I have carefully read through the foregoing and pronounce it an accurate report of my interview with Mr. Blount.  

Curtis J. Lyons.

No. 36.

Statement of Curtis J. Lyons.

Hawaiian Lands.

The entire area of the Hawaiian Islands was anciently divided up into ahupuās or small districts, each of which had its individual distinctive name. These divisions were either valleys, or strips of land between gulches, or strips with artificial boundaries, which were well conserved.

The feudal system under which these were held is described in Prof. Alexander's Brief History of Land Titles, in President Dole's Historical Paper on the Evolution of Land Titles, and in the accompanying series of papers by the writer of this, published in 1875 on Land Matters in Hawaii.

In brief, the actual history of the transition from the feudal system to the fee simple system which took place in the period from 1846 to 1850 may be stated as follows: It being premised that while the theory of the division of lands differed more or less from the actual practice, the ends attained were virtually the same.

The chiefs, under Kamehameha III, were holding lands in fief, varying in the number of those held by any individual chief from forty or more to one, according to rank or past service of the holder. The common people were tenants of these chiefs, or else of the King when living on his private lands.

Each chief made a division in writing with Kamehameha III as sovereign, in which the chief relinquished all right in about one-half of the lands held by himself and received from the sovereign a similar relinquishment in toto of the said sovereign's claim on the remaining half. This transaction was entered on the opposite pages of the book called the mahéle book (mahéle meaning division), one page bearing the deed from the King to the chief of the half of the lands by name enumerated, and the opposite page the relinquishment, by the same chief, of all claim on the other half.

The next step was the assignment by the King of much the larger portion of the half which remained in his hands to the Government or public domain. The third step was for the chiefs to also give up a small portion of their half to the same public domain.

Thus the property known as the Government lands became established, land which has ever since been more or less in the market, and of which the choicest portions were by especial effort placed by sale at nominal price in the hands of native Hawaiians.

The next step was for the chiefs to have their individual titles confirmed by the land commission. It was a subsequent matter to obtain formal royal patents.

The lands reserved by Kamehameha III, as above mentioned, with the choice lands which had been previously regarded as his own, were united in theory, and treated by himself and by Kamehameha IV as private lands. Kamehameha V, and the Legislature coöperating with him, made them inalienable, and created the board of crown commis-