

1910.
NEW ZEALAND.

ALLEGATIONS BY THE HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR STRATFORD

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO).

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

The Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to His Honour the CHIEF JUSTICE.

SIR,—

Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 20th October, 1910.

I have the honour to inform you that during the debate in the House of Representatives on the Financial Statement, the honourable member for Stratford, Mr. J. B. Hine, made certain allegations against members of Parliament in connection with the purchase of private estates by the Crown for the purpose of close settlement. The nature and form of these allegations appear on page 461 of the second volume of *Hansard* for this session, dated the 10th August, 1910. Mr. Hine, on the 12th October, appeared before a special Committee appointed by the House of Representatives to investigate and report on the allegations referred to, and then and there reduced these allegations to the following definite charges:—

“1. That Charles Edwin Major, in or about the year 1904, while a member of Parliament, conducted the sale to the Government of a property of Frederick Bayly at Toko, and received from the said Frederick Bayly a commission or sum of money for so doing.

“2. That Charles Edwin Major and Walter Symes, or one of them, in or about the year 1905, while both members of Parliament, conducted the sale to the Government of a property of Alfred Bayly at Toko, and received from the said Alfred Bayly a commission or sum of money, which the said Charles Edwin Major and Walter Symes divided.

“3. That the said Walter Symes, in or about the year 1906, and again in 1908, while a member of Parliament, charged and received from a number of West Coast lessees of Native lands commissions or sums of money for preparing and conducting petitions in Parliament on their behalf.

“4. That the said Walter Symes, in the year 1905, while a parliamentary election was presently in prospect, in which the said Walter Symes intended to become, and subsequently became, a candidate, and being then actually a member of Parliament, did threaten, or cause to be threatened, a certain newspaper that he would use his influence as a member of Parliament to prevent Government advertisements from being given to the said newspaper unless he received the support of, or was treated to his own satisfaction by, the said newspaper during the said election contest.

“5. That Thomas Kennedy Macdonald, in or about the year 1904, and subsequent years, while a member of the Legislative Council, either alone or in conjunction with his then partner (a land agent) conducted the sale to the Government of the property of one John Motley Leigh at Nainai, and the properties of other persons, and received from the said John Motley Leigh and the vendors of such other properties commissions or other sums of money; or, alternately, the said Thomas Kennedy Macdonald and his said partner received the said commissions or other sums, and divided the same.

“6. That Henare Kaihau, in or about the year 1906, while a member of Parliament, conducted the sale to the Government of a portion of the Te Aka Block, and received from the vendors a commission or other sum of money.”

On the 19th instant this special Committee reported to the House of Representatives that it recommended that the charges so made be referred to two Judges of the Supreme Court, sitting as a Royal Commission, to investigate and report upon the charges so referred to them. The House of Representatives, by resolution carried on the 19th day of October, adopted this report. I have therefore the honour to ask you if you will be good enough to furnish me with the names of two of their Honours Judges of the Supreme Court who are willing to be appointed members of the proposed Royal Commission to investigate and report upon the charges I have already set out in this letter. Should your Honour consider legislation necessary to give validity to the proposed Commission, I shall ask Parliament to pass it at once.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD,

Prime Minister.

His Honour the Chief Justice, Wellington.