

NEW GUINEA TIMBER RIGHTS COMMISSION.

No. 1 of 1949.

An Act to facilitate the Proceedings of the Royal Commissioner appointed to hold an Inquiry with respect to certain matters in relation to Timber Rights in the Territory of Papua-New Guinea.

[Assented to 2nd March, 1949.]

WHEREAS the Governor-General, on the eleventh day of January, One thousand nine hundred and forty-nine, by Letters Patent in the name of the King, appointed the Honourable George Coutts Ligertwood, a Justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia, to make inquiry into and report upon the following matters, being matters relating to the administration of the Minister of State for External Territories of the Commonwealth of Australia:—

- (i) What were the real transactions involved between Raymond Parer, Harcourt Garden, Edward Farrell and John Smith Garden or any of them and Hancock & Gore Limited or any of its directors, employees or legal representatives in relation to timber rights in the Territory now known as Papua-New Guinea;

- (ii) Whether the Honourable Edward John Ward, Minister of State for External Territories, was party to any of the transactions above-mentioned;
- (iii) Whether the Minister signed, or authorized John Smith Garden to sign, any notification that the grant to Raymond Parer of any timber licence in the Bulolo Valley had been, or would be, approved by the Minister;
- (iv) Whether the Minister—
 - (a) was promised any financial benefit in relation to any of the transactions abovementioned;
 - (b) received, either directly or indirectly, any financial benefit in relation to any of the transactions above-mentioned; and
- (v) Whether the Minister—
 - (a) is or was financially interested, either directly or indirectly, in Sydney Pincombe Pty. Limited;
 - (b) has received, either directly or indirectly, any financial benefit from that company:

AND WHEREAS it has been contended that the Commissioner has no power to compel answers to questions or to order the production of documents:

BE it therefore enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, the Senate, and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia, as follows:—

- Short title.** 1. This Act may be cited as the *New Guinea Timber Rights Commission Act 1949*.
- Commencement.** 2. This Act shall come into operation on the day on which it receives the Royal Assent.
- Powers, &c., of Commissioner.** 3. The Commissioner appointed by the Governor-General on the eleventh day of January, One thousand nine hundred and forty-nine, by Letters Patent in the name of the King, to make inquiry into and report upon certain matters specified in the Letters Patent and set out in the preamble to this Act (being matters relating to the administration of the Minister of State for External Territories of the Commonwealth of Australia) shall have all the powers, rights and privileges which are specified in the *Royal Commissions Act 1902-1933* as appertaining to a Royal Commission and the provisions contained in that Act shall have effect as if they were enacted in this Act and in terms made applicable to the Commissioner so appointed.
- Validation.** 4. All acts done or purporting to have been done, and all proceedings taken or purporting to have been taken, in pursuance of the Letters Patent referred to in the last preceding section, or in pursuance of the *Royal Commissions Act 1902-1933* in relation to the inquiry directed by those Letters Patent, shall, by force of this section, be deemed to have been lawfully done or taken.