

1873.

## NEW ZEALAND.

PETITION OF 371 MAORIS OF HAWKE'S BAY,  
WAIRARAPA, WAIROA, AND TURANGANUI.

*Presented 14th August, 1873, and ordered to be printed.*

To the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled,

THE PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED MAORIS OF THE DISTRICTS OF HAWKE'S BAY, WAIRARAPA,  
WAIROA, AND TURANGANUI.

SHOWETH,—

1. That for several years past the Maori people have been suffering great loss and injury by reason of the improper, confused, and irregular operations of the Native Land Laws.

2. That first there was one law passed to give Maoris Crown grants for their lands, and then soon came another, and another, and another, each altering and amending the ones that went before it, until now it is impossible to understand what the laws are which govern the Maori lands.

3. That under the present laws the following evils have been created and fostered, to the great damage of the Maori people:—

First. The lands are eaten up by money for survey, Court fees, grant fees, and payments to lawyers and interpreters, and other expenses, to such an extent that the balance which comes to us from the sale of our lands is very small.

Second. The names of few people are put in grants for large blocks of land, and no care is taken of the interests of the people owning the land, but whose names are not in the grant; and thus the grantees are enabled to lease, encumber, and sell the land for their own benefit, without the knowledge and consent of the outsiders, and without sharing with them the money which the lease or sale of the land produces.

Third. That many people are put into grants whose interests in the land are not equal, some being large owners and others small owners, and the laws give no facilities for ascertaining the interests of the several grantees in cases where land has been leased to Europeans, so that after the land has been leased, and some of the grantees sell and others do not sell, there is no clear way of finding out how much of the land belongs to the people who have not sold.

Fourth. That facilities are placed in the way of imprudent owners to dispose of the lands without any regard being had to the remainder of the people.

Fifth. That sufficient care is not taken to secure to the Native owners the benefit of disinterested advice and explanation, when signing papers and deeds about their lands, and the persons from whom they receive explanations being the Europeans who are anxious that the deed should be signed.

Sixth. That no precaution is taken to see that the land is sold or let for a fair price; the Maoris, being ignorant of the causes which give value to these lands, are drawn into leases and sales of these lands at prices very much below what the Europeans themselves would accept.

Seventh. When the names of children and married women are put into grants, the interpreters are allowed to go and obtain the signatures of these women and children in a way which would not be allowed with European women and children.

Eighth. That sufficient care is not taken to make proper reserves to be held for the use and benefit of the Maoris, so that many Maoris are now without any land whatever on which they may live and work.

Ninth. That the Europeans are allowed to go to the men whose names are in the grant one by one and make bargains with them, which are unknown to the other grantees, whereas all the grantees should be called together, and unless all consented the land should not be sold.

4. That these are only some of the great evils and troubles which have come upon the Maori people by the work of the Native Land Laws, and many others will be ascertained if the Parliament agrees to enter upon the work.

5. That for three sittings of the Parliament the talk of the Government has been that they were about to make a new and a clear law for dealing with the lands of the Maori people, and the Maoris, depending on these promises, have been waiting patiently for the fulfilment of the words of the Government, and up to this time have not seen anything come out of these words of the Government, but have heard only of the promises.