

I desire to remark that it was understood by the Government that your appointment as a Judge of the Supreme Court was for the purpose of giving you proper status as Commissioner, and that such appointment was to be subsidiary to that of Commissioner, and that the work of the Commissioner's Court was not to be in any way subject to or superseded by Supreme Court duties.

The Government wish to bring this matter under your notice, because it would appear, from the paragraph of your letter above quoted, that you regard your Supreme Court duties as taking precedence of the work for which you were specially appointed, and which the Government consider it is of the greatest importance should be proceeded with without any delay or hindrance whatsoever.

His Honour Mr. Commissioner Edwards, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

E. MITCHELSON.

No. 34.

The Hon. E. MITCHELSON to Mr. Commissioner EDWARDS.

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 20th September, 1890.

I should feel obliged by your informing me when you propose to resume the work of the Commission. My present object in making this inquiry is to be able to inform Lieut.-Colonel Porter, who has been temporarily employed during the interval on land-purchase duty. Colonel Porter's work in this capacity will remain for the present in abeyance, and he will therefore be off pay until you are in a position to employ him. I may add that Colonel Porter's remuneration as interpreter can only be allowed while he is actually engaged in the work of the Commission.

I have, &c.,

His Honour Mr. Commissioner Edwards, &c., Wellington.

E. MITCHELSON.

No. 35.

Mr. Commissioner EDWARDS to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Judge's Chambers, Wellington, 23rd September, 1890.

In reply to your letter of the 20th September, No. 982, I have the honour to inform you that I propose at once to take the necessary steps to have the applications for inquiry already lodged gazetted for hearing, but that it will not be possible for me to sit to take any claims (save any that may be properly heard in Wellington, if there should be any such) until after the termination of the Nelson and Blenheim circuit sittings of the Supreme Court in November next.

I anticipate that I shall be able to hold a Commission Court early in December; and my present intention is (although I do not consider myself in any respect bound to do so) to sit thence continuously throughout the long vacation in the Supreme Court, which lasts from the 20th December to the 31st January.

The sittings of the Supreme Court for 1891 have not yet been fixed, and will not be fixed until the next sitting of the Court of Appeal; but I have little doubt that I shall be able to so arrange as to be able to give the whole of February also to the Commission Court. I anticipate, therefore, that I shall be able to give three months continuously to the Commission Court, beginning early in December next. During that time, if the parties have properly prepared their cases, it will, I believe, be possible to dispose of all the applications at present lodged and any others which may then be ripe for hearing. There will be some work for the interpreter as soon as the secretary is appointed and the necessary notices are prepared.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Native Affairs, Wellington.

W. B. EDWARDS.

No. 36.

Mr. Commissioner EDWARDS to the Hon. Mr. MITCHELSON.

DEAR MR. MITCHELSON—

Wellington, 23rd September, 1890.

I have received your official reply as to the appointment of a secretary to the Native Land Commission, and before replying officially to it I think it as well to write you informally to call your attention to the matter in a way which I cannot so well do officially.

It appears to me that, in proposing that an ordinary clerk of the Native Department shall act as secretary to the Commission, you must be unaware that the secretary has to perform substantially the same duties as a Registrar of a Court, as well as to attend to correspondence, &c. It is quite impossible that any person who has not already had experience of Courts can satisfactorily discharge these duties without an amount of tuition and supervision which I have neither the leisure nor the inclination to give him.

In dealing with this matter I must necessarily also refer to the second letter of this date with respect to my own status, and, in doing so, I desire first of all to say that I object to the tone of that communication, as seeming to imply that my position is that of a Commissioner with the status of a Judge. That is not, and never has been, my understanding of the matter, and I would not have accepted the office on those terms. My position is that of a Judge, with the special duties of Commissioner added to the higher office.

You cannot have forgotten that shortly after my appointment—I believe, in fact, before any formal appointment was made, but after it had been determined upon and announced—a statement appeared in the *New Zealand Times* that I was not to sit in the Court of Appeal; and that