

On motion of Mr. Cracroft Wilson, C.B., the Committee adjourned until to-morrow, at 10 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7TH, 1861.

Committee met pursuant to adjournment.

Present :—

Mr. Cracroft Wilson, C. B.,	Mr. Creyke,
„ Chairman of Committees,	„ Fitzherbert,
The Hon. Mr. Crosbie Ward,	
Mr. Weld in the Chair.	

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

Mr. C. W. Richmond in attendance.

Mr. Richmond made the following preliminary statement to the Committee.

I submit to the Committee, that the papers referred to by Dr. Featherston, do not support the charge made against me, that I have abused my office and influence, and have been party to a conspiracy for depriving William King of his rights. Except Mr. Abraham's petition, to which I shall presently refer, and the minute of the Executive Council of March, 1860, the documents referred to do not bear at all upon the question of the part which I personally took in the business of the Waitara purchase. The argument against me, so far as I can make it out from the mass of documents cited yesterday by Dr. Featherston (which I have not yet examined), is simply this, that all Taranaki settlers desired and intended the spoliation of the Waitara natives, and that I, as one of those settlers, must necessarily have participated in the feelings and designs of the class to which I belonged, and must have used my influence accordingly.

Mr. C. W. Richmond.

7th Aug., 1861.

I might fairly decline to make any defence against an accusation founded upon such grounds as these, but as I am anxious frankly to inform the Committee of the real position which I assumed in these transactions, I shall proceed as if a *prima facie* case had been made out against me. In the first place, I beg to record my absolute, unqualified, denial of the charge made, or insinuated, against me. I have not initiated any single step in the transactions to which the charge refers, either directly or indirectly, either officially or privately, either immediately, by advice or recommendation tendered to His Excellency the Governor, or mediately, by influence and suggestion. I have, on the contrary, rigidly confined myself to the statement of my opinion when called upon to give one, and to the execution of His Excellency's directions. These assertions may not be capable of strict proof; but I believe I shall be able to place before the Committee evidence which will satisfy them of the truth of what I state.

Had I employed undue pressure, that pressure must have been ultimately exerted upon Mr. Parris; I propose, therefore, first, to examine that gentleman.

In the course of that examination, I shall put questions to Mr. Parris relating to a private correspondence which I carried on with him, and I shall ultimately produce that correspondence for the perusal of the Committee.

Mr. Parris.

7th Aug., 1861.

Mr. Parris called in and examined.

75. Mr. Richmond.] What is your name?—My name is Robert Parris, I have been District Land Purchase Commissioner at Taranaki since June, 1857, and I still hold that appointment.

76. Previously to the offer of the Waitara block did you ever receive instructions from the Government to open negotiations for that block, or for any other land at Waitara?—I did not.

77. Was the purchase of land at Waitara ever suggested to you by me, publicly, or privately, directly or indirectly?—No, by no means whatever.

78. Did you ever solicit the offer of the block by the Natives?—I did not.

79. Was, or was not, the offer of the block the purely spontaneous act of the Natives concerned?—It was.

80. Do you think that any member of the late Administration was aware, beforehand, of the intention of Te Teira to make the offer which he made at the meeting of March, 1859?—Not one of them to my knowledge—not even the Chief Commissioner, up to the morning of the meeting; neither was I aware that Teira had his native mat with him, until I saw it thrown down.

81. Subsequently to the offer of the block, did the Government urge on the completion of the purchase, or were you allowed ample time to endeavour to arrange the differences between the Natives?—I was never urged on by the Government.

82. Did you at any time previously to the survey of Teira's block correspond, privately, on Native affairs at New Plymouth with me?—I remember writing a few private letters to you, one subject, the line of road from Waikato, to which District the Government had sent me—another letter (subject), Native reserves, but I believe I never alluded to Teira's land in any but one, that of the 21st September, 1859.