

behaviour suggested it was ridiculous." Now, what is Jones's evidence? About the 3rd November, 1908, I met the Hon. John Rigg, who presented my petition to the Council, and I showed him the terms that were being exacted from me. He said, "Are you sure those terms are right?" I said, "Come upstairs," and he asked Treadwell if those were the correct terms. Treadwell said, "Yes." Mr. Rigg said, "Where did you get them?" Treadwell said, "From Dr. Findlay." Afterwards Mr. Rigg said, "I will write to Dr. Findlay." I said, "No; write to the Premier. He is responsible, and Findlay is not." On the 5th November down comes Mr. Dalziel to Treadwell, and states, "Jones has been talking to Rigg, and Rigg has written to the Premier about this matter of our terms." He intimated that as the letter of the honourable gentleman did not disclose the benefits supposed to accrue to me under the draft agreement, the Government had decided to disregard the recommendation of the Legislative Council in so far as the Royal Commission was concerned, but would send the matter on to be dealt with by Sir Robert Stout's Native Commission. I wrote to Treadwell demurring to such action. My letter was dated the 7th November, 1908. At that time I was home at Mokau. I had forgotten all about this, but on the 12th May of last year I picked up an Auckland paper, in which it was stated that the Stout-Palmer Commission had reported on the matter. I was astounded that they should have reported, as I had heard nothing respecting the inquiry. It is all very well for the Commissioners to say, "Jones is out of Court," but another branch of the Legislature says he is not out of it, and recommends an inquiry. But the Commissioners examined Hermann Lewis's representative, Flower's representatives, the Native representatives, and I knew nothing about it. They reported on the 4th March, and I knew nothing about it until the 12th May. I immediately wrote to the Premier, pointing out that Sir Robert Stout, having sat as a Judge on the case, could not fairly be considered a competent tribunal as intended or recommended by the Committee, and that, he having been President of the Court of Appeal that prevented me from entering the action that the English Courts held to be maintainable, or to appeal to the Privy Council, he had been sitting again on his own decision. Sir Joseph Ward replied on the 26th May, "I am in receipt of your petition. I have noted the representations you make, and am giving the matter consideration. I have heard no more about it."

The Chairman: Have you got a copy of the report submitted by Sir Robert Stout?

Mr. Jones: Yes. I submit further that two honourable gentlemen presented me to the Premier on the 25th October, 1909, asking that he would remove this report from the table of the House, on the ground that I was given no opportunity to be present, and that Sir Robert Stout had previously presided over the Court of Appeal. I asked that the report should be withdrawn, and effect given to the recommendation of the Committee of the Legislative Council that a tribunal should be set up to consider the matter. Now, I submit that it was an injustice to me to set up this Stout-Palmer Commission and refuse me the one unanimously recommended by the Committee of the Upper Chamber. It is said at this moment that there is no power to set up a Royal Commission. Might I ask what power there was in this Commission to inquire into the matter. Every title in the North Island could be upset if you send Judges abroad to inquire into all Native-land transactions. The Legislature never intended that two clever lawyers should range the North Island and pull to pieces every Native title. They reported on the conditions to-day, not twenty-five years ago, when I took the matter up. The report is not worth the paper it is written on. The Premier said there is a difficulty about withdrawing the report of a Royal Commission. I went upstairs at once, and saw the Speaker, and asked him about it. He told the Clerk to hunt up, and there were two instances of Mr. Seddon withdrawing the reports of Royal Commissions. I believe that Sir Joseph Ward has been honest in this thing right through the piece; but that is what took place.

Mr. Okey: That report says that Jones had not got all the signatures to the land, but that was agreed upon, and Jones had a special Act giving him power over this land, although he had not got all the signatures, showing that he had the title to the land.

Mr. Jones: Sir Robert Stout condemns me unqualifiedly, but he would not dare to come outside and do it. Twenty-two years ago there was a Royal Commission to inquire into the same thing. They never found Jones guilty of dishonesty. I lay the report of that Commission before the Committee, and will read extracts from it. Colonel Roberts and Judge Davey, in dealing with the case, remarked, "In dealing with the case it should be taken into consideration that Mr. Jones originally entered into these negotiations with the sanction and encouragement of the Government of the day, as expressed in the letter of Mr. Sheehan on April 29, 1879, Appendix No. 43, and that his services at that time in assisting to open up the Mokau district were regarded as worthy of special acknowledgment. He has now been upwards of twelve years engaged in these negotiations, and has certainly, so far as we can see, done everything possible on his part to bring them to a successful termination. . . . Considering the exceptional nature and circumstances of the cases, the said Joshua Jones is, in our opinion, entitled to any assistance which the Legislature can accord, having regard to the just rights and interests of the Natives. Nor has there been any such dilatoriness on the part of the said Joshua Jones in prosecuting his negotiations as to disentitle him and those claiming through him to such assistance, but on account of the difficulty of the cases we consider that any suggestion as to the specific form such assistance should take must proceed from Mr. Jones himself or his legal advisers. . . . The said Joshua Jones has undoubtedly sustained serious loss and injury through inability to make good his title, but we are unable to form any pecuniary estimate thereof." Had there been anything wrong in the conduct of Joshua Jones, they would have found it out. There is nothing here said about such alleged conduct. They said I was entitled to compensation, but I did not want to trouble the colony. I said, "Give me a title, and I will not bother the colony." I did not get compensation. If there was no difficulty in getting that Commission, why is there a difficulty now? A caveat was lodged by Joshua Jones on the 2nd April, 1908,