interfered. In these my difficulties are increased by the forced and unprecedented action of the Native Land Court in this district.

On the 7th July last I refused to pay money on Mr. Locke and Mr. Read's request. On the 9th the Judge and Read drove to the country house of the latter, where they were accustomed frequently to reside together.

On the 11th I was informed that the Judge was trying to get Read and Cooper's surveys at Waingaromia placed upon a special *Gazette* by telegram.

On the 12th they returned to town, and by that time the lands had been telegraphed and hurriedly notified at the head office at Auckland, not on the usual printed form under seal of the Court, but with the seal of the Court upon a manuscript.

I venture to affirm that this was an exceedingly improper proceeding, and an abuse of power. It was a violent action, the effect of which was to displace the cause of the public, and to injure it by giving Read's interest priority. It was to make claimants of the opposition, and to give them the right to reply. It was to take the bearing of our lands upon their hasty and indiscriminately (I had almost said promiscuously) made surveys and plans. It was to impart prestige to one side and to humiliate those who had sold to the Government. It was to diminish in the eyes of the people the respect due to the Government in its business transactions by rendering those transactions subordinate to the interests of Europeans who were known to have interfered with them.

Suitors in all cases in the Native Land Court are required to comply with the forms of the Court. They are required to make their claims to the Court in writing, and have, in point of fact, to fill an elaborate form of application for hearing with scrupulous exactness, failing which their applications are returned to them for correction. But the Natives with whom Messrs Read and Cooper were in treaty were excused delay, where time was an object, and were granted a special advantage. And here I may say that had the Court and the District Officer permitted business to flow in the ordinary channel; and had surveyors been furnished in March, April, and May, 1875, when I applied for them; and, further, had a Judge of the Native Land Court presided here who could have taken Government business sometimes instead of cases in which Mr Read is interested always (I believe, one solitary case excepted, that the time of the Court in my district during the year under report has been entirely engrossed in adjudicating where Read requires titles; while not a single case has been adjudicated in which Natives claim who have parted with their land to Government)—had these conditions been permitted to obtain, then the Government would have had its deeds and the Natives their money long ago.

But to return. On the 29th of July the session of the Court, specially convened to hear cases in which Messrs. Read and Cooper were interested, was opened in this district, and sat and took evidence, without having caused due notice to be given in the district in the manner prescribed by the letter or even in compliance with the spirit of the 36th section of "The Native Land Act, 1873."

On the same day the Court closed, or rather adjourned, it was alleged, upon application. An application was certainly made by a Native at the request of Mr. Locke; but he had been put up merely to cover the retreat of the Court. The real cause was of another kind. I had taken an unusual step, and had almost rendered myself liable to censure from yourself.

On the 6th of the following month, some of the notifications of the sitting of the Court arrived by mail at Gisborne. The Court had opened and taken evidence eight days before preliminary documents required by law were received in the district. It is not for me to say what the legality of such unprecedented proceedings may be worth; but if that Court was *ultra vires*, its adjourned sittings and proceedings are *ultra vires* also.

After this, the Government surveys of this land were prosecuted and completed, and Arakihi and Pararikì—portions of them—were gazetted for hearing on the 10th March last at Waiapu, a place three days' journey from Gisborne on horseback. Many of the Natives went to Waiapu to attend the Court on the 10th; but the Judge did not go. He remained at Gisborne, and sent an agent, who adjourned the Court.

On the 14th the Judge suddenly advertised a Court for the same land, under the name Waingaromia, to sit at Makaraka, Gisborne, on the 16th. Thus a notice of forty-eight hours was allowed for Natives who were away at Waiapu, and this while Read and Cooper's supporters, who had not gone to Waiapu, were near the Court-house at Makaraka.

To this impracticable proceeding I again objected, on various grounds, among others, that the Governor had called for further information prior to deciding whether he would exercise his pre-emptive right over the land, and that the present precipitate action of the Court might prejudice and forestall that right. Notwithstanding this, however, the judgment of the Court was given upon one Block—Waingaromia, No. 3. A rehearing was immediately asked for by the Natives with whom I had dealt. The Governor's Proclamation was issued over this and the other blocks six weeks after the judgment of the Court had been given.

The other Waingaromia Blocks, Nos. 1 and 2, were adjourned to Tolago for the 3rd April, where they were heard, with judgment reserved. The proceedings the first day were very painful on both sides. On one hand, the Judge was irascible, impracticable, and threatening to the Natives who had dealt with me; on the other, their spokesman openly accused him in Court and the Natives out of Court in a manner which I refrain from repeating. The scene had lasted too long, when the Court broke up in confusion.

On the following day, the Judge conceded the reasonable request of the Natives, and evidence was thereupon given. I do not wish to comment on the way the evidence was taken, nor have I space to do so here. Suffice to say, that as I watched, I became convinced—I say it emphatically—that it would be necessary to hear the cases over again before another Judge.

Here I wish to note that I reserve a point, arising out of something said by the other side, that may be required at another stage.

I believe the Atangahauiti Natives are only waiting for judgments to be given to appeal against them.

I stated in an early part of this section of my report that I had been compelled to contend against a very remarkable opposition. I have not given all my reasons for making that statement, space