

## PETITIONS.

matter of convenience in the carrying out the terms of purchase it was arranged that the then licensee should apply for such lease.

That a lease was accordingly applied for, and the Provincial Government of Otago consented to grant such lease, subject to the condition that the lessee should execute a deed covenanting to permit and allow His Honor the Superintendent of Otago, at any time during the term of the lease, to enter on the lands comprised in such lease, for the purpose of having surveyed in allotments eight thousand acres of such lands, and to permit and allow the said Superintendent to sell such eight thousand acres, and on such sale thereof to quit and deliver up possession of the lands so sold.

That, with the consent of your petitioner and his copartner, the licensee agreed to take a lease of the said station, and to enter into the deed of covenant so required, and a lease and deed of covenant were accordingly executed, such lease being subsequently assigned to your petitioner and his copartner.

That shortly after your petitioner had taken an assignment of the lease of the said Tapanui Station, at suggestion of a resident in the township of Tapanui, the eight thousand acres which the Otago Provincial Government reserved the right to sell, in pursuance of the terms of the said covenant, were directed by His Honor the Superintendent of Otago to be surveyed with the view to the same being sold.

That your petitioner, on hearing that such survey was made, represented to His Honor the Superintendent of Otago that the greater portion of the land so surveyed was not applicable for agricultural purposes, and, with the concurrence of the lessees of the adjoining country, suggested to His Honor that a portion only of the eight thousand acres, in conjunction with the lands forming part of the adjoining stations should be offered for sale, and His Honor subsequently informed your petitioner that only four thousand acres of your petitioner's country would be offered for sale.

That, at the last Session of the Otago Provincial Council, a petition was presented, praying that a Hundred should be declared of the lands in lease to your petitioner and his said copartner, and in compliance with the prayer of such petition the said Provincial Council recommended that fourteen thousand acres of the Tapanui Station should be declared into a Hundred, and such recommendation, your petitioner is informed, is now under the consideration of your Excellency.

That the fourteen thousand acres so recommended to be declared into a Hundred comprise the eight thousand acres previously surveyed, with the view of being offered for sale in pursuance of the right reserved under the said deed of covenant.

That, previous to the survey before mentioned of the eight thousand acres proposed to be offered for sale, under the provisions of the said deed of covenant, your petitioner had, of his own free will and without being requested so to do, fenced off and appropriated to the use of the inhabitants of the township of Tapanui and neighbourhood, for the purpose of depasture, two thousand acres or thereabouts.

The petition presented to the Provincial Council, praying for the declaration of a Hundred on the lands leased to your petitioner, was signed by one hundred and six persons, described as residents of Tapanui.

That there are only from sixty to seventy inhabitants in, and in the immediate neighbourhood of, the township of Tapanui.

Your petitioner has reason for believing that some of the signatures to the said petition were fictitious, and that some at least of the persons purporting to have signed such petition never were required nor did sign such petition, and in proof of this assertion on the part of your petitioner, your petitioner would refer to the evidence taken before the Committee appointed by the Otago Provincial Council to inquire and report on the Petitions of Hundreds.

That many of the parties whose names appear as having signed the said petition are in no way interested in the prayer of the said petition.

That your petitioner is well acquainted with the inhabitants in and in the neighbourhood of Tapanui, and who could be in any way interested in the proclamation of the Hundred prayed for by the said petition, and such persons, with the exception of the few resident in the township of Tapanui, the originators of the said petition, have declared themselves quite satisfied with the provisions, as before stated, made by your petitioner for the depasturing of their cattle on your petitioner's station, and your petitioner is assured that there is no desire whatever on the part of any of the parties who signed the said petition to purchase any part of the lands so recommended to be declared into Hundreds.

That if otherwise than as last before stated, your petitioner is assured that the most of the persons who signed the said petition to the Provincial Council are not in a position to purchase any portion of the land recommended to be declared into a Hundred, of sufficient area for agricultural purposes.

Your petitioner has no hesitation in asserting, from his knowledge and information of the circumstances of the persons interested, whose names are attached to the said petition to the Provincial Council, and from his knowledge of the requirements of the district in which your petitioner's station is situated, that land for agricultural settlement is not required by them, or that, if required, they are not in a position to purchase for the purpose of agriculture; and moreover, assuming the Hundred recommended to be required, it could only be with the view of acquiring the right to depasture by the acquisition of a limited area of freehold.

That of the fourteen thousand acres recommended to be declared into a Hundred, only about one thousand five hundred are fit for agricultural purposes, the residue consisting of shingle and broken land being only adapted for pastoral purposes; and your petitioner, in verification of this assertion, would respectfully ask an inspection and survey of the lands proposed to be declared into a Hundred by a disinterested person competent to judge of its capabilities for agricultural purposes.

Your petitioner ventures to assert that the agitation for the declaration of a Hundred on your petitioner's station originated from persons resident in the township of Tapanui, who had no desire themselves, and who knew well that there was no general desire on the part of their neighbours, to acquire lands for agricultural purposes, and that it was only from motives of envy and malice, and to serve political purposes, that such persons agitated the presentation of the petition, representing to