

his own judgment. That is all. I have not seen or heard from him or from Mr. Lewis since. I next saw the telegraphic account in the *Lyttelton Times* newspaper of the 13th July. The same day I wrote you; and after having written to you I yesterday received your telegram, as follows: "Come here by first boat after receipt this; bring your letter-book, and all papers relating Wason's application for loan." To which I replied: "Coming 'Rotomahana' to-night; 'Tarawera' full."

Did you agree, or lead Mr. Wason or Mr. Lewis to suppose that you had agreed, that Mr. McMillan should value without referring the matter to me?—No, certainly not. Mr. Lewis knew exactly the opposite. In his letter of the 11th March he says, "As soon as you have arranged for Mr. McMillan to value the land." The whole thing was left an open question until we had heard from you.

You have since seen what purports to be a *Hansard* proof of Mr. Wason's speech?—Yes.

So far as you know, is there a syllable of truth in the accusation he makes?—Not a word. I was simply astonished when I saw it in the paper.

The foregoing is a correct report of what took place at my interview with the Public Trustee this morning.—J. J. M. HAMILTON, District Agent, Christchurch, 15th July, 1898.

No. 12.

The Right Hon. the PREMIER to J. C. WASON, Esq., M.H.R.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 15th July, 1898.

I have the honour to forward to you herewith the correspondence connected with the charges made by you against the Public Trustee, his denial thereof, and enclosures.

I have, &c.,

J. Cathcart Wason, Esq., M.H.R., Wellington.

R. J. SEDDON.

No. 13.

J. C. WASON, Esq., M.H.R., to the Right Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 16th July, 1898.

I have the honour to acknowledge your favour of yesterday, with enclosure from Public Trust Office. With regard to Mr. Hamilton's evidence, I have absolutely no knowledge of the conversation that took place between Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Lewis. At my interview with Mr. Hamilton—Mr. Lewis being present—I made no remarks about the value of the land. I displayed no temper, nor did Mr. Hamilton's demeanour warrant such, for he was most courteous. Mr. Hamilton showed Mr. Lewis and myself the offensive memorandum about "private inquiry," and to that I only remarked, "What an extraordinary way of doing business." I do not consider Mr. Hamilton's letter of the 13th July at all represents the conversation that took place, but at this distance of time I do not in any way reflect upon Mr. Hamilton for his version. The evidence and correspondence does not in any way touch my ground of complaint as regards "inquiries."

The Public Trustee says, paragraph 15 of letter of 14th July: "I find attached to the papers a memorandum in Mr. McGowan's handwriting, with a pencilled memorandum on it, by whom I do not know." This, probably, is the offensive memorandum to which I took exception. I should not have had the least ground of complaint had the Public Trustee, after receiving Mr. McMillan's valuation, simply declined the loan. After Mr. Martin's letter, I have no hesitation in withdrawing anything that may reflect upon him as giving a political complexion to the affair, and to express my regret for imputations made in that direction; but I hold that no public department has the right, "after publicly advertising that they are loaning money," after negotiations are set on foot, to make private inquiries and expose the affairs of an applicant to others than those immediately interested.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. the Premier.

J. CATHCART WASON.

No. 14.

The PUBLIC TRUSTEE to the Right Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Public Trust Office, Wellington, 25th July, 1898.

On Saturday I received a copy of *Hansard* containing a report of Mr. Wason's remarks in the House on the 19th instant. Mr. Wason having withdrawn all charges of improper motives against me personally, nothing more is required to be said in that connection, but Mr. Wason in effect reiterates his charges against this office of having employed an improper system of inquiry, and in his letter to you of the 16th July, which first came to my notice when I saw it in the number of *Hansard* already referred to, again refers to some offensive memorandum about private inquiry, and also to this office making private inquiries and exposing "affairs of an applicant to other than those immediately interested." Apparently therefore Mr. Wason still charges this office with two irregularities, to use no stronger term.

Firstly, the making of improper inquiries. The only inquiry made was from Mr. McGowan, who is the Commissioner of Taxes, a member of the Board under the Land for Settlement Act, and the head of the Government Valuation Department. His knowledge of the general value of land and its suitability for the investment of trust funds is, or ought to be, very great, and he is a