Commission. I may illustrate by naming a block—the Panikau Block. There are five Panikau Blocks—Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The purchaser acquired interests by purchase in the whole five blocks. He purchased a very large majority of the shares in each block, practically the whole. In every one of the five blocks there had to be a division to get rid of the shares of minors, or in some few cases of dissentients in all five blocks. The division was properly made by the Court, without challenge or any question as to the payment of the purchase-money The irregularity of this case consists in technical defects. This mistake was made: In making the division the Land Court assumed that the purchaser's title would be registered against the subdivision award made by the Court. The Registrar of the Deeds Office took the same view, and the Registrar of this district issued certificates of title to the purchaser. The purchaser was in the enjoyment of the certificate of title a considerable time, until the decision was given in the case of Matthews *versus* Brown (Paraone), which pointed out that such registrations were technically improper; and what the Land Court should have done was, instead of making the orders to the vendors, rather to have made new certificates of title, and indorsed on them orders of freehold tenure, from which the purchaser would derive his new grants. This was simply a technical mistake of the Courts. There is no doubt as to the *bona fides* of the purchases, but the position now is that there is practically no title whatever. That is one case out of a dozen or more in this district where titles are complicated in that way. There is no challenge of the purchases and no impropriety whatever alleged. The difficulties have arisen out of the defects of the Acts, and in such cases obviously no Commission is required. There are a great number of such cases in the same position as the Panikau title. In order to protect that estate from any attack, notices should have to be served on all parties; other heavy expenses would have to be incurred, amounting at the least in each case from £60 to £100. This really amounts to a fine imposed on the purchaser on account of the defects of the Acts of the Legislature. There are a number of cases where the *bona fides* is absolutely beyond question, and the purchasers should not be placed under disadvantages through no fault of their own. Of course Commissions might be used where the question comes to be one of disputed consideration. And it is cases of disputed consideration that will present the most difficulty in this district. There are many cases in this district where the present occupants were not the original purchasers, where they have come in purchasing in good faith, and where it is extremely difficult at this distance of time, with the original parties removed, to prove what the consideration was, and to get that general insight into the original transactions. How they are to be dealt with I do not know. If there is laxity there is room for abuse. On the other hand, where there has been no objection, and that for a series of years, it will be hard for those persons to have to prove an affirmative where no negative has been set up. As to the future buying, I think one may say that there is no such thing now as buying lands with Native titles. It has fairly stopped now. Purchasers are beginning to understand that there is no legal method at present of purchasing lands held under memorial of ownership or certificate of title or of leasing lands. So as regards that we are in this position: The district has a number of incomplete titles, and there is no progress made by purchasing or leasing. I am not, of course, speaking of Crown grants. In many cases that are estopped from completion, some of course present quite exceptional grounds; but the moment any existing purchases were said to be stopped was an accident that the parties could not be in any way responsible for. I think it has been decided by the Chief Justice that the repeal of the Act of 1873 marked the time when it became impossible to complete any transactions of purchase of memorial of ownership lands. The Act of 1873 was repealed by the Act of 1886. That is leaving out for a moment the interval of the Administration Act. That appears to mark the interval that stopped the completion of any purchase of lands held under memorial of ownership. So these cases would have to be dealt with in some way. No one can read the Act of 1873 without seeing that there is elaborate machinery set up for purchasing Native lands. If the Legislature in 1886 deprived all parties of the means of making those purchases it seems right and incumbent on the Legislature that they should devise machinery that would not necessarily complete the purchase, but give the purchasers an equivalent for the purchase-money expended. Then, of course, if I am correct that there is no purchasing going on now, or for a considerable time, there would be no great hardship if the Legislature determined that there should be no more purchases. Then, they should allow purchasers with partly completed purchases to get an equivalent for the money they have paid. No mischief would be done by allowing persons who embarked in good faith in these purchases completing their title for what they have paid for. That brings me to the edge of the next branch of the question—that is, as to what would be the best thing to substitute for individual purchases. But you are so patient that I am inclined to trespass a little upon you. I have never been able to see why the Native title is individualised if the object is simply to settle the country. No system more disastrous to the country or to the Natives could be devised if the whole wit of man had been engaged in the process of invention. Disastrous to the Natives, because they must necessarily receive inadequate consideration; then there is the uncertainty of title, people not caring to invest capital that is absolutely essential in order to make this country reproductive. Nor am I aware, from any reading that I have been able to bring to the matter, that the individualisation of Native title was at all sought for by the Natives themselves. As far as I can judge, it has been forced on them with a view to purchasing from them. I have never been able to understand why the Natives should not be allowed the fullest freedom of decision as to what lands should be sold or reserved, and why, on the other hand, all titles should not flow from the Crown to the purchaser. It seems to me that the Crown empties itself into hundreds of rivulets in order that the purchaser may gather the water up from these rivulets so as to obtain a title which is, in fact, never a title. Of course it may be a matter of individual right, if you apply our theories and English law, that every Native should be the arbiter of his own destiny, but I venture to say that is not in accordance with Native custom and usage, which is more inclined to act