

I regret, however, that you did not confer with me before you wrote that letter, because my reputation is as much involved as yours. The statements in your letter I believe to be accurate; and, as the then Assistant Law Officer and the officer who conducted the taxation on behalf of the Government, to my knowledge the bill of costs never was sent back to be increased for the purpose of taxation. I considered that the costs were very excessive, and I taxed them closely with the object of reducing them as far as I could. I thought the charges by Mr. Buller were out of all proportion. I was not satisfied that the amount taxed off was as large as it should have been, although I had taxed off so large a sum as is stated in your letter.

You will please refer this letter to the Minister of Justice, and insure it the same publicity at once as your own letter obtained.

W. S. Reid, Esq., Solicitor-General, Wellington.

Yours faithfully,  
E. STAFFORD.

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MEMORANDUM.

WITH reference to the memorandum of the Solicitor-General laid on the table of the House by the Minister of Lands on Tuesday, I desire to make the following explanation:—

What I intended to convey by my answer was this: The largest bill of costs I could remember having rendered was that against the Government, for whom I acted in the *Waka Maori* libel case in the Supreme Court. I was speaking from memory of a transaction which happened nearly twenty years ago (October, 1877). After the conclusion of the case the bill of costs was made up in my office on the minimum scale, as between solicitor and client, without the slightest idea of its being submitted to taxation. I was under the impression, when before the House on Monday evening, that it was actually rendered in that form to the Solicitor-General, and that I was allowed to have it back from his office for revision; but, as Mr. Reid is positive that it was not, no doubt he is right. I am perfectly clear, however, on this point: that I received information that the Government intended to have the bill taxed, and that thereupon I had it recast, charging in every instance the maximum costs I considered myself entitled by law to claim. This was only reasonable, seeing that a friendly bill of costs as between solicitor and client was now to be treated as a hostile bill. By this means an amount of something like a thousand pounds was added to the account. I believe Mr. Stafford had instructions to tax strictly. That he did so can admit of no doubt, for the taxation before the Registrar of the Supreme Court lasted two or three days, I myself conducting the case on behalf of my firm. The result of that taxation is correctly stated in Mr. Reid's memorandum. On another point I am equally clear: that on taxation I was allowed 15 guineas per diem for a period of some weeks during which I was engaged in collecting Maori evidence in Hawke's Bay, and in proving it before a Commissioner of the Supreme Court, this being 5 guineas per diem more than I had ever received in the Native Land Court.

I was hoping that I should be able to refer to the original papers for the purpose of refreshing my memory, but, as will be seen by the annexed letter, this is now impossible.

Wellington, 30th October, 1895.

W. L. BULLER.

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DEAR SIR,— Panama Street, Wellington, New Zealand, 30th October, 1895.

With reference to your application to refer to the papers in the *Waka Maori* libel case (Grindell and Another against Russell), I am sorry to say that I have had a careful search made for the papers but cannot find them.

At the amalgamation of the firms of Buller and Gully and Izard and Bell, in 1886, the whole of the papers belonging to the original firm of Buller and Lewis, who were the solicitors in the above case, were transferred to the offices of the firm of Bell, Gully, and Izard. In 1889 a fire occurred at the offices of Messrs. Bell, Gully, and Izard, and destroyed almost the whole of the contents of the room where the papers should have been; and I have no doubt but that the papers were destroyed by such fire.

In looking up the letter-books of the firm of Buller and Lewis, I find a letter to the Solicitor-General relating to the costs in the above matter, and I send you a copy of same as it may be of some use to you.

Sir Walter Buller, K.C.M.G.

Yours truly,  
J. ANDERSON.

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SIR,— Wellington, 10th October, 1877.

*Grindell and Another against Russell.*

We beg to enclose herewith copy of the allocatur made by the Registrar after taxation of our costs for £2,283 2s. 5d.; which, less sum paid on account of costs of £500, leaves a balance of £1,783 2s. 5d. due to us.

We also enclose copy of the allocatur made by the Registrar after taxation of Mr. Gordon Allan's costs amounting to £81 16s. 6d.

As suggested by Mr. Stafford, we shall, of course, be happy to sign (if required) any document binding us to pay over to counsel any sums mentioned in our bill of costs as payable to counsel.

The Solicitor-General, Wellington.

We have, &c.,  
BULLER AND LEWIS.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, not given; printing (1,200 copies), £1 6s.

By Authority: SAMUEL COSTALL, Government Printer, Wellington.—1895.