps it would be shorter if I were to make a statement. In 1873 I was employed professionally to attend the Hawke's Bay Commission. Paora Nonoi was there, but in bad health, and died shortly after the Commission was over. I returned about June. Amongst other business offered to me was this matter of Paora Nonoi's, respecting his signature to a deed of the Awa-o-te-Atua Block. The substance of the statement made to me by Paora's daughter, Rora, and a Native named, I think, Nikera, was, that on the conveyance of this land to Mr. Sutton by Paora Nonoi being made, Mr. Sutton promised to give Paora back an area of land from 300 to 400 acres. I am speaking now from recollection. In reply to a question from me, they said that the promise was made in writing. I asked where the paper was, and they said that they would endeavour to find it. They returned some days afterwards, and informed me that they had made a search for the paper, but could not find it. I thereupon informed them that they had better let the matter drop, as, in the absence of that document, it was idle to bring the matter into Court. About that time the petitioner Davie disappeared. Why, I do not know. It was rumoured that he was drowned over in New South Wales. If I mistake not his wife went into mourning, so satisfied was she of the truth of the report.

123. Who was this — Davie?—Yes. He turned up about twelve or eighteen months afterwards. Shortly after his return he came with these same people, Rora Nonoi and Nikera, with a document in Mr. Sutton's handwriting, which I have seen, to the effect set out in the petition. It is three or four years ago now since I saw it. It did not take long to satisfy me that there was no civil remedy in a Court of law, and that it was clearly bad as a legal document. I advised him to leave the matter at rest until we saw what became of the other cases then in hand. The matter then stopped, as far as I was concerned, until I ceased to carry on business in Hawke's Bay. I may state that, in consequence of the business having been brought to me, I searched the title. I ascertained that the block contained about 5,700 or 6,000 acres. I believe that there are nine grantees in the block. I do not think that there were ten. Paora Nonoi was one of them. A conveyance purporting to be signed by him was on the register. So far as the register was concerned, it appeared that there had been a clear conveyance of his interest in the block. During the same inquiry I ascertained that the total amount of the reserve in the block was twenty-five acres, at a place called the Willow Pa. That is all I know of the matter, except that I left the document, among other papers, in Mr. Rees's hands in Napier. If it be produced I can identify it.

124. Have you anything further to say?—No.

125. *Colonel Trimble.*] I only want to ask Mr. Sheehan if he knows anything of the case during the last four years?—Yes; I knew of the case. Do you mean professionally?

126. Yes?—I have had nothing to do with the case professionally since the middle of 1877.

127. Might I ask whether this woman is pecuniarily able to prosecute her suit in the ordinary Courts of law?—Well, I can hardly answer that question. When I left Napier in 1877 she had money to credit in Mr. Russell's hands; but I presume she has, as the Natives always do, very likely drawn it long before now. Of course, she has interests in land.

128. Does Mr. Sheehan know from his own personal knowledge whether, so far as pecuniary means are concerned, she is able to prosecute this suit?—I do not know.

129. One of the allegations in the petition is, that the woman has no means to prosecute the suit, and I wish to ascertain if it be true?—I cannot say. I might mention with regard to the £100 that Mr. Ormond was examining Mr. Rees about, that it was a debt partly due by Paora Nonoi and partly by Rora Nonoi to Davie. He brought an order which I refused to cash. Subsequently she came with him herself, and requested it to be paid.

130. I wanted to ask if Mr. Davie was present in 1877 at the first interview?—I do not think so. I fancy I saw Davie about the question of the will in 1873. There was a will which Paora Nonoi had made in his favour as executor. I do not remember seeing him about this matter. Davie was not a person I cared to do business with.

131. Was that because he was not a trustworthy man?—I felt that if I was right in going against