

*The Chairman* : I had no objection to its being read ; but I did not mean to allow it to go into *Hansard* until I knew what it referred to.

*Hon. Mr. Hislop* : But it would go into the Appendices.

69. *The Chairman*.] You have said it was to vindicate the character of one of your officers. You were not at all aware that it was tending to any breach of the privileges of the House?—That is so.

70. It is hardly necessary to ask you whether, if you considered it a breach of privilege, you would have adopted the course you took?—Certainly not.

71. *Hon. Sir J. Hall*.] I think you said, Mr. Mitchelson, that the statement which you heard Mr. Hamlin make in the House was of such a character that it raised the question in your mind whether, if true, Judge Macdonald should be retained in the public service?—Yes.

72. Was it on that, before you saw the report in *Hansard*, that you called on Judge Macdonald for an explanation?—I did not call on him personally; but the Under-Secretary coming into my office next morning, I told him of the remarks that were made by Mr. Hamlin. I stated at the same time that it was my duty to call on Judge Macdonald for an explanation. I asked him to tell Judge Macdonald to read *Hansard* as soon as it appeared and send me a reply, so that I could lay the same before the Government, for I considered that the statement made by Mr. Hamlin was of a very damaging character.

73. Your action was taken on what you heard of the speech made by Mr. Hamlin?—On the hearing of myself and others.

74. It raised a question in your mind as to whether Judge Macdonald should be retained in the public service?—I considered, if the allegations were correct, that he was not a fit and proper person to remain in the service of the Government.

75. With regard to the actual laying the paper on the table—it is headed “Copy of a letter from J. E. Macdonald, Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, in reference to certain allegations, &c.”—when you rose for the purpose of putting it on the table, did you read that heading?—I read every word of it in as loud a tone as I could possibly do.

76. Did the Speaker put the question?—Yes, in the ordinary way.

77. He asked the House that it lie on the table?—Yes.

78. *The Chairman*.] “That this paper do lie on the table and be printed” was the question I put?—Yes.

79. Was any objection made?—No objection was made.

80. *Mr. Walker*.] Are you quite sure you endeavoured to make it heard?—Yes; my voice is not very strong, but I did so as far as I could.

81. I never heard you?—There is such a buzz generally about that time, when business is about to begin, that you can hardly know what is taking place.

*Hon. Sir J. Hall* : I heard every word of it.

82. *Hon. Mr. Hislop*.] Did any one take notice of it immediately afterwards?—I did not take notice.

83. *Mr. W. D. Stewart*.] What is the rule as to presenting papers “by command” or “by leave”?—I do not know of any rule; sometimes they come “by leave” sometimes “by command;” I have never been able to understand why a difference should be made.

84. Why did you do this “by command”?—Because it was considered important. The document was sent to the Governor, and remained with him twenty-four hours before it was returned.

85. *Hon. Sir J. Hall*.] A copy, you say, was sent to the Council, without requesting authority?—Yes.

86. *The Chairman*.] Do you know whether it was known outside the Chamber that a paper of this kind was to be presented?—I do not think so.

87. Was Mr. Hamlin aware of it?—I do not know.

88. Was he told of it?—I do not think so.

*Mr. Walker* : The first person who told me was a member of the Upper House, who asked me whether such a paper had been laid on the table of our House.

89. *Mr. Walker*.] Were they both laid on the table the same day?—I cannot say whether it was on the same day, but believe it was.

[Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,375 copies), £5 5s.]