

*The Chairman:* Might I put this aspect of the matter to you: Your story regarding the Mokau Block is as well known as the story of Robinson Crusoe, is it not?

*Mr. Jones:* No.

*The Chairman:* What I mean is this, and I say it quite respectfully: your case has been published time after time, both in *London Truth* and in papers circulating throughout New Zealand, and therefore it is not a new story.

*Mr. Jones:* I do not think there are more than two gentlemen on this Committee who know anything about the minutiae.

*Hon. Sir J. Carroll:* Has there been anything at all in the present proceedings in any way damaging to you?

*Mr. Jones:* Oh, yes. The Stout-Palmer Commission's report is a terrible thing—a thing that would have been burnt in any other community, and the authors of it.

*The Chairman:* We have nothing to do with the report of the Stout-Palmer Commission.

*Mr. Jones:* Permit me. All this trouble is based upon the allegations in the report of the Commission that Jones's leases are voidable; and this report with regard to these Native leases has been terrible.

*The Chairman:* My answer to that, on behalf of the Committee, is that, if you feel that, you should petition Parliament to give you an inquiry with regard to the finding of that Commission. We have nothing to do with that.

*Mr. Jones:* But you have to do with the Stout-Palmer Commission's report.

*Mr. Herries:* It has been mentioned.

*Mr. Jones:* That report is really the groundwork for your proceedings.

*The Chairman:* I think you may claim some consideration in regard to that report; but as to your going into the history of the case from 1876, the Committee are very clear that they cannot permit that.

*Mr. Jones:* Do you object to my dealing with the Stout-Palmer Commission's report?

*Mr. Herries:* I think Mr. Jones is really talking about finishing where he ought to begin. I do not think the Committee should go into anything that happened before the time Mr. Herriman Lewis bought the leases. That is our commencing-point.

*Hon. Sir J. Carroll:* Mr. Jones heard all the evidence that has been given before the Committee on the present occasion, and I am putting it to him whether there was anything in that evidence that was damaging to him.

*Mr. Jones:* The Stout-Palmer Commission's report—you are working on it.

*Hon. Sir J. Carroll:* I do not think any evidence was given on it; reference was made to it.

*Mr. Jones:* If I might be allowed to state some things that I object to in connection with that report, that might assist me; and then I would begin, according to your ruling and the suggestion of Sir James Carroll. I would begin—and I could finish in one day—from the date when the decision was given by the Judges here and when the Prime Minister gave his assurance to me, and cover the ground up to the present time; but I cannot possibly do that without referring to the report of the Stout-Palmer Commission which was made previously, and I think you will agree that that comes within the scope of this inquiry.

*Mr. Greenslade:* Have you a written statement?

*Mr. Jones:* Yes, sir. The statement I proposed reading carries me up only to the decision of the Judges.

*Mr. Herries:* That is where you ought to begin. That is where our inquiry begins.

*Mr. Jones:* I am endeavouring to meet the Committee. Will you allow me, then, to produce this report of the Commission and comment upon it? I think that might be permitted to me.

*Mr. Herries:* We have had a good deal of evidence on the question of the validity of the leases.

*The Chairman:* I personally do not see any harm in that.

*Hon. Sir J. Carroll:* I think all the legal profession agree that they do not place much value on the Stout-Palmer Commission's report.

*Mr. Jones:* In reply to Sir James Carroll, I desire to say that, though I do not think he intends to injure me, he lays very great stress upon the fact that the Commission's report condemned my leases and my titles. Now, I want to put it to him and the Committee that he is under a misapprehension.

*Mr. Herries:* I think that what Sir James Carroll said was that all the legal evidence we had before us was against the report of the Commission.

*Mr. Jones:* But Sir James Carroll will not repudiate what he has said on the public platforms.

*Mr. Herries:* I think Mr. Jones might be given another day to prepare this fresh report.

*The Chairman:* Is that the wish of the Committee—that Mr. Jones be allowed another day to recast his remarks, commencing from the point that the Committee thinks he should start from?

*Mr. Herries:* That is, the time the leases were put up to auction and purchased by Mr. Herriman Lewis.

*Mr. Jones:* The time I mentioned was when the decision of the Court was given—when the Government first took the matter in hand for me.

*Mr. Herries:* But that came after the sale of the leases?

*Mr. Jones:* No; at about the same time.

*The Chairman:* I was with you when you lodged the caveat. It was after that that we went to Sir James Carroll.

*Mr. Jones:* Very well, then. I will start from the time Mr. Lewis negotiated, and with your kind permission I will make use of the Stout-Palmer report in what I am allowed to say, the day after to-morrow.

*The Chairman:* Before you go, Mr. Jones, I should like to mention that you made a mistake in your previous evidence. At question 73 in the printed evidence you were asked, "By whom