Parliament attempted to grant redress, but the attempt was not effectual. These cases should be left with plenary power to the Native Land Board hereafter mentioned to examine and decide. A very grave accusation is made concerning the land comprised in the Thermal Springs Act. A thousand square miles of territory is governed by that Act. Not only did the Government restrict the Natives from dealing with that land, they took upon themselves its management as trustees for the Native owners. It is alleged on behalf of the Natives that the only part of this huge estate utilised by the Government was the Rotorua Township. Land was leased there in one day for rentals amounting to nearly £3,000 per annum. For years the Natives have received no rent. Recently they sued the Government, after waiting for six years, for accounts and payment. The Government it is said has admitted the justice of their claim, but pleaded the Crown Suits Act in order to bar it. Is it wonderful, in the face of such conduct, supposing these allegations to be correct, that the Maoris are too doubtful of the Government to intrust to it either their land or their money?

In other cases the Maoris complain that many persons having undoubted rights in land have been omitted from the lists furnished to the Native Land Court. In one of these—the Ngarara Block, Waikanae—an Act was passed to rectify these mistakes; but its sections are too narrow, and the Courts so construe them as to leave the tribunals still unable to rectify the errors originally made. In all such cases, as already suggested, the Native Land Board should have full power to do substantial justice.

Questions also of surveys, of undeclared titles, of delayed hearings of particular blocks long promised, and a host of other troubles, were continually brought before us, which all demand investigation.

The Maoris of the East Coast allege that they were greatly injured by the action of the Government in making all the grantees under "The Poverty Bay Grants Act, 1869," joint tenants instead of tenants in common. Certainly, to confer a title upon the Maori which did not descend to his heirs or successors upon his death was a grievous wrong. It may be that it is too late to effect a remedy, but it should be tried.

On the same day on which this report was executed, May 23, 1891, the Court of Appeal unanimously declared the awards and leases mentioned in this paragraph *ultra vires* and void. The judgments are included in the Appendix.

In one class of cases the complaint is directly against Parliament. The Natives of the West Coast had leased their lands to Europeans on certain terms which were fair between the parties. These leases were confirmed in or about 1882 by Sir William Fox and Sir Dillon Bell, as Commissioners. Some of the Maori lessors were then living upon land which the Commission gave to others. The only land left to them was the land which they had leased. It was stated that the Commissioners had promised fifty acres per head of inalienable reserves. Such a promise, if made, was not fulfilled. After 1880 many applications were made by the European lessees to the Maoris to renew the leases which would expire during the ten years from 1890 to 1900. The Maoris refused, many of them wanting the land as homes for themselves, as they were living as tenants-at-will upon land belonging to their friends. In 1884 an Act was passed providing that, with the Maoris' consent, fresh leases might be made. For the reasons already given the Maoris still refused. The European lessees were persistent, and in 1887 they obtained the passage of "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Acts Amendment Act, 1887." By the 7th section of that Act new leases for thirty years could be granted to the lessees without the consent of the lessors. Reduced or increased rentals could be fixed by arbitrators. The Maoris did not, except in a few cases, appoint arbitrators, because they refused to agree to extended leases on any terms; so arbitrators were appointed for them, in accordance with the Act. The rentals were generally reduced very largely. The whole section is arbitrary and strong-handed. It took away, in one line, the rights of the Maoris to all improvements. The improvements, according to the Maoris' testimony, had been taken into consideration when the original leases were made, and lower rents agreed upon in consequence. Those leases had been confirmed by the Commissioners. The Maoris' rights were confiscated by one dash of the pen, and, at greatly-reduced rentals, new leases for thirty years were given to the lessees. The general public was shut out; the Maoris were plundered. The evidence given before the Joint Committee of both Houses in September, 1890, shows that twenty-six European lessees obtained new leases for terms of thirty years of nearly 18,000 acres of land, and that the value of the improvements taken from the Maori owners by the 7th section of the Act of 1887 in those lands alone amounted to £19,821 4s. 9d. Some of these Maoris are now obliged to live where they can, having, according to their own testimony, no other available land of their own. In one extreme instance the rent was reduced from £358 per annum to £80. It would be difficult to imagine a more flagrant case of legislative robbery. To this point, also, the attention of the Native Land Board should be directed, for we respectfully submit to your Excellency that at this time every