

799. Do you know where the lease to Mr. Mackay is of Hikutaia from the Natives?—I never knew there was one to Mr. Mackay.

800. Did you never see one?—No; I saw a lease in favour of Rowe.

801. Where is that?—I do not know, unless Rowe has got it.

802. Did the storekeepers ever offer you a commission for the orders you sent to them for supplying goods to the Natives?—I think they have. I can hardly be sure.

803. Do you know of any officer in Mackay's office ever having taken any commission?—I do not.

804. I mean any of his private clerks?—Guilding and Crippen were the only two there, and I am not aware of their having received any.

805. Have you any idea of the total amount paid to the Natives by way of orders?—No, I cannot tell.

806. Did it amount to several thousand pounds?—I dare say it would; that at least during all the time.

807. Was much money paid to them?—Yes, a great deal of money.

808. How much do you think in money, roughly?—I cannot say what the total amount has been. The purchases have been extending over three or four years. Sometimes large sums were paid to them in cash. The purchase of the Tairua block was altogether paid in cash. £3,000 was paid in cash in one day.

809. You have never entertained any proposal for taking commission on account of orders?—I have not.

810. You have not benefited directly or indirectly by the supplying of goods to the Natives?—No, I have not.

811. *Mr. Rolleston.*] You are not aware of any Government officers having done so?—I am not. I have had nothing to do with any Government officer but Mr. Mackay.

812. What was the general result of making large payments in cash to the Natives?—In the case of only a few Natives getting the money they generally kept some of it, but when it was divided among a number they generally drank it, and remained drunk until all the money was gone.

MONDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 1875.

Sir DONALD McLEAN, re-examined, on oath.

[*Witness.*—I now hand in a letter written by Colonel McDonnell to me with reference to statements made by Mr. Brissenden to him in connection with land purchases in the North. It was found by me in a box that I had at Auckland before I left that place for Waikato on the 26th January last. This letter was locked up in the box on the 25th January, the day previous to my starting, and in searching for other papers in the box I found it. When I received it I omitted to read it in the hurry of packing up, and it was put away with my other papers.]

813. *The Chairman.*] When was it found?—A few days ago.

814. *Mr. Rolleston.*] I should like to know whether, having read that letter, it does not recall to you now any conversation upon that subject with Colonel McDonnell?—I could not recall any conversation of the same nature as he has told this Committee did take place. He may have said something to me about Mr. Brissenden's purchases, but I do not remember it.

815. *Mr. Sheehan.*] Would you undertake to say that no such conversation took place?—No, I would not; but I have no recollection of the conversation. I am aware that Colonel McDonnell and Mr. Brissenden were at variance with each other, and perhaps I did not pay very much attention to the rumours I heard about their actions.

816. *Mr. Rolleston.*] You will not say the conversation did not take place?—I will not say that Colonel McDonnell may not have mentioned something in connection with these purchases to me, but I have no recollection of a conversation such as that narrated in his statement before the Committee, in which he stated that Sir Julius Vogel and others were interested in this timber negotiation. I do not think the letter bears evidence of that.

817. *Mr. Sheehan.*] I suppose you will now be disposed to qualify your former evidence?—Yes. I may state that I thought it was just possible that the letter might have been left in the Native office at Auckland, and I telegraphed to the officer there, but it could not be found. I have already explained how I found it the other day.

818. *The Chairman.*] On what day did you find it?—I found it on Friday last, and I have brought it to the Committee at the first meeting which has since been held.

819. Has Colonel McDonnell been informed yet that it has been found?—No, I thought it my duty to bring it to the Committee.

820. So that he has no information of it yet?—He is not aware of it yet, but I suppose he will be informed. I have not seen him for some days.

821. Since you found the letter have any proceedings been taken by the Government in reference to Colonel McDonnell which have called his truth and honesty in question?—I am not aware of any, except that a report had been sent to the Defence Office, that he had taken a letter belonging to Mr. Brissenden, and the matter has been referred to Colonel Lyon with the view of getting an explanation as to how the affair took place.

822. Was any strong language used between Colonel Lyon and Colonel McDonnell, in reference to this letter?—I cannot state exactly, but I know that Colonel Lyon said he would refer to Colonel McDonnell for an explanation, in the usual way. When the complaint was made to the Defence Office, a letter was written to Colonel Lyon, and this letter he was to refer to Colonel McDonnell.

823. Did it occur to your mind that Colonel McDonnell must have suffered under great distress of feelings and anxiety in getting that letter?—I cannot answer that question.

824. Did it occur to your mind that it might be a great relief to him under the terrible circumstances in which he is placed now, to have known instantly that this letter was found?—I neglected in the pressure of business to let him know instantly. I brought it to this Committee at its first sitting.

*Mr. G. R. D.
O'Halloran.*

23rd Sept., 1875.

*Hon. Sir D.
McLean.*

27th Sept., 1875.