

“17. It shall also be notified in the *Gazette* notice referred to in the preceding clause, numbered 16, that the District Committee shall assemble, along with the Chairman, at the place named by the Chief Judge for the Court to sit, on a day arranged for the Court to open, for the purpose of adjudicating upon the claims published in the *Gazette*.

“18. The evidence of the claimants and counter-claimants, whether or not the counter-claimants have put in a claim, shall be all written in the minutes of the proceedings of the Court, clearly entering the evidence given by each person. When the evidence so entered is finished it shall be read over to the witness, to make any correction if necessary, after which he will sign the same in full, and the end of his written evidence. Each separate sheet of his evidence he must initial, doing so either at the top or bottom of the page. He must also initial any alterations that may appear. This course to be pursued with reference to all witnesses giving evidence before this. Let the Judge certify as follows: ‘That the evidence has been read over to the witness, and corrected by him, the Judge and the Chairman of the Committee of the District to sign the same.

“19. When the Committee have given judgment, the Chairman of the Committee shall make known to the Judge the result of the Committee’s decision, fully and clearly, and the judgment shall be fully entered in writing in the Court books. After which the Chairman and Committee shall sign the judgment, the Judge signing his name at the end of the judgment, stating that he fully confirms the decision of the District Native Land Court on the                      day of                      at a sitting of the Court held at                      , before him. Hereto he will append his name in full.

“20. Before proceeding with the investigation of the case, the *Gazette* containing the notices of the claim shall be read out by the Judge or the Chairman of the Committee, as the Judge may deem fit. On ascertaining who are the counter-claimants, together with the chief claimants, to the block about to be adjudicated upon, or to any portion of the said block, thereupon they shall proceed to choose a Committee—that is, the members of the Committee having no interest in the land, or connected by close relationship with the parties to any of the cases. Such persons, if four or five generations removed, shall not be objected to on the grounds of relationship, nor be disqualified from being a member of any such Committee of Investigation of Claim. On this being completed the members of the Committee so chosen shall sign a document prepared by the Judge certifying that they are the persons selected by the parties to the various suits before the Court to adjudicate upon the particular claim then before the Court. When this document is executed, a person interested in each case before the Court shall assent in writing to the persons so chosen to adjudicate upon the particular claim before the Court and to give final judgment.

“21. The District Committee for adjudicating upon Native land, when proceeding to adjudicate upon a claim, shall not consist of less than two members, and, including the Chairman, making altogether three in number. Should the number, including the Chairman, be less than three, the investigation of title shall not proceed until the proper number to constitute the Committee is obtained, providing that the number on the Committee may exceed three.

“21A. The Judge shall have power to invoke the aid of any Committee, or the members of any Native Land Court Committee of another district, in which no Court is sitting at the time, to act on the Committee of his Court at the time he is holding his Court at the advertised place, whether in this island or the South Island.

“22. Should any member of the Committee be detected in showing favouritism, accepting bribes in money or goods from any person in order to pervert the judgment of the Court, or the evidence or the decision of the Court, or any other work of a reprehensible character, the Judge may thereupon and forthwith stay proceedings, and summarily investigate the matter; and, upon inquiry, should the Judge find the accusation proved, the accused shall be fined in a sum not less than £5, nor more than £25, together with imprisonment as the Judge may deem fit. Should the accusation against the member of the Committee, or the Committee itself, be found to be improperly made, let punishment be inflicted upon the person so making the false accusation.

“23. The Chief Judge of the Court shall, at his own discretion, and upon such grounds as he may deem sufficient, discontinue forthwith the services of the Committee of the District Native Land Court, or any member of such Committee, and have a new Committee elected in accordance with the provisions for electing members for the District Committee, as authorised by Parliament.

“24. The Chief Judge of this Court shall also have power to discontinue the services of the Committee for investigating Claims, and cancel all its powers, or dismiss any member of that Committee, at such times as he may deem expedient, and for such reasons as he may deem right and just, and have a new Committee elected, or make any alteration, or, at such times as he may think fit, he may remove any of the members of the Committee, and have, if he so desires, an entirely new Committee elected, or have new members elected as he may deem expedient.

“25. That there be six districts for the whole Island, three districts to be situated on the East Coast, and three districts on the West Coast, in which the District Native Land Court will sit, as well as the Committees for investigating Claims to Land for each of those six districts; the Government, along with the Chief Judge of this Court, to arrange and decide upon the boundaries of those six districts above mentioned.

“26. The Government and the Chief Judge of this Court shall arrange the day and the month for the election of a Committee or Committees, herein called the Native Land Court Committee and the Committee for investigating Titles; the name of the locality where the voting is to take place to be also specified.

“27. Existing Committees, appointed according to law, to cease exercising their functions. All Committees to be elected anew in conformity with the provisions of this law. The members of the two Committees above mentioned to be men thoroughly well versed in Native-land matters and Native customs affecting Maori lands, the Maori people, their hapus and tribes.