whose duty it shall be to issue an order in conformity with the decision of the jury, provided it is not appealed against within three months by any person feeling himself aggrieved. The procedure before the jury to be confined to questions of title or cases of subdivision in which Natives are alone concerned. All appeals from the decision of the jury to be referred to the Native Land Court to hear and finally decide. Evidence taken before the jury may be received and used as evidence in any proceedings referred to the Court. The Chief Judge, subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, to make rules for the conduct of business before the jury, and prescribe forms for all proceedings, and fix the fees to be demanded and taken upon any such proceedings.

The jury system, if carried out properly by the Natives, ought to materially assist the work of the Court, even if nothing else was accomplished by it than settling the precise issues to be tried, or, at any rate, putting them in a definite shape, instead of tumbling the case, as hitherto, into the Court like a bundle of dirty linen, leaving the Court to disentangle the heap and reduce it into shape as best it may. The Court needs outside aid wherewith to seek out and grasp for itself all the facts of the case before it; and this assistance could be afforded either by the Runanga or the jury. In the Supreme Court the Judge carries with him a known rule of law, and has to apply it to the facts of the case, the responsibility of finding out such facts being the work of others; but in the Native Land Court the Judge has to find the facts himself as best he may, out of a mass of evidence of the most unreliable character.

It is customary to blame the Court for the protracted duration of the hearings; but the delay is not the fault of the Court, but is attributable to the untoward circumstances associated with all the business that comes before it: and if a change can be effectuated by relegating to the Natives the duty of reducing the work—in a great measure caused by the peculiarities of their tenure, the nature of the evidence submitted, and the obstructions and difficulties placed in the way of a speedy ascertainment of their title by the tactics adopted by designing individuals and land-grabbers of their own race—a great deal will have been accomplished. I have always felt that the Court needed outside assistance of this kind for the purpose of shortening the proceedings, and I have encouraged the Natives on all occasions to arrange matters amongst themselves; but it is a very rare occurrence that success attended their efforts. This was probably attributable to the want of authority possessed by the Runanga, or Committee, to take such matters in hand, and to the Natives, as a rule, being unwilling to submit their land-questions to the arbitrament of a self-constituted body, whose actions were not recognised by law.

It has been mooted from time to time as a mode of reform in the Native Land Court procedure, that the Courts should be changed into Commissions, and the Commissioners sent among the Natives to seek information instead of deciding merely on the evidence brought before the Court. The idea of a Commission of Inquiry is a feasible one as a preliminary operation; but the Commissioner and Judge should be distinct. There is no doubt that a preliminary inquiry would be of great assistance to the Court, as it needs "tentacula" wherewith to seek out and grasp for itself all the facts of the case; but the plan would fail to give satisfaction to the parties claiming the land if the inquiry was made by the same official who had to finally decide the ownership. The Natives are a very suspicious people in regard to land-matters, and the Commissioner, however cautiously he might act, would very soon get distrusted, owing to the nature of his work compelling him to associate freely with the people for the purpose of ascertaining the necessary facts of the case under investigation. As the proposed reformation in the Native-land laws is for the purpose of simplifying the mode of procedure, it may be deemed that the foregoing proposition would rather tend to increase than diminish the work of the Court, by creating a dual mode of investigation of title, and, as the intention is to encourage the Natives to take part largely in settling their own titles, any mode by which their aid could be called into action would be preferable to establishing a form of minor Court, to be presided over by a Government official. If the Natives could be induced to adopt the jury or some other system as a preliminary procedure, that would meet the requirements of the case, a great deal of expense would be spared them, and the time of the Court ultimately saved. Under the present condition of affairs, Native agents, paid by the Natives, fight the title of the opponents in Court, and prolong the procedure to an unnecessary length. This in itself is the parent of mischief, as it interferes with an opportunity for a compromise. The land becomes the subject of contention in a new arena, reminding the Natives of the old conflicts by force of arms, and they enter the contest with zeal, forgetful of its enormous cost.

Touching a statement that appeared in some of the papers that it was intended to change the title of "Judge" to that of "Recorder," I would submit that the term "Recorder" is an inappropriate one. It is true that the Native Land Court is a Court of Record, but the Judge of the Court does not perform the functions of a Recorder—that is the duty of the Registrar. It has been urged that the duties of a Judge of the Native Land Court are simply to find out the facts—facts as to the owners, boundaries, customs, &c.—and he has no other function: this, however, is an erroneous view of the duties, as the Judge has not only to find out all the facts, but he has to compare such facts, and perceive their agreement or disagreement, and thus to distinguish truth from falsehood, and determine authoritatively the controversy between the parties. It would be more to the purpose to improve the status of the Judges than to disrate them: if not practically, as regards the duties to be performed, it would in public estimation, through calling them an inappropriate name. The appellation has existed for twenty-six years, and there appears to be no good reason why it should now be changed out of mere caprice.

With reference to the complaints frequently urged against the Court relative to the time occupied in hearing cases, I would beg to observe that it is manifestly unfair to compare the duration of a hearing in the Native Land Court with one in any other Court, for, quite apart from the magnitude of the interests at stake precluding anything like a summary inquiry, there is this material difference: In other Courts the issue is not only settled or well understood, but it is between plaintiff and defendant only; whereas in the Native Land Court, besides the claimant, there may be a dozen