

2041. *Mr. Mackay.*] It would stop all these cases of perjury?—I think so. When, at the request of the Native Minister, I submitted this memorandum some few months ago, Mr. Cadman requested me to put it into practical form. I have not got his minute with me, unfortunately. That is to say, I was to take a piece of Maori land, and propose rules by which it could be carried through under my system to a Land Transfer title. That I have endeavoured to do, and I shall now read the result to the Commission. It is in the form of rules.—“(1.) Any Natives being owners according to Maori custom or occupiers of Native land which has not been before the Native Land Court may send in an application to be allowed to ascertain the title by inquiry in Runanga. (2.) Such application shall give the name or names by which such land is known, and describe its boundaries. Where the boundaries are not natural features, such as ranges, streams, or other boundaries easily recognisable, unmistakable landmarks should be placed. (3.) Applications should be signed by not less than adult Natives, whose signatures must be duly attested by a Justice of the Peace, Resident Magistrate, Postmaster, or schoolmaster. (4.) Applications to be addressed to the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, Wellington. (5.) Applications should state place and date proposed for first meeting of Runanga. The date should not be earlier than one month from the sending-in of the application. (6.) The Chief Judge may alter date should he consider a longer notice necessary. (7.) If the Runanga is not able to meet on the date fixed, it shall not therefore lapse, but may meet and proceed to business on such other subsequent date as may be found convenient. (8.) All persons claiming any interest in the land shall have an equal right to be present at any meeting of the Runanga, and be entitled to speak and vote. (9.) Twelve adult members shall be a quorum. (10.) A Chairman shall be elected at the first meeting of the Runanga, who shall have an ordinary as well as a casting vote at all meetings. (11.) The Chairman shall be the medium of communication between the Runanga and the Native Land Court or the Government. (12.) All notices of sittings or adjournments of the Runanga to be published in the *Kahiti*. (13.) The notification of the first meeting of the Runanga shall fully describe the land which is to be adjudicated upon, and shall state the time within which the Runanga shall be required to report its decision. (14.) The time within which the Runanga shall be required to report its decision shall be fixed by the Governor. (15.) If the Runanga has not come to a decision at the time fixed, application may be made to the Governor for an extension of time, which may be granted or refused by the Governor. (16.) If the Runanga cannot agree upon any report as to the ownership of the land under investigation within the time fixed under clauses 14 and 15, the Chairman shall report to that effect to the Chief Judge, who shall thereupon notify in the *Kahiti* that the land is subject to adjudication by the Native Land Court in the ordinary way, as provided by law. (17.) The decision of the Runanga shall be forwarded by the Chairman to the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, who shall advertise it in the *Kahiti*. (18.) Any objections to such decision shall be forwarded to the Chief Judge in Wellington within three months of the date of publication of the decision, stating reasons in full for same objection. All signatures to objections must be attested by a Justice of the Peace, Resident Magistrate, Postmaster, or schoolmaster, and any objection the signature to which is not so attested shall be null and void. (19.) Objections shall be dealt with by the Chief Judge in the same manner as applications for rehearing of cases adjudicated upon by the Native Land Court. (20.) If objections are sustained the Chief Judge may declare the proceedings of the Runanga quashed and the land open for investigation by the Native Land Court in its ordinary procedure, or the Chief Judge may refer the decision back for reinvestigation by the Runanga. (21.) Costs may be given by the Chief Judge against the Runanga or against the person or persons appealing, and such costs may be registered against the interests in land of the persons against whom they are given.” My object in drafting this clause is to protect both sides from oppression or unreasonable obstruction, and to make the Natives really feel their responsibility in the matter, and to lead them to act in good faith. “(22.) The Runanga may investigate and decide on all the following matters, or may limit its investigation and decision to the first one or more : (a.) The tribal or hapu boundaries, with the names of the tribe or hapu entitled to the land under investigation. (b.) The names of the persons entitled as owners, with their relative shares. (c.) The family or individual shares. (d.) The location of the family or individual shares. (e.) The portion of the block to be vested in Her Majesty in satisfaction of any lien which the Crown may have upon the land. (23.) If no appeal is made against the decision of the Runanga, effect shall be given to it by the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court making an order therewith, which order shall have the same force and effect as an order made after investigation by the Native Land Court.” I would like to interpolate here that it will thus be seen that, supposing the Natives have arrived at a decision as to the title, and have carried that decision even to individualisation if they like, and they are unanimous in so doing, the title will become a Land Transfer title, without the block, however valuable it may be, or however extensive the investigation, costing them any more than the expense of meeting amongst themselves. “(24.) On application being made to the Surveyor-General by the Chairman of the Runanga for any survey, sketch-plan or completed map of the land under investigation by the Runanga, such survey, sketch-plan, or map shall be supplied, and the cost thereof paid in the first place by the Government. (25.) The cost, to be fixed by the Surveyor-General, shall be a lien against the land under investigation. (26.) Land in satisfaction of such lien to be given within months after service has been performed, and such land to be valued by the Surveyor-General, and to be set apart in a locality to be approved by him. (27.) Any objections to the valuation of the Surveyor-General must be made within three months after the land has been set apart. Such objections to be forwarded to the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, who shall investigate them in such manner as he may think fit, and decide thereon, and his decision shall be final and conclusive. (28.) Land set apart for payment of survey or other charges to be declared vested in Her Majesty, and an order to that effect shall be made by the Chief Judge. (29.) No lawyer or agent shall be allowed to be present at any meeting of the Runanga, and any person not claiming an interest as an owner of the land under investigation who shall refuse to leave after having been requested to do so by the Chairman of the Runanga shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £5