

day-work was finished, and Mr. Nightingale told me I must take a contract. I could only get a boy to join me in work. I came down to the Bay by myself. Collins told me we must have four men to be able to take work. If I could get work here I would remain. I was three weeks earning the £5 0s. 6d. I have mentioned at the Haast I was charged twice for a box of matches by Marks, but when I mentioned it I got another box given me. I was buying meat from Mr. Murdoch. When I received my money I was obliged to pay Mr. Murdoch at once, though I wanted to spend my money for my own use elsewhere. I was obliged to pay Murdoch cash, because he told me he must have cash. I am a married man and I have one daughter. I had enough money to buy a cow when I arrived.

ANTONIO MAX sworn and examined.

I arrived at the settlement three years ago. I signed the petition. It was not read over to me before I signed it. Callery and Dwan came to me when I was at work and asked if I wished to sign it. I said when everybody signs I will sign too. I did not know the contents of the petition. It was not read over to me. Next day Michael Dwan, Callery, and Crawford were there, and Crawford read it. Some parts I understood, some parts I did not understand. I was afterwards sorry I signed it, as I could not prove it. I thought I should get good land. I was told so before I came to Wellington and Hokitika. That was the reason I came. My land is in the Arawata, on the beach. I looked at the Waitotō land, and I did not like it. It was on both sides of the river. I did not go two miles up the river. I heard that the land at the Okuru was subject to floods, so I did not go to look at it. Then I took a section in the Arawata. A drain has been made which throws the water through my neighbour's land on to mine, and stops my access to my own section. I have tried to make a home here, but I cannot see that I can. If I was certain of getting work here I would remain. I am married and have five children. If I can get a passage I will go. I cannot stay unless I can get work to provide myself with necessaries for my family.

JOSEPH HEVERT sworn and examined.

I arrived at the settlement in 1876. I signed the petition. Callery and Dwan brought it to me to sign. It was not read to me. I understood that the object of it was to do good to the settlement. I did not know afterwards what was in it. I complain that the goods were charged for too high. I could not get my pass-book often when I asked for it. I have asked for it three times, and did not get it. My son took up a section in 1877 in Arawata. The first year my boy was not strong enough to do the work, and then he had no section. The second year he had one month's work at 5s. a day. I earned £12 from the survey; my boy brought me the cheque. I had to take the cheque to Mr. Macfarlane for countersignature. Mr. Macfarlane kept the cheque and gave me credit for it in my store account. I wanted £6 in cash and £6 to be credited. I would stop here if there was work to be got.

JACOB CHABALASKI sworn and examined.

I came to the settlement about three years ago. I signed the petition. It was read to me. Callery and Dwan read it to me. It was read in English. I did not understand it. I signed it because others had signed it. I thought it was for the good of the settlement and so I signed it. I complain that the provisions were charged for in the store too high. The provisions could have been got here for half the price. I wanted some potatoes; they were sent to the Arawata by the boat. I came to fetch the potatoes from the shed at the barracks. I emptied the bag and picked over the potatoes, and I had to leave half of them there rotten. It is more than two years ago. I believe the bag weighed about 150 lb. They were seed potatoes. I complain that I often could not get my pass-book from the store when I wanted it. I cannot read or write. I cannot say that there is anything wrong in the book. I was surprised when the book was kept back. When the store was in Government hands I wanted clothing for my children. Mr. Macfarlane refused to give me any, and their clothes were so ragged that I could not send them to school. All the time I have been here I have not been able to get clothing for my children. All the covering I could get for them was the old flour-bags. I did not like to see my children going to school so badly clothed. About 1877 I was working for the survey party. I earned about £10 10s. I received the cheque for Hokitika. I took it to Mr. Macfarlane to be countersigned. Mr. Macfarlane stopped the cheque, and would not give me any money out of it, but paid it to my credit in my store-book. I wanted a portion of the money, but Mr. Macfarlane refused the cash, and put it all to my store account. While I was working with the survey party I got my goods out of the store. The last time I got my goods out of the store both Robinson and Murdoch were selling meat. Robinson charged 8d. per pound, and Murdoch 6d., and everything was entered in the book. I naturally took meat from Mr. Murdoch because it was cheap. I understood that I must pay Murdoch cash, but meat supplied by Robinson could be booked in my store account. Last year, when we were paid for our work, Mr. Macfarlane gave me an order, and I was obliged to go to the store with the order and get provisions there. Mr. Murdoch would not accept the order. I asked Murdoch to take the order, and he refused. I have nothing more to say. I would like to remain here if I could get work. My land is at the Arawata. The land is not good. I have planted potatoes for three years and my crops failed.

WILLIAM BURMEISTER sworn and examined.

I came here about four years ago, in January, 1875. I signed the petition. I forget who brought it to me. It was read over to me when we were working at the saw-mill. I thought it would do me good if I signed the petition. I understood it. I thought it would benefit myself and the settlement. I am not prepared to prove any of the charges as far as concerns myself. I thought it would enable me to bring forward charges of my own. I came here because Mr. Bonar advised me. I understood that every settler should be treated the same. I have not been treated as others have. At first, in consequence of the bad weather, it took me three months to build my house. Mr. Macfarlane promised me work when my house was finished. Before my house was quite finished I told Mr. Macfarlane I wanted work. Mr. Macfarlane said there was a section behind me I could