mittee or a part of its proceedings. The bank has been summoned, by your summons, to produce certain documents. The bank desires to submit to you and to the Committee reasons why those documents should not be produced. That is a matter which I desire, on behalf of the bank, to submit to you, and that is a matter upon which I desire to be heard.

The Chairman.—Then, you do not desire, I understand, to appear here for all matters that may bring the bank before the Committee.

Mr. Bell.—I beg your pardon, Sir. You addressed me, in the first instance, by saying that the Committee considered that the bank was not before it. I at once bowed to that. But the moment that the bank is brought before you—that you are to inquire into the actions of the bank, which is equally charged here with other persons—then the bank will represent to you and to the Committee its undoubted right to be heard by counsel upon matters affecting the credit, the reputation, the character, and stability of the institution; but that is a matter which at this moment does not arise, you having informed me that the Committee has now considered that the bank is not at present before it. I bowed to that, and proposed simply to submit the matter of the summons. Upon that question I desire—the bank desires respectfully to be heard, and to be permitted by its counsel, at the present stage, to state the reasons why it should not obey that summons in its terms. With regard to the other questions, that is a matter upon which the bank will claim its undoubted right—its unquestionable right, as we assert—at a later stage, when the Committee shall consider that the bank is before it.

The Chairman.—I shall ask that Mr. Bell be heard, on behalf of the Bank of New Zealand, on the question of the production of the books and documents as contained in the summons.

Mr. Bell.—Sir, the summons which you caused to be served upon the bank, or one of its officers, requisitioned the bank in the following terms: "Produce all books, documents, and papers of later date than the 1st of June, 1885." I have, in the nature of things, only the telegram from Auckland informing me of the contents of the document.

The Chairman.—Here is the original document, which differs somewhat from what you are now reading.

Mr. Hutchison.—That is the original document, and it should not pass out of the custody of the Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. Bell.—I understand that the honourable gentleman who just spoke objects to my using or looking at the original document.

Mr. Hutchison.—I do not object to your reading it, but I handed in the document with a request that it should not pass out of the custody of the Chairman or the Clerk. I am sorry to say that it has once already passed outside the Committee.

Mr. Bell.—The document before you is, I understand, according to the statement you make, the original of that which has been served upon the bank at Auckland.

The Chairman.—Yes.

Mr. Bell.—Very well, I will refer to that. The reason I proposed to read it was because I am anxious to save the time of the Committee by reading what I have to say in the way of reasons against the production of the books, papers, &c., which have been ordered, or part of them. If the Committee will permit me I will go on and read it. "Parliamentary Committee to inquire into charges against Ministers have requisitioned: For all books, documents, and papers, of later date than 1st June, 1885, in which transactions with Sir Frederick Whitaker, Sir Harry Albert Atkinson, and Hon. Edward Mitchelson are recorded, either jointly, severally, or in conjunction with any other person or persons, or corporation or corporations, whether on their own account, or as surety or guarantee for any person or persons, corporation or corporations: all securities held in connection with such transactions; security registers. All letters, telegrams, or writings or documents, whether written or printed, or partly written or partly printed, and whether shown by press copies or otherwise, from the bank to any of the said members of the Ministry, or any one else on their behalf. The original of letters, telegrams, or documents received from any one or more of them, on his or their behalf, in any way relating to the several matters before mentioned. The original agreements in force on the 1st October, 1887, and any since made or enforced after that date and prior to the 1st July, 1890, between the bank and Colonial Treasurer with reference to the public accounts of the colony. Original letters, memoranda, telegrams, and writing received by the bank from the Colonial Treasurer since 1st October, 1887, till 1st July, 1890. Copy of all letters, memoranda, telegrams, and writing from the bank to the Colonial Treasurer, and the original agreement or agreements made between the bank and the Colonial Treasurer within the period mentioned, having reference to rate of interest from time to time, or at any time, payable or to be allowed or credited by the bank on balance beyond the amount or amounts mentioned in agreement for time being in force as interest-bearing balance. The books of the bank kept at Auckland and Wellington containing original and all other entries since the 1st October, 1887, giving particulars of the public accounts of the colony, as referred to and dealt with in the agreement or agreements between the bank and Colonial Treasurer. All other accounts in which any of the public funds were dealt with since the date mentioned, and weekly and other balances of such accounts. The rates allowed and the amount credited for interest. The rates allowed and the amount credited for interest on fixed deposits. The rates charged for remittances. And showing securities, bills, debentures, and coupons lodged as security, or on deposit, or for custody. The books or other documents or returns which may show the total money and securities respectively belonging to the public accounts included in each of the half-yearly balance-sheets issued by the bank during the last three years. All other books, records, letters, memoranda, writing, or documents, whether written or printed, or partly written or partly printed, relating in any way to the dealings of any member of the present Ministry with the bank, or in any respect of his position as a customer, guarantor, shareholder, or director of the bank. All copies of telegrams, letters, and other communications to, and the original of all telegrams, letters, and other communications from,