and each side would be allowed to have his talk out. My idea is that the Native Land Court should be abolished, and the present system changed. There should be three Judges and the Chief Judge—one Judge should sit with the Native Committee, who would deal with the case. Should the Committee and the Judge agree, their decision to be final; should they not agree, then the case should be submitted to a new Committee and another Judge, whose decision should be final. The number of Assessors should be reduced, and men only appointed who are thoroughly qualified for the work. Under the present system the cost of investigating the title to land is very heavy indeed. The total cost to the colony of administering the Native Land Court Department is £23,000 a year. There would be a saving to the colony of £15,000. Under such a system as I propose the cost would only amount to about £8,000 a year. There is an objection to the Native duty paid on the wills of deceased persons. The same property has to bear the cost of this burden as each owner successively dies. The Court should appoint successors without fees being paid at the time, or charged. The expenses are too great. Lawyers' and interpreters' charges are very heavy. I also object to the 10 per cent. Native duty on sales and leases. In the case of leases the duty charged is very heavy, more than 10 per cent. The sales of Native lands should be generally prohibited. Suppose in a 100,000-acre block, say, 50,000 or 60,000 acres are leased, and the Natives desire to utilise the balance for themselves, I think that the Government should pass a law to enable money to be raised at a low rate of interest, for the purpose of enabling the Natives to effect such improvements on their land as would enable them to make their land productive. This money so advanced to be spent solely in such improvements, and under proper supervision; the Natives to repay the Government the money so advanced at a fixed period of time; a Government officer to be appointed to see that the money was properly expended; this officer to act along with the Committee. From the wool the interest to be paid annually. This could only be done with a certain class of lands. The Government, by giving such assistance, would then enable the Natives to be placed in such a position that they could pay rates. Some person should be appointed by the law to act with the Natives, and arrange with them as to what lands should be retained by the Natives for their own use and occupation, and to decide what lands should be leased. Arrangements could be made in this way in regard to lands they desired to raise money on by way of mortgage for effecting improvements, so as to render their land productive. After the people have decided to lease their land, they could then appoint two or three persons out of their own number to act along with the Government officer. Great care should be taken to provide that the money the Government would advance should be spent solely on useful works—that, say, in the case of 150 owners, these people should choose among themselves who should act for them, and that those so selected would act in concert with the Government officer appointed. These would sign the necessary documents (the persons selected and the Government officer) for leasing the land. That it would be the duty of all the owners to lay down the terms and conditions, and regulations generally under which the lands would be leased. Under the old laws facilities for practising deception and fraud have existed. The objections generally under the head of costs are: The heavy fees required by the Court; the legal expenses entailed; the great expense of getting the signatures of Native owners, where each individual signature has to be obtained. The expenses in connection with the Native Land Court should be considerably reduced. In cases, for instance, where the land should bring in £400 a year only £100 or so would be given by the lessee, in consequence of the great expense involved in getting a lease and paying the various demands of one sort and another. Such is usually the case where there are a large number of owners in the block—say, 150, 200, or 300 owners. In this way great hardship is inflicted upon the owners. Another subject of complaint is with regard to the charges made by conductors of cases in the Native Land Court, these charges amounting to £5, £3, and £2 a day. The costs in the hearing of the case are less than what is paid to conductors. This complaint with reference to conductors does not apply to this district, but to other districts. I say that something should be done to abolish that arrangement *re* conductors. Some one belonging to the hapu should act as conductor, and then the expenses would not be so great. It was owing to these heavy charges that the land was absorbed at Cambridge; and at Marton the cases have been prolonged owing to the conductors. In cases in which a Native named Hikawera was concerned large sums were paid for such services. This is one of the many evils that press unduly on the Natives. In regard to leasing, the Natives suffer a great deal through the law demanding that the Native duty for the whole period of the lease be paid down in a lump sum. And as to conductors and Native agents, they regard the Native-land transactions in the light of prolific harvests, which they are to perennially reap. With regard to lands in dispute between Europeans and Natives in this district, and the title which is in dispute, my desire is that a settlement of these disputes should be commenced and finished. The cases should be taken up and gone through systematically. There should not be a law passed validating these illegal transactions. These transactions should be dealt with according to law under which the lands were dealt with. If the pakeha has broken the law that is his look-out; if the Maori has broken the law, then let the evil consequences of his actions fall on him. But where the errors are found to be on both sides, these matters should be settled amicably. In the case of lands that have passed under the Act of 1873, where perhaps there have been twenty or thirty owners and only two or three have sold, these sales are bad. The rent-money is held back on account of the purchase. Large sums have thus accumulated, amounting to more than has been paid for the purchase of the shares. The Europeans who purchased these shares knew at the time that it was against the law, but they thought that eventually a law would be passed validating their illegal transactions. That in such cases, under the Act of 1873, no relief should be given. Where the majority of persons have sold, the Commissioners might investigate such transactions, and, where justified in doing so, award land in respect of such sales; but where a minority of the owners had sold, these sales should not be validated. In such cases the question of the validity or otherwise of such sales should be determined by the existing law.