

that perfectly clear. Another's word is as good as Mr. Jones's until it is proved to be false. I say that never at any time in the history of this case have I attempted to block Mr. Jones's petition. Mr. Jones says I was a party to getting the Chief Justice and Judge Palmer to judge his case. A more ridiculous statement was never made. In the Native Land Settlement Act provision is made for a Commission of inquiry into the areas of Native land, and to decide what surplus is available for sale or lease to Europeans. Mr. Ngata was appointed to act with the Chief Justice, and on Mr. Ngata's retirement Judge Palmer took his place. The Commission made its usual inquiry under the Native Land Settlement Act. What was the result of it? The result of the Commission was no finding as between Jones and Mr. Lewis, who had purchased from the mortgagee. If you read the report of that Commission you will see that it suggests that Mr. Jones had not acquired a complete valid title from the Natives. The decision of the Court of Appeal was that Mr. Lewis had become the purchaser, and hence the Commission's report was an attack on Lewis's title. But Lewis only took what Jones had to give. The report of the Commission is one of a series of reports, and if you read it you will see that, while it reflects on Mr. Jones and the means by which he acquired his title, it reflects also on the title of Lewis, and suggests that it is no title at all. Mr. Jones complains of the fact that he was not called by that Commission. I want to say, sir, that Mr. Jones had no right to be called by that Commission. The Court of Appeal had decided that Mr. Jones had no more right to the land than you or I—that he was no more entitled to be heard than the man in the street. Surely the only people to call were people who could show that they had some legal claim to it. If Mr. Jones had been called, then any other person had just as much right to be called. Mr. Jones suggests that there was a conspiracy between myself and the Chief Justice and Judge Palmer to prevent him appearing before the Commission; but, as I have pointed out, the Commission had no right to call Mr. Jones. That was the reason, I infer, why he was not called. In fact, Lewis, whose title was attacked, was not, I believe, represented. But I am not concerned with the reflections upon the Chief Justice or upon Judge Palmer. I suppose their characters will stand, whatever may be said. In conclusion I wish to say a few words upon a more personal attack. It is suggested that I acted professionally for Mr. Lewis. I wish to say at once and unequivocally that I never acted as Mr. Lewis's solicitor. My partner has in years past acted and still does act for him. I want to make another point clear. Since I took office as a Minister of the Crown I have had no private practice. I have not attended my office, and I know nothing of the legal work that goes through that office. I mention that because you will see, in going through the evidence, how directly a charge in this connection has been made against me. I have had no private practice for four years, nor do I make any profits out of my office. I am made a small allowance; I get a small annuity whether I go to the office or not. I have no interest in nor any gain from the work that is done there. I want to make that clear. In this work done for Lewis I had no kind of profit whatever. One further point: Mr. Lewis bought this land and got his title from the Registrar. You know that the title of the Registrar is an indefeasible title. Mr. Lewis completed his legal title before he ever came near my office at all. It was in order to meet a threatened action by a Hawke's Bay syndicate that Mr. Lewis consulted my partner. The title had been completed before Mr. Dalziel had been consulted in reference to the proceedings of the syndicate. On pages 14 and 15 of the evidence there is another rather serious charge. For the purpose of involving me in actions with regard to Lewis's right to the land Mr. Jones says this: "He saw Dr. Findlay, and, as it was reported to me, Dr. Findlay there and then said, 'No, the Government will not set up an inquiry. . . . But he put forward terms claiming certain sums of money, in all £19,000, demanded on behalf of Hermann Lewis and Flower's executors—£5,000 for Hermann Lewis, and £14,000 for Flower's executors. This sum of £5,000 was shortly increased to £11,000. This was the demand of Dr. Findlay to my solicitor.'" I say that that statement is absolutely false. I never made a demand of any kind against Jones. I did not know what the financial sums were. Then Jones goes on to say, "I was taken aback. I said, 'What has Dr. Findlay got to do with Hermann Lewis? He said, 'Dr. Findlay tells me that his firm are the solicitors in this matter.' When he made the speech in the Legislative Council we did not know he was the solicitor, or that his firm was the solicitor, for Hermann Lewis. I said, 'Do you mean to tell me that this gentleman as Minister of the Crown refused the inquiry and in the same breath put forward these terms?'" He said, 'Certainly.'" Now, I do not want to make reflections upon Mr. Jones. But I say these statements are absolutely and wholly false. I made no demand. I had no dealing with this matter at all. My hands are perfectly clean as a Minister of the Crown. There is one further charge of a grave character. The Registrar, Mr. Bamford, is a public servant with a spotless record. The charge made against him by Mr. Jones is that he acted at my instigation or through my influence to remove a caveat to allow a mortgage to be registered. It is alleged that a caveat was taken off this title in order that the mortgage might be registered. I understand that a question was put in the House by Mr. Okey in reference to this matter. This was the question: "(1) Whether he is aware that—in the face of the recommendation of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council, in 1908, that the Government should order inquiry into the circumstances connected with the Mokau-Mohakatino Block, and that pending that inquiry steps should be taken to prevent further dealings with the property—the Attorney-General refused to give effect to the recommendation; (2) whether, at the suggestion of the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, the District Land Registrar of Taranaki did lodge a caveat against dealings with the property, and whether the Registrar-General, on the 2nd May, 1910, proceeded to New Plymouth, and, without judicial authority, ordered the removal of such caveat, notwithstanding that a protest had been lodged against such intended removal, upon the grounds that there had been fraud in the dealings that were not allowed to be investigated; (3) whether on the date of such removal of caveat by the Registrar-General, Hermann Lewis registered to the legal firm of Findlay, Dalziel, and Co. a mortgage over half the estate, an area of 26,705 acres, for £1,000, and Mr. T. G.