

161 Do you mean to say you do not know what was meant by that?—I know what is usually meant by “men not of the right colour”—that they are not Government supporters.

162 I will read the balance of the letter: “—which personally I think is a great mistake. You are aware, like the rest of us, that it is only our own money we are asking for and a debt owing to us which should have been paid long ago. Personally from the tone of your letter to me, I have great hopes of the affair being settled this time, and if you are instrumental in getting it done you may take my word it will be a long time before you are forgotten. Hoping you will get a good hearing and a successful one, I remain, yours sincerely, G. S. NEWLAND.” Did you receive this letter dated 15th October, 1905, from Mr Newland? “I must say I was agreeably surprised on receiving your letter yesterday, as I was under the impression that more evidence would have to be got for the Committee to consider. My reason for thinking so was the *Hansard* report of the first finding of the Committee, which looked rather black for us, but, thanks to the able manner in which you fought, and the manner you were backed by the west coast members and others outside, Mr Wilford for one. If you and your backers do not get the hearty thanks of the petitioners, all I have to say is that you ought, in the most substantial way they are able to give it. What will surprise some is that all who took a prominent part are Government men, and on that account alone I do not see that the Government can do anything else but give effect to the last report.” Did you receive that letter?—I dare say.

163. You say that politics had nothing to do with the matter at all?—Yes.

164. Will you be good enough to explain this letter which I will read to you “I know that I can get these claims settled, or otherwise, but if all the petitioners are going to treat me the same as your firm propose, well, it will be otherwise.” What did you mean by that?—That I had the information, and that if they were going to treat me like that I should not do anything to help them by way of or through the information that I had in my possession.

165. What do the words “or otherwise” mean?—Well, that I would not do anything for them.

166. Do you not think now that that is rather an unfortunate expression?—Probably.

167 Do you not think that it is consistent—that any one reading it would come to the conclusion that your reference was to influence which you could bring to bear?—I do not think so.

168. Read the letter and just see?—No, I do not see any other construction than I say.

169. Well, why did you go on to say, “I am not using this as a threat”?—Well, I was not using it as a threat.

170. Well, what were you using it as?—Well, I was using it in my own self-defence.

171 Did not Messrs. Hutchison and Haddow write to you primarily as member of Parliament and as member for the district in which those lands were situate?—No, I do not think so.

172. You say in your letter to Hutchison and Haddow, “I will not lift a finger to help the above claims under £20 each”?—Yes.

173. Why?—Because I thought it was worth it.

174. You said in your evidence that you thought it was rather a difficult matter to collect the money—what did you mean by that?—I thought, if Mr Hutchison could not collect it it would be a difficult task.

175. Did you seriously mean that, or did you not mean that, in conjunction with this letter, it was a difficult matter because of some other reason?—No, no other reason whatever. I considered that if Mr Hutchison could not collect his debts he must look upon it as a very difficult matter to collect, and that my services were worth what I asked for, and if they did not want my services they could say so.

176. In a letter you wrote to Mr Lysaght you said that unless his father's estate paid your claim you would take care to keep his name and his brother's off the second petition?—As far as I was concerned.

177 Now, Mr Symes, in those communications were you not writing as a member of Parliament, referring to a petition which you were preparing?—No, I was not.

178. But your letters show it?—But the petition was not being prepared, and he was not a constituent of mine.

179 But you say in your letter that you are preparing a second petition?—By order of the constituents.

180. And that you will keep their names off?—That I would not send it up to them, but I did. I sent it to Mr F Lysaght.

181 Supposing Mr. Brian Lysaght had refused to pay you the claim which you made against his father's estate, and supposing you had been asked by him as a member of Parliament to present a petition, would you have done it?—No, I would have referred him to his own member.

182. Would you have presented it, seeing that the lands the subject-matter of the petition were in your district?—No, they were not.

183. Where were they?—In Hawera.

184. You would have declined to do it?—I would have referred it to the member for the district.

185 And would you have withheld any information that you possessed, which you threatened to do?—I may have or may not. I dare say I would.

186. Do you seriously think that?—My information which I acquired I never acquired as a member of Parliament.

187 But had you not acted in the previous petition of 1905, and heard everything that went on?—I knew everything that went on.

188 Now, you were yourself one of the petitioners, were you not?—Yes.

189 And at that time, in 1905, you had been a member of Parliament for nine years?—For some time.

190. You presented the petition from yourself and others?—Yes,