

go outside the Port Nicholson district, as it was then called. The consequence was that a great number of settlers round about here selected very inferior selections, and were still upon them. Of his own personal knowledge, he knew that many hard-working, deserving settlers had never been able to recover from the position in which they had been placed by the Government of the country. With regard to paragraph 4 of the petition—"That from time to time they had to take up arms in defence of the European settlements against Maori aggressions, and for the maintenance of peace and good government, thereby losing their time and wasting their resources to an extent ruinous in some cases and serious in all"—all the settlers were called upon to do military duty. They were kept night and day in the performance of these duties: in point of fact, the best part of the settlers' time was wasted through Native difficulties, previous to the Wairau massacre. No compensation was given to the settlers for those military duties, though since those days Provincial Governments in the North Island had under the various Volunteer Acts given grants of land to Volunteers. A great number of these early settlers considered they had a strong claim upon the Government on that score, and had expressed it in a great variety of instances. Clause 6 of the petition stated, "That the circumstances under which the settlements of the South Island were founded at a later date were of a totally different character, and that, with the exception of Nelson, none of these settlements had to contend either with Native difficulties or with disputes between the Government and the New Zealand Company." With regard to the South Island, it was a perfectly well known fact that about thirty million acres of land there were purchased for a very trifling sum—some £7,000 or £8,000. There the settlers were put in undisturbed possession of their lands, while the settlers in the North Island were continually struggling, and some of them might be said to be struggling now, against Native difficulties in the acquisition of land. For these reasons, those who interested themselves in this matter—and the interest that had been taken was very large—considered that the first settlers were entitled to the consideration of the Government. Clauses 8 and 9 were merely historical statements. With regard to clause 10—"That the Treaty of Waitangi, dated the 12th of February, 1840, which assumed on the part of the British Crown the right of regulating the disposal of public lands in New Zealand, contained an article which practically put an end to all private transactions with Natives, and pursuant to which enactments were passed and Proclamations were issued by the Government forbidding the settlers who were then arriving in the country from dealing in any way with the Natives for land, under pain of heavy statutory penalties"—the Treaty of Waitangi had been rigidly maintained by the Government until 1862. During that period the early settlers referred to in the petition could only take advantage of the selections open to them; and he considered that they and their families had thus been hardly dealt with, and were therefore entitled to the consideration of the Government. Clause 12 of the petition stated, "That, owing to disputes which had arisen between the Natives and the New Zealand Company, and to the subsequent action of Governor Hobson, the founders of the Nelson settlement were unable to obtain the town site originally intended, whilst their leader, Captain Wakefield, R.N., together with several of their most prominent men, were murdered by the Natives at Wairau." The Government were so hostile to the Company at this particular time that when Captain Wakefield came out with the Nelson shipment he wished to have made a selection in the South Island on Banks Peninsula, but Governor Hobson peremptorily refused to allow him to make his settlement, except somewhere in Cook Strait. The result was that Captain Wakefield had to take the whole of his batch of immigrants, after the ship lying in Port Nicholson for three weeks, and to fix upon a place in Blind Bay, which is the present Nelson. Otherwise he would have gone south, and founded a more flourishing settlement there. Therefore he (the witness) considered the Nelson settlers had suffered from the hostility of the Government of the day. They were more or less ruined by it. Clause 13 of the petition said, "That, speaking generally, the Government of the day made no effort to protect the interests of the pioneers, who, with very few exceptions, were impoverished and their energies wasted, whilst they were daily exposed to the aggressions of hostile tribes, their position in 1846 being fairly described in the appeal made by the landowners to the New Zealand Company." That appeal was repeated in the petition, and was given there because the language, which was that of Dr. Featherston, was so suitable. With regard to the position of the Natives, at the period referred to in the 13th clause, the various settlements throughout the North Island were in such a state of confusion that it was a great question with a number of the respectable settlers whether they should remain any longer in the island. A good many had left, and there was an expedition contemplated by Dr. Evans to go to South America. Everything was getting so unsatisfactory, and the hostility of the Government to the settlers was such, that no progress could be made. The bulk of the settlers who remained here at that particular time had to contribute largely from their means to make the by and main roads, for which they never received any consideration. He considered they had strong and just claims upon the Government for those services, which had never been acknowledged in any except in the ordinary complimentary way. The petitioners asked for something more substantial. With regard to the 19th paragraph, which says—"That it is not intended to press the claims of any particular class or body of pioneers, but to apply generally on behalf of all who settled in New Zealand and became *bonâ fide* colonists prior to the foundation of the settlements of Otago and Canterbury, and who may now be disposed to claim the grant"—this comprised the whole of the North Island and Nelson, but there were a great number of the early settlers now scattered over all parts of New Zealand. He had brought a number of letters (produced) from different parts of the colony to show the interest that was taken in this matter. Of course, a great many of the early settlers were now in prosperous circumstances, and they would not require anything—he did not think they would make a claim: but, as he had before observed, a great many of the early settlers were entitled to do so, and, in point of fact, stood in great need of some consideration. The 21st paragraph stated, "That at a public meeting, held pursuant to advertisement, at the Oddfellows' Hall at Wellington, on the 17th day of June, 1875, where upwards of three hundred pioneers, from all parts of the colony, were assembled, the undersigned being chairman, a resolution was passed affirming the justice of the claim now put forward, and fixing the year 1848 as the limit in point of time to the recognition of pioneer settlement in New Zealand, in terms following, that is to say, 'That the pioneer settlers and members of their families, now in the colony, who arrived