

had I not been interfered with. I have been all these years in ruin and my family in misery. I might have hoped for better treatment at this stage. Will the Premier be pleased to let me know whether he will take steps to remedy matters and grant relief?—I beg to remain, &c., JOSHUA JONES." This was never answered. There is a note in the margin, "Delivered personally to the Premier's private secretary, Mr. Hislop." Here is a letter by the member for Taranaki to the Prime Minister, dated Wellington, 5th July, 1910: "My dear Sir Joseph,—*Re* the Mokau land case: Mr. Joshua Jones, who is now in Wellington, informs me that the latest phase of this case is that you were good enough to inform his solicitor, Mr. Treadwell, a short time ago that you would, on or about the 23rd June last, submit a scheme to the Cabinet in the form of purchasing the freehold of this land from the Natives, and under the new Native Land Act dealing with all parties claiming interests through Mr. Jones in the property, and awarding certain concessions to Mr. Jones, subject to the approval of Parliament, vesting the minerals in him, with defined areas of freehold land for his own occupation, that would enable him to communicate with London in reply to certain offers received by him through cable, of which I understand you are aware, to work the minerals and build a harbour at the river-entrance in accordance with the Government survey plans. Mr. Jones now states that neither he nor his solicitor has heard anything further about the matter, and he is, as you may know, in great anxiety respecting it. The people of Taranaki are also very desirous of seeing this block of land settled upon. The Taranaki members of the House, with myself, have been urged by our constituents to endeavour to get a settlement of the case. It is proposed that we should take some action in the House, but before I move in the premises I would feel obliged by your informing me at your earliest convenience whether the Cabinet has arrived at any decision and as to what is proposed to be given effect to, in order that this long-standing grievance might be irrevocably terminated.—I beg to remain, &c., H. OKEY." This is a memo. by myself: "Note: I understand that Mr. Okey's letter was not replied to, and Mr. Treadwell informed me three weeks ago that he had seen the Premier the previous day, who then stated that in consequence of my having moved in Parliament through Mr. Okey the Government would do nothing further to meet my requests; but, incidentally, the Premier mentioned that when the Government had dealt with the land there might be some small sum left in hand that might be handed to me." [Exhibit TT.] The movement by Mr. Okey in the House was on the 27th July, 1910, when he put this notice on the Supplementary Order Paper No. 6 and elicited a reply. [See Exhibit UU.] When this was laid on the table I made some remarks on it. "The replies state that the recommendation was made to the Government and not to the Attorney-General, but I answer that the Attorney-General represented the Government, and he gave the reply to my solicitor when the report was presented that the Government would not appoint a Commission to deal with or investigate the merits of the petition." [Exhibit UU.]

23. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Is not that in your petition?—Yes. I will ask leave to put it in.

TUESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 1912.

JOSHUA JONES further examined. (No. 6.)

*Witness:* The Hon. Mr. Paul asked me at last sitting whether I could tell him which Committee had thrown out the Stout-Palmer report. I do not know whether that is the question.

1. *Hon. Mr. Paul.*] That is it?—It is given on page 137 of the evidence taken before the Native Affairs Committee of 1911 in connection with the Mokau-Mohakatino Block: "Mr. Herries: I think we start from Mr. Herrman Lewis's purchase? Mr. Jones: No. What I was going to say was that you have had before you, and have now, I think—for you have been basing a lot of your inquiries upon it—the Stout-Palmer Commission's report. The Chairman: No; that has come in incidentally, but it has been ruled out as having no bearing on the paper which forms the subject-matter of this inquiry." I say afterwards, "I am sure you will rule it in again to allow me to refer to it," and for that purpose it came before the Committee by special resolution that I should be heard, but in the end they ruled me out again. At page 138 the Hon. Sir J. Carroll asks, "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." After some further remarks Mr. Carroll says, "I think all the legal profession agree that they do not place much value on the Stout-Palmer Commission's report." I did not make the statement without having ground for it, but the report was not applicable to the Mokau leases at all. The Stout-Palmer Commission's report was in reference to inquiry into Native lands occupied or unoccupied. This was not Native land, but land held under a Land Transfer title, and they had no more jurisdiction over it than a fly. Mr. Dalziel, at page 102 of the evidence, says, "I should like to say at this stage that the Commission had no jurisdiction whatever to try the question of the title to these leases." That, I think, justified me in saying what I did.

2. The extracts that you have read this morning do not say that the Stout-Palmer report was an illegal document, but that it was ruled out by the Committee as being irrelevant?—That is the fact; but my contention is that it was illegal from the inception. There was no power for them to deal with that block.