

*Mr. London.*

March 24, 1879.

1631. And did they sign the papers in the open air, as you describe?—They did.
1632. Were there any of them blank forms on that occasion?—Yes.
1633. You have already said you did not attest the names on that occasion. How were they witnessed?—Mr. Williamson signed some of the blanks with his own name—a good many—before I met these Maoris at all.
1634. Did you take these forms which had Williamson's name to the meeting and get the Maoris to sign the claims?—Yes.
1635. And the body was either then filled up or afterwards?—When there was plenty of time, and the weather permitted it; it was all completed at that time.
1636. You were an elector of the district at that time?—I was not.
1637. Were there any other electors of the district near the place at which you held the meeting? Was there no other elector present?—I do not think so.
1638. What particular place was the meeting held at? I mean to say, at what house; if there was a house near?—At several places in the Awanui: one evening at my brother's; another evening at the house of Jupiter (Hupata); and another evening at another house.
1639. Was Jupiter not an elector of the district?—Not at that time.
1640. I suppose, Mr. London, you have frequently read the attesting declaration on one of these forms—"Signed and declared by the said claimant this 12th day of March, in the year 1875, before me, an elector of the district." Now that was the declaration which Mr. Williamson signed?—Yes.
1641. And how was it possible that could have been a truthful declaration? He did not see the man sign, according to your statement. Mr. London, that declaration must necessarily have been false; is that not so?—According to that, of course it was; and how could it be signed in the presence of an elector of the district if he did not go to see it done? I could not take an elector or J.P. round the country, without being paid.
1642. And you state that as a justification?—That is all I can do in the matter. There would be a lie, in the face of it, when a man was not present when he signed it.
1643. Were you not aware it was improper to make yourself a party to that kind of thing?—I did not attach any great importance to that.
1643. I will now ask you whether you have on any occasion carried round petitions to the House of Representatives?—I have.
1645. Will you describe the manner in which they were signed? Were they signed by the people whose names purport to be on the petitions, or by friends on their behalf?—Sometimes by themselves and sometimes by their friends.
1646. Had you a meeting at the Awanui for the purpose of getting signatures to a petition?—Yes.
1647. What was the process adopted? Did the people come forward one by one and sign, or did one particular man come forward?—Sometimes those signed who could, and sometimes one man signed for half-a-dozen.
1648. Do you remember Hepe's place at Waiho?—I do.
1649. Do you remember being present on any occasion with Mr. Bates and a number of Maoris at that place?—I do.
1650. Was your brother present?—Yes.
1651. Do you remember the names of any of the Maoris who were present?—Yes; there was Heremaia te Ara.
1652. Did he take any part in the proceedings as to signing these forms on that occasion?—He seemed to be the principal man.
1653. What did he do?—He signed for several of his people.
1654. Those people being present or absent?—Some of them were present; I do not know how many.
1655. How many names do you suppose he signed upon that occasion? I am not asking you to give an absolutely correct answer, but how many names do you think?—I could not tell how many. I think he called some young person to write away for him according to dictation.
1656. Do you think he signed as many as a dozen claims?—I do not know. He might have signed more.
1657. Did he sign his own name?—I think so.
1658. You understood at the time he was signing the names of people who were absent in some cases?—Yes, I think so.
1659. Did you consider that a proper mode of getting signatures?—According to the letter, I do not consider it made any difference whether he was present or a hundred miles away, putting his name on the electoral roll.
1660. No, not if he signed his own name. Do you remember any conversation taking place on that occasion between Heremaia te Ara and any other person as to his salary as an assessor?—I have no recollection of that, not the slightest.
- In reply to the Commissioner, Mr. Williams said he had no questions to ask.
1661. *Mr. London.*] Have you been in the Awanui District longer than three years?—Yes; when I gave my former answer I meant the Hokianga County.
1662. *The Commissioner.*] How long have you been in the Awanui District?—Off and on, ten years.
1663. *Mr. London.*] You were on the roll when these names were attested [list of claims for 1875 exhibited]?—Yes.
1664. Were all those attested properly, the papers filled up in the recognized form of law?—Yes; I did according to the letter of the law, because I was then an elector myself, and could do everything in the proper style; but could not take an elector with me unless he chose to go.
1665. *The Commissioner.*] When you say "according to the law" do you mean to say that in the first place the whole of the claimants signed their names?—I might say so, but would not like to say so positively; but any who did not sign I signed for them in their presence, allowing them to make their cross.