

1. Galatea: This Court was adjourned owing to the intromission of the Hon. Mr. Sheehan. My memory does not serve to explain the discrepancy of the telegrams; it was done against my judgment. There is no foundation for Mr. Wilson's assertion that this Court clashed with Opotiki.

1A. Maketu: The Registrar explains why this attendance was overlooked: Mr. Heale was the Judge. It appears that Mr. Wilson assisted Mr. Heale for seven days at the close of the Court.

2. Tauranga: The Registrar credited Mr. Wilson with ninety-two days sitting. Mr. Wilson says he sat only twenty-one. I do not see why Mr. Wilson complains of being credited with more work than he did. On examining the books I find that on the 21st September he adjourned the Court "to a time and place to be fixed." This was illegal. During October he did not sit at all. On the 13th November he sat again, and finally adjourned. Mr. Dickey naturally supposed (without going through the books) that he was sitting continuously. The return is strictly correct as to amount of work done, subject to previous explanations. The one certificate which he ordered was appealed against. He complains that rehearing should not have been ordered. The Governor in Council, on my recommendation, thought otherwise. He also complains that it was not gazetted. Certificates are not gazetted. No law requires it.

3. Wellington: Nothing at all was done except successions. Mr. Wilson says, "I only held this Court while waiting at Wellington to give evidence before Native Affairs Committee. When my evidence was finished, the Native Minister directed me to return to my district." I need not remark on this; it displays a state of things quite incompatible with progress of public business, absolutely illegal, and bringing great discredit on my department.

4. Waiomatatini: Mr. Wilson says he did not attend because it was "out of his district." In the first place he had no district. No Judges had or have districts. They have jurisdiction over the colony. In the next place, as far as I am aware, he never made this excuse before. He always pleaded his engagements with the Tauranga Land Commission. I annex an instance of his letters to me, and an example of the letters which I used to write to the Government. (C.)

5. Opotiki: No remark.

6. Tauranga: As this was a remarkable Court, I have extracted some particulars Mr. Wilson puts down as "disposed of" cases that he adjourns, like the man who rejoiced that "that is paid," when he renewed a bill. The annexed paper (E.) will show the way in which the business was done, and also the little importance of the succession cases, which indeed the Registrar has not noticed. Nearly the whole of the time of this Court was occupied in hearing one case—Rangiuru. The case was protracted in a remarkable manner, and the Court ended (apparently) in a *fiasco*. Mr. Wilson committed a man for contempt of Court to imprisonment in Auckland Gaol, with hard labour for three months. I never heard or read of such a punishment for contempt of Court. As soon as I got news of this, I represented the matter to the Attorney-General. He instantly procured the man's release. Mr. Wilson complains of this; for what reason I cannot tell. The sentence was outrageous. The singular idea of the "appropriation" (as Mr. Wilson calls it) of the memorial by myself is another fallacy. I showed the Chairman the minutes of the Court at which I presided when that order was made. Mr. Wilson adjourned this Court to the 4th February without consulting me as to the means of attending it, and having no intention of attending it himself, for he immediately afterwards applied for three months' leave of absence. When February came, being unable to provide for it, I went to Tauranga myself and sat for a few days, and had finally to adjourn it for a whole year.

7. Galatea: I can find no justification for Mr. Wilson in so protracting the Tauranga Court as not to be available for this. I have looked through the minutes, and state this opinion with confidence.

8. Tauranga: Mr. Wilson was not yet (I think) on sick leave. I saw him myself at Tauranga; but he was undoubtedly ill. His error was in adjourning the Court to a date when he knew he could not attend.

9. Uawa: He says, "out of my district." I repeat that he had no district; also, that he never pleaded this excuse before, or I should have corrected him.

10. Ohinemuri: He again uses the excuse "out of my district." I annex his letter. He says that he could not attend because he had a Commission Court the same day. Yet he took Maketu Court, which was on the same day. See my letter.

11. Maketu: This Court had not sat when the return was made, as I explained to the Committee. He says he adjourned this Court for some time on receipt of a telegram from a solicitor appearing before the Court then sitting at Cambridge. It is scarcely credible that such a thing could happen in a Court. I have not examined the proceedings of this Court, but desire to speak of one matter which has come before me, and given me (and will give Parliament, I expect) some trouble. The principal case at this Court was Paengaroa. Mr. Wilson, without authority of law, proceeded to cut up and divide the block amongst a number of tribes (seventeen, I think), and made orders. They are all illegal. He heard cases which were not before the Court, and which he had no power to hear. Legislation will be required to set this right by means of a third hearing. It is somewhat remarkable that parties of the Natives who are alleged to have joined in the congratulations set forth in Mr. Wilson's petition subsequently stopped the surveyors by force, and I have had to give directions to the Chief Surveyor to take no further proceedings. When I left Wellington another party were there trying to get all these mischiefs before the attention of Parliament.

Notwithstanding what I have stated, and the great entanglement that Mr. Wilson's perversity occasioned me, I never requested the Government to do more than transfer him to the Tauranga Land Act. When, however, I was consulted as to the new appointments under the Act of 1880, I was compelled to say that, in my judgment, he (with two other gentlemen) were not competent to fill the situation. I feel bound to add that the tone of the paper which I have been remarking upon affords sufficient evidence of how difficult it must be to get on with this gentleman in the transaction of business.

F. D. FENTON,
Chief Judge.