

of the seventeen years during which the land has been in my occupation." I think Mr. Poynton can bear me out in this. I think he must remember my saying this. It was so arranged, and Mr. Poynton wrote a letter to Mr. Fisher telling him the arrangement we had made, and towards the end of January we met in Taranaki. Mr. Poynton wired me to say that he would be there on a certain date. I think I put it off for one day owing to my family being away on a holiday, but, however, I arrived at Waitara about half-past 8 in the morning, and I was out at the block, a distance of ten miles, about half-past 9. By that time they had gone over to the block. Well, we met at the pa, and the principal Natives were there. The real owners—those who possessed land in the block—were there. "Now," I said to Mr. Fisher, "I suppose you know what you are here for?" I said to him, "Will you point out amongst these Natives who it is who has complained to you of my receiving the rent of that particular piece of land?" Mr. Fisher turned round and he walked away, and he said, "I cannot tell you anybody in particular. It was in conversation." I said, "Then in conversation you tried to create this disturbance amongst the Natives." I then turned round and I asked the Natives this. I said, "Is there any one amongst you who has complained to the Public Trustee that I have no right to this particular piece of land?" They said "No," that they did not know of anybody having complained to the Public Trustee, and there was nobody there who had complained as to my having that particular piece of land. Then a man, the principal man named _____ said, "If there is nobody here who has made this complaint it must be one woman called Mrs. _____, who has been carefully concealed away from the meeting." Then I said to Mr. Fisher, "You had better go and bring Mrs. _____ and I will show you that she has not one acre here." Of course, the law has given her the right, and these are the kind of people that Mr. Fisher holds with to do a great deal of the disturbance that is created in Taranaki. The real possessors of the land have nothing to say against anybody. It is those who have got little or no interest in the land who create the disturbances. The law has given them the power to do this, and they do not care two-pence. They will not live on the land. They stay away at Parihaka and other places, and get the Public Trustee to extract from Mrs. Thompson and myself and others so much for these idlers. They will not live on the land themselves, and we have got to pay licenses to be distributed amongst these idlers. They are afraid, according to Maori custom, to go and live on the land because they know they have no right to it. They know that morally they have no right whatever to this land. That is the position with regard to the whole of the West Coast Settlement administration, and that is how we are treated. I have nothing to say against Mr. Poynton. I wish it to be distinctly understood that Mr. Poynton has always behaved well to me, but he says the law has to be administered. Therefore I pray and ask if your honourable House will relieve us of all this. That is the prayer of my petition—

3. You have not finished this interview with Mr. Fisher?—I then said to Mr. Poynton—

4. Was Mr. Poynton there?—Yes, Mr. Poynton was there with us. After this I said to Mr. Poynton, "What do you intend to do with me, because," I said, "my petition is still in the House, and I intend to petition again?" "Well," he said, "you are going to Auckland?" I said, "No, I am not going to Auckland to-night. I have other business to attend to." "Well," he said, "when you arrive in Auckland we will arrange the matter." I went back home on the Tuesday following—this was on a Thursday—and it was arranged that we were to meet in Auckland. We met in Auckland, and I said, "What is the result?" and he said, "The result is, I return you back your money, and when I go back to New Plymouth I will instruct Mr. Fisher to return you back your money." I waited for a fortnight or three weeks or more, but I heard nothing from Mr. Fisher. I then wrote to Mr. Fisher. I received a reply from Mr. Fisher saying he knew nothing of any arrangement such as I said had been arrived at in Auckland. Therefore, to prevent further misunderstanding I wrote at once to Mr. Poynton, and this was Mr. Poynton's reply to me: "Public Trust Office, Wellington, 9th March, 1904.—Mrs. Jane Brown, Kohimarama, Auckland.—MADAM,—With reference to your letter of the 2nd, I have just seen Mr. Fisher, who informs me that you wrote him on this subject on the 7th February last. He was, however, busy with his rent-distribution, and unable to give attention to your letter until last week. You will, I presume, have received a letter from him about the date you wrote me. As far as the understanding exists between us, it is understood that the matters as they now are remain in abeyance, or, to put it more plainly, the proposed arranging of occupation licenses will stand over." Now, there was no arrangement about occupation licenses at all as far as my recollection goes. "Regarding Mr. Greenwood's rent, this will be returned to you, but you are not to take it as a recognition of your right to lease, and in the event of further dealings with the land you may at any time be required to refund it, together with rent to be paid you in future by Mr. Greenwood." Now, that is how I am tied. I have to face the prospect of having to pay all that back again to the Public Trustee. Why should I be subjected to this? Then, Mr. Poynton gives us one of his reasons. "I may state that Mr. St. Clair, solicitor, of Auckland, has written to the office asking what has become of the interests of Haurangi, *alias* Pihuka, in this section, as he maintains that interests of the aforesaid deceased Native should go to her grandchildren, and he has been advised by this office that succession orders made in 1887 by Judge Wilson appointed you successor. This may, of course, lead now to a variation of the original order, so you will see my reason for being careful as to Mr. Greenwood's rent.—I am, &c., J. W. POYNTON, Public Trustee." This individual interest which Mr. Poynton mentions has nothing whatever to do with the point of my argument. That is not a matter for Mr. Poynton to decide at all. With regard to this individual interest which Mr. Poynton drew my attention to, I may say that she was an aunt of mine, but that has nothing whatever to do with the petition. It is altogether outside of the petition, and therefore it is not worth while my going any further into that matter. I say in my petition that I have been a ratepayer and a taxpayer. I have always been treated as a European. I have never been treated as a Maori as far as paying rates and taxes is concerned. I have brought my land-tax receipts for the Committee to see. [Documents handed in.] I am a British subject. The last amount I paid for myself, my daughter, and husband was £30 4s. 2d. That is for income-tax. And those receipts will show from year to year what I have paid towards the revenue of the country—