

181. At the time Mr. Mantell recommended the reserve in favour of the Natives there was no doubt about Wakefield's reserve?—Not the slightest.

182. And it was within the category of this land the Governor had power?—No. Had we known at the time that Mr. Mantell recommended this, it would have been stopped at once, but it did not come out for years after. The whole thing was done secretly. This reserve was made ostensibly as a place for the Natives to land their boats at. They did not land their boats there at all, but on the spot where the Customhouse now stands. I should like you to put such questions as you may think necessary, in order that the real position of the case may be understood by Taiaroa and the Natives. It was not out of any desire to filch anything from the Natives that we have opposed their action in this matter. On the contrary, we were anxious to deal liberally with them. In 1865 and 1866 I urged that this money should be devoted to erecting schools for them, and a Native hostelry at Pelichet Bay.

183. And why was that not done?—Because Mr. Richmond, who was Native Minister, did not agree to it.

184. *Mr. Taiaroa.*] Do you know whether Mr. Mantell recommended the Governor to make this a Native reserve, and do you know, also, whether the Governor approved of the recommendation?—I know Mr. Mantell recommended it, but I did not know this for years after it was recommended.

185. Do you know whether the Governor approved of it?—The Governor approved, I believe, but there was no further action taken. It was never Crown-granted, or anything done to give a legal title.

186. Were there no plans, sketch, or tracing asked for from the office in Dunedin?—The public knew nothing about it until Mr. Mantell had left the country. At the time Mr. Mantell recommended this reserve to the Governor as a Native reserve, he also recommended the Octagon or Moray Place to be reserved as a site for an Episcopalian Church. The Church authorities commenced to put a fence round it. That was the first intimation the public had. We immediately wrote to head-quarters, and the thing was stopped. Had we known of the other at the time, it would have shared the same fate. There was just as much right to make the one reserve as the other; and that was none at all.

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THURSDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 1877.

The Hon. Mr. STAFFORD, being in attendance, was examined.

187. *The Chairman.*] Will you please give the Committee any information you can in connection with the issue of a grant for the Princes Street Reserve?—As far as I can recollect, I think it probable that neither the Governor nor myself were aware when that particular grant was signed. The practice used to be that Mr. Domett, Secretary for Crown Lands, which was then a permanent office—not ministerial, as now—used to send up to me a number of grants together, varying from ten to one hundred at the same time—bundles of grants. I being Colonial Secretary then, those grants were forwarded by me to the Governor for his signature. As a rule, Mr. Domett never called my attention to grants unless there was some speciality connected with them. He merely notified that the grants had been examined and were correct. Mr. Domett had the duty of sending back grants to the Land Office from whence they came if he found them to be incorrect, either as regards area or measurements, or which he believed to have been prepared without due observance of the law of the district where the land was situated, or where they affected public reserves of lands that should not have been alienated. It is within my recollection that Mr. Domett had more than once refused to pass grants as being correct when they affected public reserves. I refer, for instance, to certain reserves for shearing purposes which the then Superintendent of Marlborough undertook to sell. My confidence in the knowledge and diligence of Mr. Domett was so great that whenever I got grants from him I cannot recollect having put any question about them at all—I accepted them as correct. Therefore, I think it is very probable that this grant may have come up inadvertently with a number of others, and in the same way may have been sent on by me to the Governor for his signature. I have used the word “inadvertently,” because I have some recollection—I will not be quite positive about it—that I had given a special instruction that that grant should not be sent on for signature without my attention being called to the fact. I knew that there had been a great deal of discussion about the ownership of that Princes Street Reserve, and I knew also that there was a very strong difference of opinion about it, and that it was a question that had not been absolutely dealt with in any decided way either by Parliament or by any Government, but the question had been before Parliament and before successive Governments. The attention of Parliament and successive Governments had been directed towards it. I believe—although I will not be absolutely positive at this length of time—I believe I gave positive instructions that that grant was not to be sent on to the Governor without my attention being specially directed to it. I have been informed that Sir George Grey, who was then Governor, has stated that he put some questions to me with regard to this grant. I have no recollection that the Governor, Sir George Grey, ever put questions to me about any grant whatever at any time. But if Sir George Grey says he is perfectly certain he did put such questions to me, I am not, at this length of time, prepared to say that he did not; but I have certainly no recollection of Sir George Grey having at any time questioned me as to a grant, and, I think, if such an occurrence had taken place I should have recollected it, because, as a matter of fact, I did not myself—I will not say never, because it is just possible that occasionally I may have carried in a portfolio—I did not take grants to Sir George Grey at all. When Mr. Domett sent grants to my office, I used to send them on for His Excellency's signature, with Mr. Domett's minute, and sign my name or initials to the minute. Either my Private Secretary or some officer in the Colonial Secretary's Department used to take the grants over to the Governor for his signature. Those grants sometimes came back signed the same day, if the Governor happened to be in his office when they arrived; but sometimes they may have lain one, two, three, or even more days, if the Governor happened to be absent, before they were returned to the Colonial Secretary's Office duly signed. Unless Sir George Grey