

1888.
NEW ZEALAND.

CASE OF MR. JOSHUA JONES

(PAPERS RELATIVE TO).

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Mitchelson and Dr. Hodgkinson, with Leave of the House.

No. 1.

The Hon. Mr. MITCHELSON to Mr. J. JONES.

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 13th June, 1888.

I have the honour to inform you that it is intended to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into your land claim, and to request you will be good enough to instruct your solicitor to submit a draft commission for the approval of the Government.

Joshua Jones, Esq., Wellington.

I have, &c.,

EDWIN MITCHELSON.

No. 2.

Mr. J. JONES to the Hon. Mr. MITCHELSON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 15th June, 1888.

After waiting several weeks in Wellington seeking inquiry into my case at the hands of Parliament, I receive a letter from you on the 13th, marked "Immediate," informing me that the Government had determined upon appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into my land claims, and requesting that my solicitor should submit a draft commission for the approval of Government.

In reply, I would state that I came to Parliament in the hope of obtaining immediate relief for the wrongs done me by the unintentional passing of laws that have injured me, and by the action of the Government and its Judges, who have prevented me completing my titles. The appointment of a Commission is not of my seeking or that of my friends. The Premier at first consented in the House to a Committee of Parliament, but other influence was brought to bear, and a Commission—which, I fear, means delay and danger—is substituted.

It is more painful to me to be told by the Native Minister that he did not consider I had any right to appeal to Parliament; that, had a Parliamentary Committee reported, the Government would not have taken any notice of the report of the Committee; and that, so long as he was in the office, no law should be passed to afford me relief: and it was not very encouraging to hear the Premier, Sir H. A. Atkinson, inform a deputation of some twenty members of Parliament that "Mr. Jones relied upon Parliament to redress his grievance," in a tone indicating that I was committing a crime in asking for a hearing. The present Government endeavoured to assist me last session, and why they should reverse their policy now I do not know.

As the troubles have arisen mainly through legislation and the errors of officials, I might have hoped that some reference would be made to me, or to those gentlemen in Parliament who are anxious to see justice done me, relative to the nomination of the Commission.

I would have it placed upon record that other persons—namely, Messrs. Morrin and Russell, of Auckland—have, with the aid of the Native Land Court Judges, acquired titles to lands at Mokau in a most illegal and unrighteous manner very recently that other persons were better entitled to, and I have seen clauses in Bills to give validity to such transactions; and the agents of these same persons are creating some of my difficulties in the hope of acquiring my lands by a similar unrighteous process. I could have submitted ample proof of this to a Parliamentary Committee, and I have no doubt I shall see these same agents opposing my interests before the Royal Commission, who would not dare show their faces to the daylight of a Parliamentary Committee. These people can obtain a title in a few minutes in a hotel parlour, without the expenditure of a shilling of money, to lands that had not passed the Court when the agreements were made, and had never been surveyed. Whereas I have been over twelve years with large expenditure, anxiety, and trouble, and every time I approach the Land Courts (four times last year) these same Judges reject mine or the Natives' applications.

It is neither my duty nor desire to attempt to cavil at the doings of Government, but, as there appears to be never any end or finality to the negotiations, it is my duty to my family, or those of