

Macarthy a mortgage over 54,205 acres for £25,271 8s. 2d., thereby raising an alleged liability on the property of £14,000 to £40,271 8s. 2d.; and (4) whether he will cause inquiry to be made into the foregoing alleged transactions, and all transactions in connection with this property, since the 17th January, 1893, as recommended by the Select Committee above referred to?" That caveat was removed by the Registrar-General, and this mortgage, in which it is alleged I was interested, was registered. The charge is against Mr. Bamford as well as against me. No man who knows Mr. Bamford would think of making a charge against his honesty. Do you know that the caveat removed was one placed upon the register on the ground of alleged fraud by Mr. Jones? That meant that Jones got his title by fraud. The caveat was lodged to protect not Mr. Jones, but the Land Transfer Assurance Office Fund. You would imagine after reading the question put by Mr. Okey that the caveat was some protection to Mr. Jones, whereas it was a reflection upon Jones. The caveat was removed after the Registrar had been threatened with legal proceedings if he did not remove it. Neither I nor my partner had anything to do with the removal of that caveat. The removal of the caveat was brought about by an independent firm of solicitors, and we had no more to do with it than the man in the moon. With reference to the mortgage for £1,000 given to Mr. Lewis, I have no more interest in that mortgage than Mr. Jones. The mortgage was given, I believe, for money advanced by my partner and for work done by him. Now, it may be said, How does your name come to be in the mortgage? There were hundreds of such cases where partners' names appear in mortgage deeds although they have no interest at all in the mortgages. I have no more interest in this mortgage than the man in the moon. I know it looks to a layman as if I had some interest in it when my name appears in the mortgage. But, as I have said, there are dozens of similar cases. I knew nothing of the mortgage until these reflections arose. When the reflections arose I asked where I came in, and I was referred to this mortgage as if it branded me with some kind of crime, as if it clinched the matter and proved me guilty of disreputable conduct. It is an illustration of how a man might be put in a pillory without him knowing a single thing about it. I did not know the mortgage was taken, I have no interest whatever in it, and yet I am held up as if I were a scoundrel taking a thousand pounds from some gentleman to bribe a man like Mr. Bamford.

*Mr. Fisher:* If you had got the thousand pounds it would not be so bad.

*The Hon. Dr. Findlay:* No, and even if I had, it would have been perfectly proper. Mr. Jones asks, "If a Commission was set up in 1908, why not now?" It is pointed out that the Jones trouble has frequently become a scandal, not because of Lewis, but on account of the mortgages in England, who have lent this money and cannot get it. Now, the Native Land Commission have reported to the Government that an area of over 50,000 acres of land, worth, Mr. Jones says, £100,000, has for twenty years been lying practically closed up, the owners only receiving £300 a year from it. The first duty of the Government was to try and settle this land. That was the idea they had in agreeing to set up this Commission: it was primarily to put a stop to this wretched waste, not to restore Mr. Jones's rights. By the Commission of Inquiry Act of 1908, and the decision in the Ohinemuri case, the hands of the Government were found to be tied. That is the reason why a Royal Commission cannot now be set up. In my judgment the Government should have power to set up such a Commission. I have great sympathy with Mr. Jones. He has lived a great many years; he is an old man; and I am sorry that at the end of a long life he should be in a state of worry about this property. He seems to think that I have been antagonistic to him. I will explain why I think he has been misled. Mr. Treadwell came to see me, and told me that Mr. Jones was a headstrong man, and would not follow his advice. He said certain proposals had been made between himself and my partner of which I knew nothing, that he had discussed them with Mr. Jones, and that he (Jones) would not agree with them. So my name was mentioned to Mr. Jones, who appears to have conceived the idea that I was coercing him into making a bargain. Treadwell came to me, and told me Jones had attacked my character, and that unless some arrangement was come to, Mr. Jones had told him I should be attacked in Parliament.

*Mr. Jones:* I never said so.

*Hon. Dr. Findlay:* That was told me. Think of Treadwell coming to a Minister and making such a threat if he had not heard it from Mr. Jones. I fancy, however, that my name was used for the purpose of coercing Jones. If so, I say Mr. Treadwell has not acted as a professional man should act to the Attorney-General. He should be called. I want to ask him a few questions if you should see fit to call him. I am generous enough to believe that Mr. Jones has been misled by some one in this matter. If Mr. Jones had come to me personally instead of sending a threat to me, I should have been ready and willing to give him any assistance. He had my sympathy, and he has it now. I had my duty to do, and I could not agree to the setting-up of a wrong precedent. It is not very nice to have my character assailed by a man I should have been glad to help. I should have been glad indeed to help this old man if he had given me a chance.

1. *Mr. Hindmarsh.*] Can you say how much of the £1,000 appertained to costs?—I cannot tell you anything about it.

2. It seems to me that the Committee should know. It is very difficult to see where law-costs could have been incurred. Can you explain why a lawyer would be required, except to give an opinion?—There was litigation between the Hawke's Bay syndicate and them.

3. Was a writ served?—I will not commit myself to any statement of fact. I believe writs have been issued.

4. By the Hawke's Bay syndicate?—Yes, I believe so. I understand them to say that Lewis has no title.

5. A special Act of Parliament confirms the title to Jones?—No, no. It gives him the right to acquire a title.

6. There is going to be a lawsuit over this matter?—I think there is.