

336. You admit, then, that it is very likely signed by one of the chiefs on behalf of a number of the people?—No, I do not say that; but it is evident that, although the document bears several distinct signatures, some of the signatures are in the one handwriting. With regard to a question asked a short time ago as to the genuineness of Parakaia's signature, here is a note in pencil by the late Judge Young, who knew Parakaia and his signature well. He puts this pencil-note opposite two other signatures, "Signed by Parakaia."

337. I will now question you on the arrangement made by Dr. Pollen. Do you think that the reason why Dr. Pollen gave 11,000 acres to these Natives was because he felt there had been injustice and wrong done by Dr. Featherston? [*Colonel Trimble*: Dr. Pollen himself was examined. Mr. Lewis cannot possibly know anything about his motives.] Was any part of that £4,600 paid on account of rents, or was any part of it paid on account of purchase-money?—On account of rents. It had nothing to do with purchase-money. I believe not.

338. This letter signed by Parakaia—was it dated when the Manawatu Block was purchased?—The date of the letter is Otaki, 23rd February, 1869, and the period of the transactions connected with the Manawatu Block covers the date of that letter.

339. When that letter was written was that £4,600 lying in the bank or was it lying in the hands of the Government?—I have explained more than once already that the amount was never lying in the hands of Government at all. That £4,699 represented the amount of rents due from the lessees, which Dr. Featherston, as alleged, promised should be paid to the Natives. He drew out that money from the Treasury from time to time, to make distribution to these Natives. Altogether a sum of £4,633 was paid in this way to the Natives. Apart from that distribution altogether the Government tried to recover these amounts from the lessees, but they only succeeded in collecting £1,971.

340. Was that money divided in terms of that letter?—Dr. Featherston, in his letter addressed to Sir William Fox, 5th November, 1869, gives a general account of one large distribution.

341. What I want to ask you is whether a distribution of money took place in consequence of that letter, in accordance with the terms of that letter?—I am not in a position to express an opinion in that matter of my own knowledge, but I produce a letter from Mr. A. McDonald, who gives his opinion that the rents were distributed generally in accordance with that letter.

342. *Mr. Bryce*.] He was the agent?—He was an agent of the Natives. I should add to that answer that Mr. McDonald represented, at the time of the inquiry, non-sellers who laid claim to these rents.

343. *Mr. Pere*.] Does Parakaia's name appear to any receipt for that money—money paid either by Mr. McDonald or Dr. Featherston. What I mean is, if McDonald did distribute any of this money has any receipt been shown or produced that Parakaia received any of that money?—No receipts. Mr. Pere, I think, has already seen the return which shows that no receipts were found. I would add that I do not think receipts would be expected under the circumstances.

344. Is it a European custom to pay money without receipts?—In the distribution of rents to Natives in those days we know that receipts were not always obtained.

345. Is there no memorandum even, giving the names of people to whom these moneys were paid—putting receipts out of the question, is there no memorandum?—I have very little doubt there were at the time memoranda showing generally and particularly the receipts, and furnishing full information; but these payments were made by the Provincial Government and their agents. When the claim for these back rents was first made the Provincial Governments had ceased to exist, and their offices had been broken up; therefore the Native Office has been unable to obtain a number of papers that must have existed on this question.

346. How is it, then, they got hold of some documents and not others?—The documents I produce are documents in the Native Office, which has not been broken up.

347. *Colonel Trimble*.] Who is that letter addressed to?—To Mr. Richmond.

348. He was then Native Minister?—Yes, he was Native Minister at that time.

349. *Mr. Bryce*.] You have produced a letter signed by Parakaia and other Himatangi Natives appointing Mr. McDonald to receive the rents due to them, have you not?—Yes.

350. Was money paid to McDonald in the terms of that letter?—Yes.

351. His receipt for that money is producible?—I believe it is.

352. Is it at all disputed that money was so paid to McDonald?—No.

353. Does not that constitute a receipt among Natives?—Yes; but the question in the form it was previously asked was, whether any of these Himatangi Natives actually signed receipts themselves, which I believe they did not.

Mr. J. BRYCE, M.H.R., gave evidence.

*Mr. Bryce*: I want to make a statement with respect to a particular portion of Dr. Buller's evidence. It is not very material, but I would like to be allowed to make it in order to put myself right with the Committee. Shortly after I took office in 1879 Dr. Buller waited on me in reference to this claim—the claim in the present petition—and he stated the case from his own point of view. I was not familiar with the case at that time, and I said to Dr. Buller at the conclusion of his statement that from his statement there appeared to be a claim; but I said that I would go through the papers carefully before making any definite promise on the subject. Dr. Buller pressed me very hard and persistently there and then to make a promise. I declined. So far Dr. Buller and myself are agreed. But Dr. Buller alleges that after I had gone through the papers I still professed to have a favourable opinion of the claim. To that statement I give an absolute and unqualified denial. After the perusal of the papers and examining the whole subject I never had the slightest doubt that the case was bad. The matter was technically not in my department, but in the department of Lands; and I wrote a memorandum on the subject to the Minister of Lands, embodying the result of my examination of the papers. That is all the evidence that I desire to give, for I know nothing further except what the papers disclose.