

referred to it in a separate section of my annual report. Some of the allegations I made were upheld and some of them broke down. I reported unfavourably in connection with the conduct of a Judge of the Native Land Court, but I have no wish to reopen that matter.

105. I understand you to say that a Judge has been appointed in your place, and that the office has not been abolished?—There are twice as many Judges now as there were then.

106. Who is the Judge of your district now?—No Judge has any particular district now; the North Island is all one district.

107. *Mr. Sutton.*] Had the Government a clear title to this land, for which you charge acreage, in 1876?—No.

108. Then it is not absolutely certain that the negotiations were completed at this time?—No; I charged  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre on the lands I was negotiating for, though the Government had not got the title to the whole of the land.

109. Can you say how much they got the title to?—No.

110. You were dismissed by Mr. Ormond?—Yes.

111. That would be prior to your appointment as a Judge of the Native Land Court?—Yes.

112. Why were your services dispensed with on the last occasion?—I do not know; I am quite in the dark about it.

113. *Mr. Swanson.*] I understand that, whether your claims were much or little previously to your appointment, you settled the whole of this business with Mr. Sheehan when you accepted the Judgeship?—Yes.

114. And having got this Judgeship you were practically starved out of it by the stoppage of supplies wherewith to pay the officials their expenses and salary?—I was starved out of it by having my salary stopped. I kept the Court going though we had to get into debt to do it.

115. Then, however much you were hampered, you did manage to carry on the Court?—Yes.

116. I think you have stated that through the unfriendly interference of the Chief Judge the arrangement between yourself and the Government came to an end, and you were worked out of the job?—Yes; that is my impression. I think it is inimical to a Judge to keep him without money to carry on his Court. I contend that this is a positive injury to a Judge.

117. I understand that what you considered your dismissal came down by telegram to you while you were actually sitting on the Bench, and that you considered you were placed in a humiliating position thereby?—Yes, certainly.

118. And that being the case, you now come back to your original claim?—Yes.

119. Who were the speculators you say you reported unfavourably of?—Messrs. Reid and Cooper, of Poverty Bay.

120. Who formed the Royal Commission that was appointed to consider your report?—Dr. Giles and Major Brown, of Taranaki.

TUESDAY, 11th JULY, 1882.

The Hon. Mr. ROLLESTON examined.

121. *The Chairman.*] This is a petition from Mr. J. A. Wilson, late a Judge of the Native Land Court. I have been informed you were Native Minister in 1880 when the circumstances occurred?—I think I was Minister of Justice, and that the Native Land Court Department was under the Minister of Justice at that time.

122. You have a knowledge of the circumstances under which Mr. Wilson left the Government employment. Yes, generally. I could tell them generally from recollection.

123. Will you state them to the Committee?—The Native Lands Act of 1880 brought the then existing commissions of the Judges to an end, and Mr. Wilson was not reappointed.

124. The effect of the passing of the Act cancelled the commissions of the Judges?—Yes.

125. Then all those Native Land Court Judges who have continued so were reappointed I presume?—Yes.

126. Have you any objection to stating why Mr. Wilson was not reappointed? Was it from any want of ability or from not performing his duties as a Judge properly, or anything like that?—I have not had much to do with Mr. Wilson myself, and cannot speak personally, but I always heard well of his ability. So far as I recollect now new Judges were not reappointed, with one or two exceptions, till some months after the passing of the Act, and in the meantime the Government was considering the question of fresh appointments. Mr. Wilson was not reappointed partly because difficulties arose with him subsequently, and partly—indeed mainly—because he was not recommended. And the other gentlemen who were appointed seemed to have quite as good claims and to be efficient men.

127. Were the difficulties between Mr. Wilson and the Government or between him and the Chief Judge?—Well, Mr. Wilson refused for sometime after the passing of the Act to give up the seals of office, and declined to comply with the requirements of the Government in respect to papers connected with his other appointment as Commissioner of Native Claims at Tauranga.

128. Did he assign any reason for not giving them up?—Mr. Wilson objected altogether to his office being brought to an end.

129. Did he assign as a reason that it was not legally brought to an end?—He did, as far as I recollect; but of that the Government had no doubt.

130. Was there any complaint made with respect to the manner in which he discharged his duties as Judge?—I should not like to say from recollection. The Chief Judge is here in Wellington, and he has the administration of the Native Land Court Department, and would probably be able to give evidence on that point, and I think there are papers connected with it.

131. Still the appointment of Judges rests with the Government?—Yes.

132. What the Committee wish to learn is—looking at the fact that he was a Judge, that the whole of the Judges had their commissions cancelled, that the others were reappointed, and Mr. Wilson was not—why was it? Whether it was through any disagreement between him and the Chief Judge,