

No. 60.

Mr. Justice EDWARDS to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 12th March, 1891.

My attention has been called to a leader in the *Wellington Evening Post* of the 28th February, in which, amongst many other inaccurate statements, appears this: "Mr. Edwards takes up the position, we understand, that, although he draws a salary as Native Commissioner, and has a staff provided as such, the law as it stands imposes no duty whatever upon him, nor gives him any power, and that, even if it did, he, also holding a Commission as a Judge of the Supreme Court, must determine for himself what proportion of his time he devotes to either position. Ministers, after taking advice on the subject, do not see their way to controvert this position except by removing or suspending Mr. Edwards as a Judge."

In order that it may not hereafter be said that I have assented to this statement of my views, I desire to state emphatically that, although I hold a Commission as a Judge of the Supreme Court, specially conferred upon me both to make me independent and to enable me to render assistance in the Supreme Court work, I always have recognised, and do now recognise, that the work of the Commission must take precedence, and that, if the work of the Supreme Court is found to interfere with it, then the Supreme Court work must, so far as I am concerned, give place to the work of the Commission.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

W. B. EDWARDS.

No. 61.

The Hon. the PREMIER to Mr. Justice EDWARDS.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 16th March, 1891.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th inst., pointing out that you do not assent to the statement of your views as embodied in a leader in the *Evening Post* of the 28th February relative to your offices as Native Commissioner and Judge of the Supreme Court.

I have, &c.,

W. B. Edwards, Esq., Wellington.

J. BALLANCE.

No. 62.

The Hon. J. BALLANCE to Mr. Commissioner EDWARDS.

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 14th March, 1891.

I have the honour, in the absence of the Hon. the Native Minister, to inform you that, as Parliament has not made any provision for the expenses of the Commissioner appointed under section 20 of "The Native Land Court Acts Amendment Act, 1889," after the 31st instant, the Government has decided to bring its labours to a close, and that His Excellency the Governor in Council has been advised to revoke the Commission from that date, from which period the offices held by you and Mr. Ormsby under the above-mentioned Act will cease.

At the same time I desire to convey to you the thanks of the Government for the services you have rendered as Commissioner.

I am communicating with Mr. Ormsby on the subject.

I have, &c.,

His Honour Mr. Commissioner Edwards, Wellington.

J. BALLANCE.

No. 63.

Mr. Commissioner EDWARDS to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 16th March, 1891.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th March, No. 246.

In reply, I think it my duty to inform you that there are now pending a considerable number of applications to the Commissioners, some of which have been heard, and are, at the request of the parties, now standing over for judgment, in order that it might be ascertained whether the Legislature would authorise the Commissioners to remove certain formal defects mentioned in the report of the Commissioners on the Gisborne sitting, and some of which, at the like request and for the like reason, have been adjourned for hearing.

There are also one or two applications for hearing for which no date has at present been fixed.

Further, it is most probable that a large number of additional applications will be lodged before the 20th of this month, when the time for receiving applications will expire.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

W. B. EDWARDS.

No. 64.

The Hon. the PREMIER to Mr. Commissioner EDWARDS.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 18th March, 1891.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th inst., relative to the work now pending before the Commissioners appointed under "The Native Land Courts Act Amendment Act, 1889," which I have forwarded to the Hon. the Native Minister.

I have, &c.,

W. B. Edwards, Esq.

J. BALLANCE.