

PETITIONS OF THE EAST COAST NATIVES.

unless it was quite in accordance with their own wishes; in fact they are exceedingly tenacious of signing their names to documents of this nature, which form the subject of public discussion among themselves, unless they have good reasons for doing so.

2.] How long has the subject of annexation to Hawke's Bay been the subject of discussion amongst the Petitioners? Between two and three years;—that is to say public discussion. I believe partial discussion on this subject commenced at an earlier period, and I think the first formal act in the matter was on the part of the Europeans of the district.

1.—*Mr. Parker.*] How many Europeans reside in that part of the country? More than 100; perhaps 150.

2.] Is there any natural boundary lines separating the portion of country inhabited by the people who petition to be annexed to Hawke's Bay from the rest of the country forming the Province of Auckland? There is a high mountainous and impassable range running through the country, forming as it were a backbone along the Ruahine mountains at the back of the Province of Hawke's Bay, on the Lotion Point, where it abuts upon the sea, and entirely disconnects this district from the rest of the Province of Auckland. The people residing on the South-east of this range are of one tribe, and they are the Petitioners. They have different tribal names, but they originally came to New Zealand in one canoe, and they consider themselves one people.

The witness then withdrew.

PANAPA called in and examined.

Mr. Puckey, Interpreter to the Native Department, attended for the purpose of interpreting the evidence.

1.—*Mr. Cracroft Wilson, C.B.*] Did you write this letter? (The letter handed in by *Mr. Newman* was shown to Panapa.) Yes?

2.] Is it anything unusual when a Native Chief has got the consent of his people to any document for him to sign the document on the part of his people so consenting? They often do so.

3.] What then was the object in writing this letter? *Mr. Rice* asked me who wrote the Petition from the Natives of Turanga, and I then wrote the letter to *Mr. Rice*.

4.] Did *Mr. Rice* request you to write this letter? *Mr. Rice* did not request me to write the letter which I wrote to him.

5.] Do the people whose names are affixed know of the prayer of the Petition, and were their names attached by their knowledge and consent? Some knew and some did not. Some were present and consenting; others were absent, and though they knew that a Petition was being got up they did not know that their names were attached.

6.] Where do you reside, and to what tribe do you belong? Aitangaamahaki; I belong to this tribe, and I reside at Turanga.

7.] Did you sign the petition, or did you refuse to sign it? I did not sign it. I was not asked to sign it.

8.] With what object did you come to Wellington on the present occasion? *Mr. Rice* and the Superintendent of Auckland can tell that.

9.] Have any portion of your tribe been sent to the Chatham Islands? Nearly all have been sent there.

10.] How do you know that some of the people whose signatures are attached to the Petition were not consenting to the prayer of the Petition, and ignorant that their names have been attached to it? Because they were absent.

11.] Can you tell the Committee the name of any person whose signature is attached to the Petition, and who is ignorant of the prayer of the Petition, and that his name has been attached to it? Haera is the name of one. Tamati is the name of another. Himiona is the name of a third.

12.] Where do they reside, and to what tribe do they belong? These three men belong to my tribe, and they reside at my village of Tutuokoroheke.

13.] Do you know that any European was engaged in getting up this Petition? I do; one, (alluding to the petition of 1400 signatures) his name is Wyllic.

14.] Is there any other person, not of your own tribe, whose name is affixed to the Petition, and who is ignorant both of the prayer of the Petition, and that his name has been attached to it? I know of none except the men before mentioned, and belonging to my tribe.

15.] Who wrote the names of the three men mentioned by you? Wi Pere, of Poverty Bay; he is a half-caste.

The witness then withdrew.

PAORA PORAU called in and examined.

1.—*Mr. Cracroft Wilson, C.B.*] What is your name, and where do you reside? Paora Porau, and I live at Turanga.

2.] Do you know this Petition and its contents? Yes.

3.] Is your name attached to it? Yes.

4.] Did you write the names of your own people? I wrote the names of 44 of my people, they touching the pen.

5.] Did you do so with their consent and knowledge? Yes, we had a meeting on the subject and they all consented.

6.] Will you state whether the prayer of the Petition is generally known of on the East Coast and approved by the people? Yes.

7.] Is it the Native custom or not for the Chief to sign a document such as this Petition on behalf of his people? That is our own way of doing it.

8.] Did you come here with *Mr. Rice*? I did.

9.] Have Panapa and you received money from *Mr. Rice* since you have been here? We have all received money.