

1883.  
NEW ZEALAND.

PETITION OF THE MANIAPOTO, RAUKAWA, TUWHA-  
RETOA, AND WHANGANUI TRIBES.

*Presented to the House of Representatives, 26th June, and ordered to be printed.*

[TRANSLATION.]

To the Governor of New Zealand and the Members of both Houses of Parliament.

This is a PETITION from us the MANIAPOTO, RAUKAWA, TUWHARETOA, and WHANGANUI TRIBES, to PARLIAMENT; GREETING.

Your petitioners pray that you will fully look into and carefully consider the matters which are the cause of much anxiety to us, and are raising a barrier in front of us, because these matters that are causing us anxiety have principally emanated from you, the Europeans, in the form of legislation.

We have carefully watched the tendency of the laws which you have enacted from the beginning up to the present day; they all tend to deprive us of the privileges secured to us by the second and third articles of the Treaty of Waitangi, which confirmed to us the exclusive and undisturbed possession of our lands.

We do not see any good in any of the laws which you have enacted affecting our lands, when they are brought into operation, in adjudicating upon lands before the Native Land Court at Cambridge and other places; and the practices carried on at the Land Courts have become a source of anxiety to us and a burden upon us.

Through our ignorance of those laws we have been induced by speculators (land-swallowers) and their agents to allow some of our lands to be adjudicated upon so that our lands might be secured to us.

Sirs, having allowed some of our lands to be adjudicated upon, who was it that became possessed of them? It is true that after the investigations the Natives received a certificate of title showing their right to the lands, but through the superior knowledge of the Europeans we accepted foolishly the lawyers recommended to us by the speculators (land-swallowers), thinking that they were to act in our interests, but in reality they were intended to prolong the investigations, thereby increasing the expenses to so great an extent that the Natives were unable to defray them, so that they (the speculators) might seize the land, the result being that we secure the shadow and the speculators (land-swallowers) the substance.

We are beset on every side by outrageous practices and the temptations we are exposed to by speculators and even Maoris and half-castes, whom the companies have secured to decoy us into the nets of the companies.

In our perplexity to devise some means by which we could extricate our lands from the disasters pointed out, we ask, is there not a law by which we could suppress these evils? and we are told that the only remedy is to go to the Court ourselves.

Now, while we are striving to keep our lands, we are aware that your Government is trying to open our country by making roads, carrying on trig. surveys and railways, thereby clearing the way for all these evils to be practised in connection with our lands before we have made satisfactory arrangements for the future.

Are we to allow the present system to be carried on without remonstrance?

We wish to state that, if the above-mentioned practices are to be carried on in future, we think that it would not be right that our land should be rendered liable to such an objectionable system.

What possible benefit would we derive from roads, railways, and Land Courts if they became the means of depriving us of our lands? We can live as we are situated at present, without roads, railways, or Courts, but we could not live without our lands.

We are not oblivious of the advantages to be derived from roads, railways, and other desirable works of the Europeans. We are fully alive to these advantages, but our lands are preferable to them all.