

19th March, 1896.

*Copy Resolution, Jones Mokau Property.*—The Chairman submitted a draft prospectus of Jones Mokau property, which was considered, and it was resolved that the company should act as promoters of a company to be formed, provided the managing director reports satisfactorily on the position of affairs in connection with same.

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West Australian Mining Company, 257 Winchester House, E.C.

*Note.*—In May, 1896, Mr. Doyle, the managing director, returned me the plans and reports of the property. He gave as a reason that the Board had seen Wales's report, which condemned the property, and upon the face of this report they could not entertain the business. He said that neither the Board nor their solicitor believed the report to be a correct one, but as they were handling public money they had to be careful. He said the report was sent to them in strict confidence, and they were under a pledge not to let me see it, or even to let me know that it existed.

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EXHIBIT O.

Mokau, Taranaki, New Zealand, 25th November, 1908.

Messrs. Doyle and Wright, 88 Bishopsgate Street Within, London E.C.

DEAR SIRS,—

In the Dominion of New Zealand Parliament.—The Mokau lands petition (Joshua Jones), reported upon by Select Committee of the Legislative Council and referred to the Government by the Council on the 9th October, 1908, with the recommendation "That the matter should be referred to a Royal Commission, and that pending such being held further dealings with the land be prohibited."

As an inquiry will probably be held into this matter as recommended by the Committee, would you do me the favour of answering the following questions for the information of the Commission or other official body that might require the information:—

- (1.) Was or was not the Mokau property placed in your hands in 1906-7 by myself for the purpose of forming it into a company or otherwise disposing of it?
- (2.) Did you while the property was in your hands see or hear of any report derogatory to the value thereof being circulated in the City of London? If so, what did you hear?
- (3.) Did you in 1907, while you were dealing with the property, see a letter containing references to or extracts from a report or from sources relating to this property in the hands of a Mr. Seward (if I remember his name correctly), who had relations with your firm in this matter?
- (4.) Was the substance of such letter, references, or extracts of such a nature as to preclude or damage any sale, or vitiate any sale if effected?

Kindly state any other statement of fact or fair comment that you consider may prove of service to the Royal Commission or other competent authority of inquiry.

Yours, &c.,

JOSHUA JONES.

Robert Doyle, 88 Bishopsgate Street Within, London E.C.

Chas. F. S. Wright, 88 Bishopsgate Street Within, London E.C.

Please initial this letter as "received" and return it with your reply.—J.J.

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88 Bishopsgate Street Within, London E.C., 14th January, 1909.

DEAR MR. JONES,—

Letter enclosed as requested. Anything we can do you can command us. I hope and trust everything will come right. Kind regards from both.

Yours, &c.,

ROBERT DOYLE.

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88 Bishopsgate Street Within, London E.C., 14th January, 1909.

DEAR SIR,—

I am in receipt of your letter of 25th November, 1908, which I now return signed for identification.

In answer to question 1—Yes.

In answer to question 2—Yes. We experienced considerable difficulty in dealing with the property, owing to the fact that a report had been circulated that the coal was a lignite and crumbled on exposure to the air.

In answer to question 3—Yes.

In answer to question 4—Yes.

With reference to questions 3 and 4 and my answers thereto, when the business was well in hand a man named F. Seward showed me the substance of a letter which referred to a report which had been made by an engineer of a damning character. The chief nature of the criticism was that the coal was a lignite and had the unfavourable propensity of crumbling on exposure to the atmosphere. On another occasion we invited Professor Galloway to act as consulting engineer. He practically agreed to do so, but afterwards declined, as he said that from inquiries he had