

Land Transfer Act, or the title is invalid, then the Maoris would obtain compensation from the Assurance Fund—perhaps £40,000. Mr. Skerrett suggests an Act of State in this matter. It cannot be carried out without an Act of State; and I say that before an Act of State is passed you can very well insist upon Mr. Jones getting some justice in this matter.

*Mr. Okey:* I think Mr. Jones should be re-examined in regard to some new matter that has been introduced.

*The Chairman:* I want to know what the evidence is to be before I reopen it.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* It is to correct existing evidence, and that the Committee should know what the Maoris did.

*Mr. Okey:* There has been a considerable amount of new matter brought into this, and I think that Mr. Jones has a right to be re-examined in regard to it. It was never intended when the petition was presented to Parliament that you should have before you the evidence heard to-day. The intention was that you should have the petitioner heard at the bar of the House, or that a Royal Commission should be set up. Now you have allowed the Natives to give evidence which is altogether away from the scope of the petition. I should like to say that the evidence heard here this morning is altogether away from the scope of the petition. As for the payment of £25,000, the Natives have offered to sell for £15,000, or 5s. 9d. per acre, and if you are going to advise the Government to carry out an arrangement made by Mr. Skerrett—

*The Chairman:* The Committee has already heard that evidence, and it is of no use complaining now; and it would be very unfair to complain, because Mr. Jones introduced so many matters that the other people desired to be heard, and they had a perfect right to be heard. If you were assailed by Mr. Jones, you would look upon it as a very unfair thing if you were not allowed to rebut that.

*Mr. Okey:* I would ask that Mr. Jones should be allowed to give fresh evidence to rebut what has been said.

*The Chairman:* If it is going to open up new matter, and to mean recalling all those people, I will not do it.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* Do you not think that Mr. Jones has a right to be called in rebuttal? It is usual as a matter of law. If he can enlighten you further, I do not think it will take up any great time.

*The Chairman:* As long as you confine your attention to what has been done already.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* We will not introduce new matter, but Mr. Jones feels that he can throw some light on one or two things that are rather obscure at the present time.

*The Chairman:* Examine him now as to what he has got to say.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* He is going to make a statement in regard to Mr. Treadwell's evidence. He ought to be allowed to clear it up, because it is a reflection upon Mr. Jones's integrity.

*The Chairman:* I do not think I can allow that, and for this reason: that you were here when Mr. Treadwell gave his evidence, and so was Mr. Jones. That was your opportunity. You were asked if you had any questions to ask him, or if your client had. I cannot allow that now. It would be manifestly unfair to Mr. Treadwell, who is not here.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* I did not want to ask Mr. Treadwell any more questions: I was satisfied with his evidence in a way.

*The Chairman:* You had a copy of the letter. I decline now to allow Mr. Jones to discuss what Mr. Treadwell said.

*Mr. Jones:* I understood that I always had the right to reply at the end of the other case?

*The Chairman:* You have not to-day. I am sorry that I cannot agree with you.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* Mr. Jones, as you know, made certain statements in regard to the Attorney-General, and the Attorney-General came here and refuted them. Now, I may say that I do not think the Attorney-General said anything that he should not have said, but I do say that his conduct was open to another inference.

*The Chairman:* I cannot allow that statement to be made. You made that statement when Dr. Findlay was here, and the whole thing has been threshed out. You said you did not asperse his character.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* And I say so now.

*The Chairman:* Why go over it again?

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* I want to explain why Mr. Jones should be excused. I do not want the Committee to be prejudiced against Mr. Jones, and say that he has made wild statements, and that they cannot accept anything he has said.

*The Chairman:* That is purely a matter for the Committee to determine.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* I want to set up something in explanation of his making those statements.

*The Chairman:* I think that, having made the statement, there you must cease. The opportunity was also given you when Dr. Findlay was here, and you stated distinctly that you had not a word to say against his character, although you believed your client was justified in making the statements. Do not continue that line of argument.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* I do not wish you to think I want to go back upon anything I said regarding Dr. Findlay.

*The Chairman:* You have only repeated what you had already said.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* I repeat that I absolutely absolve Dr. Findlay from anything like wrong dealing in this matter.

*The Chairman:* Let it stop at that.

*Mr. Hindmarsh:* It is very difficult to know how to present this case. Would you let me refer to Mr. Treadwell's letter to show that Mr. Jones was misled by Mr. Treadwell in making some of those statements. He was Mr. Jones's solicitor, and informed him that certain facts were taking place.

*The Chairman:* It is purely one man's word against another's. Any signed statement must carry weight with the Committee. That is good, solid evidence, and we have that before us.