

TO THE HONORABLE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NEW ZEALAND,
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The Memorial of the Provincial Council of the Province of New Plymouth

SHEWETH,

That the settlement of New Plymouth was founded in the beginning of the year 1841 under the most favourable auspices : that it received by direct emigration from England more than 1,000 settlers during the two first years of its existence : that during the last fifteen years it has continued to receive accessions of population from the mother country, and yet that the present inhabitants of the Province of European birth and descent are fewer than 2,500 exclusive of the garrison.

That the Province contains by estimation 2,176,000 acres of land, 300,000 of which form a belt of the richest arable soil in the colony, extending along a coast line of 115 miles, and that the remainder, which is covered with a dense forest, is equally fertile and contains but a small proportion of unavail-able land.

That of this comparatively large extent of valuable country, the European inhabitants occupy only 11,000 acres of open land, and 32,000 acres of forest, while a district of 20,000 acres of surveyed forest land remains unsold in the hands of the Provincial Government, on account of the outlay required to bring it into cultivation, the superiority of the unoccupied open land in its vicinity, and the insecure state of the Province.

That the native population of the Province in the year 1856 appears by a Census, taken by the Assistant Native Secretary, to have been only 1,782, and that this number has not since been increased.

That the lands held by these 1,782 Natives are estimated to comprise more than two millions of acres, one-seventh of which are immediately available for the plough, and the remainder are quite equal in value and position to the forest lands held by the settlers.

That the Natives even when at peace with each other, are unable to occupy more than a very inconsiderable portion of the extensive country they inhabit. That they have no flocks of sheep, and their horses and cattle bear no proportion to the extent of country over which they range.

That the possession of these waste lands entails on the natives continual disputes, because the tribes which claim them are but the disorganised remains of a once numerous people, which have but recently returned from slavery and exile.

That the discord, rivalry, and conflicting claims of this broken people, who have lost all respect for the authority of those who, under other circumstances, would have been their hereditary chiefs, has prevented them from acting in concert for the disposal of the lands they collectively claim ; although many sections among them are most anxious to dispose of a species of property, which is unproductive of any real benefit to them, and retards their progress in civilisation.

That the native feud, which has for the last four years been raging in Taranaki, originated in the attempt of Rawiri Waihua, a native assessor and the principal chief of his tribe, to sell a piece of land to the Government which had been a cause of quarrel between himself and one of his relatives, Katatore, an inferior chief of the same tribe and a minor claimant, was unwilling that the land should be sold, and on Rawiri proceeding to mark out the boundary for the Government he and several of his followers were shot down by Katatore and his adherents. It was the first blood that had been shed among the Natives since the arrival of the settlers. The local authorities were paralysed, for they were too feeble to apprehend the murderers; but the surviving relatives and friends of Rawiri assembled in arms, and would have proceeded to immediate hostilities had they not been dissuaded from taking such a step by the Resident Wesleyan Missionary, who assured them that British law would be enforced. Unhappily at this crisis His Excellency, Colonel Wynyard, the officer administering the Government of the Colony, was daily awaiting the arrival of a permanent Governor. The first General Assembly under the Constitution Act was in session, and the whole machinery of Government was in a state of transition. The Government of the day decided not to act, and despatched Mr. Commissioner McLean to inform the Natives, that the murder was the result of a native quarrel in which the Government could not interfere. The friends of Rawiri, burning for revenge and finding that the law was not to be enforced, expressed great indignation, because the interval which had elapsed had enabled Katatore to secure himself in a strong Pa, and to assemble around him a number of men hostile to the sale of land. The friendly Natives justly urged that they were friendly to the settlers, that they had conformed to our law in not taking revenge for their slain relatives, and that now they must either submit to the dictation of Katatore, or contest with him, unassisted by the Government, a cause in which the colonists and themselves were equally concerned. They urged, moreover, that such