Commissioners require. Nor do I think that that scale was intended by the Legislature. The scope of the Act appeared to be to supply a Court that would deal with such cases according to equity and good conscience. Of course we must accept the position that that intention has not been carried out in the Act. The position then is this: All such cases must be covered by applications to be put in by the 20th of this month, or the persons whose cases were effected, and who do not make application, would be exposed to the attack of any person who chose to proceed to dispossess them. Then, on the other hand, if they do apply, and their cases are gazetted, they have the certainty that they can get no relief from the Court to which they apply. Well, under these circumstances, it would seem reasonable if the rule should be at once amended, so that applications that are put in merely to protect *bonâ fide* purchasers until the Legislature has had the benefit of your report, and time to legislate, should not be amerced in heavy fees by a tribunal whose decisions for good are inoperative. I would ask you, if you could not make an interim recommendation, that some immediate relief be granted to applicants in the matter of the fees they will be called upon to pay. Under the present rules they will have to pay large fees. At any moment they may have their cases gazetted after they make application, at the same time being unable to comply with the legal niceties the Commissioners are bound to require. Perhaps the Commissioners may consider whether they can see their way to make any such interim recommendation. Perhaps I may be allowed to say a word or two as to the causes of the present complications. I think the one great main cause is the legal fiction that has been established, created by our Courts, that a memorial of ownership is a title unknown to the law. True, it is somewhat curious that we have one class of Courts issuing titles that another class of Court says are unknown to the law. That would not be so bad perhaps; but the Legislature, year after year, has been attempting to undo this fiction, and to make derivative titles from memorials of ownership, or certificates of full weight and value, with titles derived from Crown grants. In the Act of 1886 (Native Land), no one can doubt that the 35th and the last clause of that Act were intended to give validity to transfers under memorial of ownership or certificates. Of course the Courts have held that the Legislature has failed in its intention. Then, we find the same thing again in 1888, much more expressly worded in the Act passed during that year. This Act is nothing more or less than a trap, in which any layman or lawyer may fairly fall. The wording is so expressed that the Judges themselves are divided by three and two as to the effect of the language. The 16th clause in that Act—"Land or shares in land owned by Natives shall be deemed to have been transferable, and may hereafter be transferred by deed executed and attended with the formalities for the time being prescribed by law as to deeds intended to affect the titles of Natives to land"—shall be deemed to have been transferable, and may hereafter be transferred. There we have the past and the future. Then comes the provision to clause 16, which, as interpreted by the Court, renders the whole clause nugatory. It is not the same as if that stood alone. There is elaborate machinery established by legislation, showing the fullest intention on the part of the Legislature practically to establish the transactions, past and future, with lands under memorial of ownership. And all the Acts passed right down to the present day have the same unfortunate element to the eye and ear: as read, they seem to proclaim that such transactions are good, but always fail in effect when they come to be interpreted by the Court. We have the Act of 1888, for instance, which was called the return to free-trade Act in Native lands, which many professional parties consider to this day authorised the purchase of Native lands held under memorial of ownership. Probably the Commissioners, when they come to consider that Act, will come to the conclusion, like the majority of the profession, that it does not authorise the purchase of shares, or any number of shares, of land held under memorial of ownership. I think this is a most important element for consideration when the *bona fides* of the parties dealing for Native lands comes up for inquiry. If the Legislature has for a series of years, by enacting laws that neither lawyers nor laymen understand, contributed to this state of affairs, there must be a very wide line of demarcation between persons who bought under such titles and those who bought openly in defiance of declared Acts or restrictions and Proclamations. I hope it will not be thought presumptuous if I point out one reason of failure in our Native-land laws. No Government has ever taken the time that is required to have Acts properly drafted. Nearly all these Acts—certainly all that were passed within my own knowledge—were hastily drafted by a Government in search of a new policy, and snatched from the hands of the draftsman. With the incessant pressure brought to bear from all sides, it was certainly impossible for them to turn out work of a kind that would in practice be found to stand. It is of the very first necessity in having remedial legislation that the Government should take ample time in having Acts drawn by competent persons, and not to be left to be done by Government officers, when all their faculties are absorbed by other work. I cannot think of any Act in the series before me that has been drafted in anything like fair circumstances to the draftsman who was called upon to do the work. The immediate tribunal which is open to persons with defective titles is, of course, the Commission Court, and the question naturally arises whether that Court, if made effective, would fairly do the work that is put upon it. Well, I do not think it would, unless, of course, a very large portion of time was given to it. The work in this district alone would take a Judge or a Commissioner a very large period of time. While I have no knowledge of other parts of the North Island, if, however, they are anything like this, the work required to be done would extend over a considerable period of years if one Commissioner had to deal with it. My own view is—I believe you are asking for personal views—only personal as derived from some experience here—if it were thought wise really to make the Act of 1888 effective, as it was intended to be in this 16th section—that is to say, that all transactions under memorial of ownership that had taken place, or might take place, should be as valid as if made under Crown grants—we would then have very little need of Commissioners at all. All transfers that were *bonâ fide* and good would stand. All that were made in violation of any special Act or restriction would be bad, and would deservedly remain bad. There is one large class of cases for which you obviously require no