

I am not suggesting that that is the object—to bring up further matter; that will have the effect of preventing a report being made. Fairness to the petitioner entitles me to submit to the Committee that it ought not to take that course. If the Committee determine to take that course, then I am in the hands of the Committee; and if they think they cannot report, then the course you suggest of reporting the proceedings so far is better for us than nothing.

*The Chairman* : Before calling on you, Mr. Gray, I wish to point out an unintentional omission in Mr. Bell's address. Mr. Bell will probably remember that, while this petition has been before the Committee a very long time, the delay has been owing to Sir Walter Buller not complying with an order which the Committee made. I am not saying how that matter was settled, but I would like Sir Walter Buller to admit that, so far as the Committee is concerned, there has been no delay, but that it has been in consequence of correspondence which has been passing between the parties. These are matters, probably, that Mr. Gray has no knowledge of, but I would point out that that is an omission which Mr. Bell has made.

*Hon. W. Hall-Jones* : I may point out that the resolution of the Committee asking for certain information as to certain accounts was passed on the 31st August, and the last account submitted by Mr. Bell did not reach us until the 14th October.

*The Chairman* : I do not want it to appear on the records of our proceedings that there is an innuendo that the Committee has been delaying this matter.

*Mr. Symes* : There is more than an innuendo.

*The Chairman* : I do not think Mr. Bell intended to cast any reflection upon the Committee.

*Mr. Bell* : I did not for a moment suggest that the Committee had delayed the matter, either by innuendo or otherwise, but I did intend and did say directly that the Committee had gone into evidence which was extraneous.

*Hon. W. Hall-Jones* : The Committee is competent to form an opinion upon that point.

*Mr. Bell* : The Committee will know that I am speaking here as representing Sir Walter Buller, and that what I say is a mere submission. You are the judges, and I regret very much if I have given offence to any member of the Committee. I never intended to suggest that there was any delay on the part of the Committee. When you said there was a non-production of the accounts you did not suggest that the matter was prolonged by us. The real reason was this: First of all, the report was not sent in; then, Mr. Baldwin being away some time, there was a delay before he took exception to the account; and then we represented the matter to you, and there was some time taken up by counsel for the Government. The gaps were not due to us. We were asked to supply you with copies of the account, and then there was a further gap caused by the comment by the Government counsel. You did not suggest—and, if you did, I submit it would not be just—that this long period, as mentioned by Mr. Hall-Jones, was a period covered by our delinquency, because our responses were quite prompt without any suggestion from you.

*Mr. Symes* : Why I said that it was more than an innuendo was because Mr. Bell said it was not on their own account or on Mr. Baldwin's, and therefore it must have been caused by the Committee.

*Mr. Bell* : Allow me to say that I expressly attributed no intentional delay to Mr. Baldwin. I said I would not do it, because Mr. Baldwin was absent, and I did not intend to do it if he was here. It was caused by his attendance at Napier on important Government business.

*Mr. Gray* : All I desired to say was that no unnecessary delay could be attributed to Mr. Baldwin, and that any delay that had occurred was unavoidable; but that was rendered unnecessary by Mr. Bell's last explanation.

*The Chairman* : Have you anything to say as to the Native Appellate Court proceedings?

*Mr. Gray* : I am not familiar with the Horowhenua Block proceedings. You will, however, have observed, from the report of what was in the morning paper, that there was a distinct difference of opinion between counsel yesterday—Sir Robert Stout and Mr. Bell—in the matter before the Appellate Court, but I am not in a position to deny what Mr. Bell stated.

*The Chairman* : Then, as to the other point—supposing we cannot finish up the whole thing in time before the supplementary estimates are presented—as to laying part of the evidence so far taken before the House, and adjourning the matter till next session.

*Mr. Gray* : That, of course, I have not had an opportunity of considering; but if the Committee has resolved to take evidence to-night, then I assume there will be time to consider that matter to-morrow.

*The Chairman* : We have decided to take evidence to-night.

ROBERT C. SIM examined.

1. *The Chairman*.] What are you?—Registrar of the Native Land Court, Wellington.

2. Do you produce the will of the late Major Kemp?—Yes; I have it here, dated 15th February, 1898: "This is the last will and testament of me, Meiha Keepa te Rangihiwiniui, of Putiki, near Wanganui, an aboriginal Maori chief of New Zealand. I give and bequeath the full-length portrait of myself in oils by Lindauer unto the Town of Wanganui, to be carefully preserved and exhibited in the museum or some other public institution. I give and bequeath my military uniform, my presentation sword received from Her Majesty the Queen, my Imperial war-medal, and my New Zealand Cross decoration unto my nephew, Haruru-ki-te-Rangi, the son of Hakaraia Korako. I give, devise, and bequeath all my real and personal estate not hereby otherwise disposed of unto my daughter, Wiki Keepa, upon trust to sell, call in, and convert into money the same or such part thereof as shall not consist of money, and to stand possessed of the proceeds thereof upon trust—Firstly, to pay my funeral and testamentary expenses, not to exceed the sum of one hundred pounds (£100); secondly, to pay to Sir Walter Lawry Buller, of the City of Wellington, K.C.M.G., his executors, administrators, or assigns, the sum of six thousand eight hundred and ten pounds (£6,810) now due and owing by me to him, and also any further sums of money that he