

Mr. BROWNE: They can read Native. Everybody was supposed to read it.

PA ARIKI: What I read was something else: it was something else I thought I was signing. I deny signing my name to this paper.

Mr. PLATTS: This is not Pa's signature at all. This was signed by somebody else for Pa.

Mr. BROWNE: If it is not Pa's signature, it was signed by Charlie Cowan, and she was present. I may explain that there was a lot of trouble on the island. It was thought that Mr. Platts was taking too much power into his own hands. As a result there was a general meeting, with Mr. Ayson as chairman. I was interpreter. I never had a word to say. The Arikis spoke: "If Mr. Platts is going, we do not want him here again."

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: What Arikis?

Mr. BROWNE: Pa and others.

Mr. PLATTS: They said that if I was going to send Estall with those troops they were going to do away with me.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes. And then they had a private meeting of their own—the whole—the Arikis, the island Councillors. The only outsiders were Tinirau and Tawi. No European was present. At that meeting they wanted certain people to draft out a petition for them. They said, "Make it as strong and hot as you can. Everything you have got against Mr. Platts put in that paper." They elected two others and myself to prepare the petition. They said, "You prepare the petition, and we will see if it is all right and then sign it." I had the work to do, and I brought the petition to Makea's yard. The whole of the Arikis were present. I put the paper in front of them. I read it, and they were all satisfied, and they put their signatures to it.

Mr. HORN: You told us, Mr. Browne, that the Natives were angry, thinking that the Commissioner was sending a certain man with their troops—Estall—whom they did not wish to send, and they said in that event they would rather wish to discharge the Commissioner than have him carry out that purpose?

Mr. BROWNE: Yes.

Mr. HORN: On the strength of that special circumstance you were instructed to make things as hot as you could in that petition?

Mr. BROWNE: Yes.

Mr. HORN: Did you then, on the strength of their feeling in regard to the appointment of this man Estall, get them to sign a document which embodied other matters?

Mr. BROWNE: At their request.

Mr. ISITT: We had a statement made by the Native Fruit Association that the traders this year offered them 1s. 6d. a case for their fruit. Is that correct?

Mr. AMBRIDGE: Speaking for the traders, I can say that that is not correct. The lowest price offered was 2s. 6d.

Mr. PLATTS: I do not think they made that statement in reference to this year. If they did, they did not intend it to apply to this year.

Mr. McCOMBS: I would like to ask Mr. Browne this: there are twelve signatures to this petition of which we have photographs. How many of the twelve are in the room now?

Mr. BROWNE: Nine, I think.

TEPURETU, a member of the Council, on being asked, said: The only thing we discussed at the meeting was about Estall. We did not know that other matters had been included in this petition afterwards. Willie Browne prepared the petition and brought it to the settlement. I was on the wharf, and it was put to me, "Here it is: sign your name." I said, "I will not sign it. Sign it yourself." I would not sign with my own hand. I refused to sign it.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: Is that your signature on the document?

TEPURETU: I never signed that paper. No.

Mr. WITTY: Is it correct that you asked some one else to sign for you?

TEPURETU: No.

Mr. FORBES: I would like to ask Mr. Platts what the duties of this Island Council are, and why the whites should not be represented on it?

Mr. PLATTS: The duties of the Island Council are similar to the duties of a Borough Council in New Zealand, shorn of a great deal of the power of taxation. The Council makes ordinances in the nature of by-laws for the good government of the community. But it cannot interfere with the revenues.

Mr. FORBES: Why should not whites be represented?

Mr. PLATTS: Principally because the Arikis object to white representation on the Council. That is the first block in the way. When that is overcome there arises the question of the disparity in the relative populations. Thirdly, the experience throughout similar communities shows the disadvantage of trying to carry on things with a mixed body such as there would be if there were Natives and whites on it, when the Natives are in a state of tutelage. Those are the three objections—first, that a promise was made when the islands were taken over by the Crown that their local self-government would be maintained for them, and until their consent is obtained every Minister has found it difficult to suggest any way out of that impasse. The second difficulty is how to allocate the representation when there is such a disparity as nine thousand Natives to one hundred and fifty Europeans.

Mr. FORBES: They do it in India: there are whites on the Council there.

Mr. PLATTS: India is a great deal further advanced than this place. Sections of the community in India are trained at the universities.

Mr. ISITT: I am going back convinced that it would make ultimately for good if some method were devised for giving Europeans representation on the Council.

Mr. McCOMBS: Mr. Browne told us that of those whose names are appended to this petition nine are present. We have heard four who repudiate this document. I should like Mr. Browne