

*Mr. Jones:* That is not the report.

*The Chairman:* Might it not have been a close typewritten copy of the report that was produced? This is a huge document.

*Mr. Jones:* There were two reports in London. This is the one that animadverted on the proposal throughout. Flower had two in his possession—one that he used when I wanted to sell the property, and one when he wanted to sell it.

*The Chairman:* I am afraid we cannot help you now.

*Mr. Jones:* Well, I wish to record my protest.

*The Chairman:* In the circumstances I think we will go on with the case. Do you desire Mr. Okey to open the case?

*Mr. Okey:* I have very little to say in connection with the matter. There is no doubt it is a very important case. Mr. Jones thirty-five years ago took up a large block of land on the Mokau-Mohakatino River, and, after holding it for some years and obtaining a sum of money upon it (a first mortgage of a certain amount), and a second mortgage of a smaller sum, proceeded to London with the object of dealing with the land. He was recommended to a firm of solicitors, Flower and Nussey, to negotiate for him. On his arrival in England it appeared that notice of the calling-in of the second mortgage had gone Home in the same steamer. The solicitors then paid off the second mortgage, and commenced to deal with the property. No sooner had they paid off the second mortgage than the first mortgage was called in, and they paid it off, so that these gentlemen were in the position of having one mortgage on the property, which they had on Jones's account. This is where the trouble seems to have started. Jones was not in a position to redeem that mortgage, and immediately he brought a person who was prepared to provide the money to redeem it there were all kinds of difficulties placed in the way. First they wanted a considerable sum for the money they had lent out and the business they had done for Jones. Jones was asked to pay £1,000 for what they had done, but as time went on they asked larger sums, until the amount, I think, was something like £20,000 that they required to redeem the mortgage they had taken up for Jones. However, Jones seems to have got into difficulties and law, and, although the money was on one or two occasions offered to redeem the mortgage, it never came off. That is really the start of the case. The case went to the Courts, and Jones eventually got the right to redeem the mortgage. Meanwhile this firm had sent a gentleman out to Taranaki (Mokau), and he got a report on the property. One report, as Mr. Jones has said, was for their use if they wanted to deal with the property, and the other—the false report—was placed before the public when Jones wanted to deal with the property. Immediately Jones had the chance of raising the money to pay off these gentlemen the false report was placed before the public. However, the matter has gone on from time to time from one Court to another until Jones has had to come to New Zealand. The London Court told him that he would have to come to New Zealand, as they had no power to deal with it. Before the Court in Wellington he was told that he had not a legal claim to appear. The petition to the House was heard by the gentlemen of the Upper Chamber, and they recommended that a Commission should be set up. This is what Jones asks for. This Commission has never been set up. What they did do was to ask Sir Robert Stout and Mr. Jackson Palmer to inquire into the case. They did so, but Jones was never called to give evidence. That is one of his chief grievances. If any of the gentlemen present had a case in hand to inquire into, the least thing you could do would be to hear the evidence. Jones asks that the Commission should be set up; and the Minister informs him that he has no power to set up the Commission. He now asks that he should be heard at the bar of the House. If you gentlemen think that it would be unwise to hear him at the bar of the House, it is possible to suggest that he should have a Commission. I am sure you will give him a fair hearing in this case.

*The Chairman:* Mr. Jones, will you make your statement. We should be obliged if you will make it as shortly as you possibly can, and to the point.

*Mr. Jones:* I am quite sure that it will not influence the Committee, but I have fair grounds of complaint that this case has been prejudiced in the Press by a statement of the Attorney-General in the Upper House and leading articles in the morning papers.

*The Chairman:* That will not affect the Committee.

*Mr. Jones:* No; but it is not improper for me to raise the point. It will come in later on.

*Mr. Newman:* I expect the witness will confine his argument to showing that he has had an injustice done to him in so far as this Commission has not been set up. He is not going into the merits of the case?

*The Chairman (to Mr. Jones):* You do not propose to go fully into your case?

*Mr. Jones:* You will surely want to know what took place in London, in order to show that they had no jurisdiction, and what brought me to the Court here, where your five Judges threw me out.

*The Chairman:* It is admitted that you went to the Court, and they had no jurisdiction. There is no need to tell the Committee that. I suggest that you should show us that you have been unfairly treated by the individuals mentioned in your petition, giving some reasonable justification for your request that you should be heard at the bar of the House.

*Mr. Jones:* It has even been decided by one of those five Judges that this never took place in London—that they never said there was no jurisdiction!

*The Chairman:* Well, perhaps you had better go on and tell the story in your own way.

*Mr. Jones:* When I landed in London I went to the firm of solicitors, Flower and Nussey, to whom Travers had previously sent particulars of the property, and they took me in hand. That is how I got into the hands of these people. They undertook to find certain moneys on the property which were due. They found a small sum, but allowed the property to go to auction in violation of their pledge, and the senior partner bought it at auction. It was put up by Plimmer,