

*Mr. J. Sheehan.* Natives are brought up for trial it is quite common to appoint counsel, even though they will not accept them.

9th Dec. 1879.

14. What has Mr. Rees done for this £300?—I do not know; I do not know as a matter of fact that Mr. Rees has been employed. I have only heard so.

15. *Mr. Montgomery.*] How did Mr. Sievwright come to be employed in this transaction?—I could not say, except I presume that Mr. Hoani Nahe employed him as solicitor for the prisoners. I may say I did not take any part in the matter myself, because I felt that as the Government were prosecuting, the less we had to with it and with monies given to Hoani Nahe, the better, otherwise it might appear that the persons employed by him on behalf of the prisoners were employed by the Government.

16. *Mr. Gisborne.*] Were Messrs. Sievwright and Stout employed as solicitors; we have not got that answer here?—I could not say, but I have just been looking through the correspondence, and I should imagine they were employed as solicitors.

17. Was not the arrangement in Cabinet that Mr. Hoani Nahe should have the advance, and that he should expend it, accounting for it in the defence of the prisoners?—That was so.

18. And that practically he represented the prisoners?—Yes.

19. *Mr. Ballance.*] Were there not some claims also involved? Was not part of this money to be devoted to claims which the Natives of Taranaki had then, or to the investigation of claims which the Natives had on West Coast?—I understood that money was to be employed in their defence, and I presumed that in their defence by counsel the question of the question of unfulfilled promises would be raised, and on that question a question would be raised as to the charge.

20. *The Chairman.*] The telegram from Mr. Hoani Nahe reads as follows:—"Grahamstown, October 16, 1879.—The Under-Secretary Native Department, Government Buildings.—The services performed by Messrs. Sievwright and Rees were to make arrangements respecting the reserves consented to by the Government for the Maoris of Taranaki who are now in prison; and when a Commission is appointed to enquire into the troubles at Taranaki, Mr. Rees and others will act as lawyers for me at Taranaki, for I represented Taranaki, and that is why I asked the Government to show me consideration, and give me money to retain the services of a lawyer for my people at Taranaki.—(Signed) HOANI NAHE."

21. *Mr. Ballance.*] You say the defence of the prisoners was mixed up with the question of Native reserves?—Yes, so far as I knew it was a question between the Government and the Native prisoners, and, in fact, between the Government and the whole of the West Coast population.

22. That is, the question of reserves would enter into their defence?—Yes, necessarily, unless they meant to plead guilty.

23. *Mr. Hislop.*] At the time this £300 was imprested, was the Government aware that Dr. Buller had been employed?—I think I was aware that Dr. Buller had been acting—in fact I saw him once or twice.

24. *Mr. Saunders.*] Dr. Buller also told you that the Natives would not accept any provision of this kind made by the Government?—No; I saw that statement, but it is untrue. I feel a delicacy in referring to the matter, because the two interviews which took place in the matter were held in my house, and were understood to be strictly private and confidential; but, if an answer is required to the question, I say he did not tell me. On the contrary, when I told him Mr. Hoani Nahe was anxious to have assistance, Dr. Buller expressed pleasure at the idea, and expressed his willingness to have assistance, on account of the pressure of his other work.

25. *Mr. McLean.*] Hoani Nahe was a member of the Cabinet when this took place?—Yes.

26. What was the objection of the Audit?—There was no difficulty in getting over the objection, because there was no law against it. The only objection I took was that it was not desirable, and therefore I suggested that Mr. Lewis should take the imprest.

27. Have you had any conversation with Mr. Rees in connection with this matter?—I saw Mr. Rees about a week or ten days ago, when he asked me where Hoani Nahe was, and I told him his address was Grahamstown.

28. I suppose he is at Grahamstown now?—He lives within a mile and a half of the telegraph station, and there would be no difficulty in getting him.

29. *Mr. Gisborne.*] You said you knew about Dr. Buller being employed? What did you imagine would be his position in reference to Hoani Nahe, as counsel or separate counsel? Did Dr. Buller say he would be leader or would work with another counsel; or what did you understand?—I did not understand anything more than that he would be glad to have assistance. That is all. In any case it would be certain, when the case did come on, that at least two counsels would appear.

30. You understand that the division of duties between the counsel would be a matter of amicable arrangement?—Of course between the counsel that would be determined by the date of admission to the bar; whichever would be senior would take the lead.

31. Dr. Buller gave you to understand that there would be no difficulty in the arrangement of the bar in the case?—None whatever. I would like to state that I heard that letter of Dr. Buller's read in the House, and that it is essentially untruthful from beginning to end. I would like to put that on the evidence, because he may be called. If Dr. Buller likes to give me leave to make known what took place I will do so.

32. *The Chairman.*] Dr. Buller's letter is as follows:—

DEAR MR. BRYCE,—

Hunter Street, Wellington, 8th November, 1879.

A matter came to my knowledge to-day, which I feel bound to mention, both in justice to myself and the Natives for whom I am acting. You are probably aware that I have been, for some time past, acting as counsel for the Maori prisoners now confined in Mount Cook Barracks. In that capacity I had frequent interviews with the late Native Minister, Mr. Wi Parata being generally present. Whilst remembering that my duty to my clients was the paramount consideration, I always assured him that so far as possible, I must avoid embarrassing the Government. That as I believed the real question