

2. Did you get an acknowledgment from Mr. Fisher for that cheque?—No. He returned the cheque with a letter. I did not know at the time. I happened to be here in Wellington when the cheque was returned back to my husband. I came on here because, as I have explained, I had written to Mr. Poynton at the same time as I wrote to Mr. Fisher, when I heard that my tenant had been disturbed; also when I wrote to Mr. Fisher enclosing the cheque for £9 10s. I told him that I would meet him in New Plymouth and discuss the matter; but by that time I had received Mr. Poynton's reply to my first letter, and in consequence of that instead of my going to New Plymouth I came straight on to see Mr. Poynton, because I was just as surprised at Mr. Poynton's reply to me as I was with Mr. Fisher's. I will first read Mr. Fisher's letter to my tenant which was written to him at the same time that Mr. Fisher's letter was written to me. You will notice that they are both dated the 14th November. "Public Trust Office, West Coast Settlement Reserves Agency, New Plymouth, N.Z., 14th November, 1903.—F. C. Greenwood, Esq., Urenui.—SIR,—Grant 5238: With reference to my letter of the 11th instant, I have now to advise you that the Public Trustee informs me he has written Mrs. Brown as under: 'Mr. Greenwood will not be disturbed providing he pays rent to me in future, but I cannot allow you to receive it any longer. I trust, therefore, you will forward me, without delay, cheque for half-year's rent ending the 31st October, otherwise this Department will have to resume possession of the 54 acres under notice. Recognising that you have been to some expense in getting this portion of the land in order, the Public Trustee does not wish to disturb you more than is necessary, but having a number of beneficiaries interested in this land he, of course, has to protect their interests.—Yours, &c., T. W. FISHER, Reserves Agent.'" Now, this is Mr. Poynton's reply to my first letter: "Public Trust Office, Wellington, 11th November, 1903.—Mrs. Jane Brown, Kohimarama, Auckland.—MADAM,—Grant No. 5238: In reply to yours of the 6th instant, I have no recollection of having made any promise regarding the leasing herein. I was very much astonished to learn that you had leased this property, you having no right to do so. This reserve does not belong to Ngatimutunga. There are a great many Native owners who have a right to all rents upon this reserve and look to me to protect their interests in it. Mr. Greenwood will not be disturbed providing he pays the rent to me in future, for I cannot allow you to receive it any longer. I cannot say when I shall be in Taranaki, as the session is lasting a long time. I will, however, send you word when I shall be there.—Yours, &c., J. W. POYNTON, Public Trustee." I was so surprised when I received this letter that I came straight down to Wellington to see Mr. Poynton. The first person I met was Mr. Carroll himself. It was just at the close of the session. I said to Mr. Carroll, "Have you any recollection of the Public Trustee saying in Committee that I could go back satisfied, and that neither myself nor my people would be disturbed on that reserve from which I had asked for the removal of the Public Trustee's control?" Well, he did not quite recollect, but his reply was that he remembered something about it, but he could not say for certain. I said, "Well, will you read this letter of Mr. Poynton's?" I then showed him the letter I had received from Mr. Poynton. I handed this letter to Mr. Carroll; he read it, and he said to me, "Have you seen Mr. Poynton?" and I said "No." He said, "You must go and see him. He ought not certainly to have treated you like this." I said to Mr. Carroll, "You had better come with me," but he had other engagements and he could not come. I went and I saw Mr. Poynton, and I told him that I was very much surprised and astonished at his writing me such a letter as this on the face of what he had said to me, and he said, "Well, he had no recollection of it." I tried to remind Mr. Poynton of what actually did take place, but he said he had no recollection of it. I then asked him why he had not written to me in the first place, because I would probably have been able to explain the whole position. I said to him, "I consider that I am practically owner of that piece of land." I showed him my titles, which I now place before the Committee. [Documents handed in.] I showed him the subdivisions which had been agreed upon by my relations. I said to him, "I am entitled to this piece of land. It was subdivided by my own relations in 1887." I had been to the expense of getting survey plans for this land, which cost me between £30 and £40, and I considered with all the paraphernalia of the law, as it then existed, I was quite entitled to look upon that piece of land as my own. He admitted the hardship—I will say that of him—he agreed that there was a hardship, but he said it was the law. He said he had to administer the law. I asked Mr. Poynton if the law was likely to be righted, and he said "No." I am complaining of the law, not of Mr. Poynton. It is these arbitrary laws which I am complaining about, which are giving to one man the power to oust us out of our birthright. I said so to Mr. Poynton, but he said all he had to do was to administer the law. That is Mr. Poynton's position. He said it was just as harassing to him as it was to me. He said, "I am very glad you have come down, because it has put quite a different complexion upon the matter." I said, "Why did you not write to me?" He admitted he had been rather hasty. I said that as owner it was not the right thing to ignore me in the matter. If he had written to me all the trouble would not have arisen. It cost me between £12 and £14 coming down here to put this matter in a straightforward position so that he could understand it. He should have written me at first, but he did not write me. He ignored me. That is the position with regard to Mr. Poynton. I do not wish to say anything against Mr. Poynton. Mr. Poynton did not know what Mr. Fisher was up to. Mr. Poynton then said that he had received a letter from Mr. Fisher to the effect that a great many of the Natives had complained to him that I had no right to receive the rent of that particular piece of land. I said to Mr. Poynton, "This is very strange, considering I have had that land in occupation for sixteen or seventeen years, that these complaints should be made now." I asked Mr. Poynton to point out to me who they were who made the complaints. He then read me a portion of Mr. Fisher's letter, but he did not mention any names, and "therefore," Mr. Poynton said, "you see the position I am in." I said, "Yes, I see the position you are in." I then said, "Well, do this. I shall be prepared to face Mr. Fisher, and to face the grantees or the beneficiaries who have complained to Mr. Fisher in Taranaki face to face." I said, "Let Mr. Fisher bring these people who have complained to him as to whether I had any right to the land or not face to face with me, and I shall be prepared to meet them, and if they can prove that I have no right whatsoever, then I will return them the rent for the whole