allegation of wrong or injury, whether by European or Maori, should be dealt with, and an end put for ever to the unhappy state of things which has for so long a time existed.

One difficulty which presented itself arose from the efforts made by the Natives to escape from the individual ownership forced upon them by law. This came forward in the shape of a desire for assistance in the matter of certain trust deeds of Native lands.

Native Trust Deeds.

The troublesome nature of the individual system has been often recognised by the Judges of the Native Land Court. The Natives have still more frequently made efforts to absorb the several titles of Maori owners in deeds made by way of trust. Thus, where the Government or private purchasers have obtained conveyances from a number of owners, but not the whole, agreements have been made whereby the remaining Maoris have assigned their interests to the purchaser, so as to make a complete title in him, upon condition that he would reassign to the persons so conveying their interests, when he had become possessed of a complete title. On some occasions, the agreement to reconvey not being in writing, the Government, as well as private subjects, have refused to reconvey.

The Native Land Court held that, under the Act of 1873, the Native owners, once registered and declared, could not convey by way of trust. This contention was upheld by the Supreme Court in the Pouawa case. The decision in this case brought into existence the New Zealand Native Land Settlement Company, which was formed for the purpose of providing a machinery by which the Natives might advantageously deal with their estates. But before the lists of owners had been handed in and registered the Court permitted, and, indeed, sometimes advised, the Natives to take the titles to valuable blocks of land in the names of a few of their number, for the purpose of economy and ease in dealing therewith.

Two cases of this sort were brought to the especial notice of the Commissioners, the Mangatu No. 1 Block, containing 100,000 acres, in Poverty Bay; and Te Ngaire Block, near Stratford, Taranaki, in which the land was declared the property of two chiefs on the express advice of the Court. It was stated that other cases existed. In regard to these, the Commissioners suggest that the Native Land Board hereinafter mentioned should have power to distribute all proceeds arising from such lands among all those who are, or ought to be, beneficially interested; due care being taken to ascertain the proper recipients, and in all respects to treat such beneficiaries as if their names, or the names of those to whom they succeed, had been originally placed in the list of owners.

West Coast Trusts.

The history and circumstances of the West Coast reserves are especially interesting. The laws governing these large estates, and the methods which rule the giving of title in them, are, although imperfect and cumbrous, eminently satisfactory when compared with the ordinary Native-land laws. Created and controlled by different statutes, one part of these reserves, which in the aggregate amount to 235,000 acres, is managed by a Trustee appointed by the Government, the whole practically vested in the Public Trustee. We venture to suggest that the Public Trustee is not likely to give such attention to this important matter as it demands, nor to possess that knowledge of Native character or local requirements absolutely necessary to successful management of this vast property. He is far away from the West Coast. He is fully occupied with the proper business of his department. The Natives distrust a chief whom they never see, and a power which they cannot call to account. From this cause complications arise both as regards Maori lessors and European lessees. Moreover, during the last eighteen months the Public Trustee, having reason to believe that fresh legislation was imminent, has declined to execute any leases. This has brought settlement upon a large part of these reserves to a standstill, and the people murmur bitterly.

Another difficulty arises from the unwillingness of the Natives to assent to leases of lands which they do not use, and which continue in a state of nature. On these lands gorse and other weeds are increasing rapidly, and they are year by year deteriorating in value. Concerning them also the European settlers complain justly that they bear no part of the cost of roads and other public improvements, and that the owners cannot be compelled to fence or pay a portion of the cost of fencing.

Another grievance is alleged: Large portions of these reserves, existing under "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act, 1881," had been leased in past years for various terms by the Maoris claiming to be owners of the respective lands so leased, directly to Europeans. In these leases there exists no right on the part of the tenant to a renewal at