

1892.

## NEW ZEALAND.

## PETITION OF DAVID McMILLAN AND 88 OTHER COLONISTS.

*Presented by Mr. Saunders, 27th July, and ordered to be printed.*

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives,  
in Parliament assembled.

THE PETITION of the undersigned FARMERS and LANDOWNERS, humbly sheweth,—

1. That your petitioners are British-born or British subjects, colonists of New Zealand, and claim as our unalienable inheritance the right to be treated equally with all other classes of colonists under the laws of the colony.

2. That, in acquiring by purchase the ownership of lands in New Zealand, we have broken no laws, violated no public regulations, nor done any wrong for which we should be punished by being taxed more heavily or on more burdensome principles than other classes of colonists, or by being otherwise exceptionally treated by the Legislature of the colony.

3. That many of us bought the greater part of the lands we own from private citizens who had purchased such lands directly from the Government of the colony or from the assigns of such purchasers, and in most cases we have paid for such lands their full present market-value, and there is no increment of value in such lands to us as such buyers.

4. That under the existing fiscal laws of the colony, especially "The Land- and Income-tax Act, 1891," we are aggrieved by being unequally and more heavily taxed than other classes of citizens, and we respectfully request your honourable House to uphold our rights to equal laws, and to grant us relief from such unequal taxation, and to redress our grievances, the particulars whereof are as follows:—

- (a.) Under the provisions of the said Act for imposing graduated taxation such of us as are merely nominal owners of lands subject to mortgage are taxed not only upon our interest in such lands, but also upon the money-lenders' interest therein, which is frequently twice as great as ours, whereby we are taxed not only upon the property we possess, but also upon property we do not possess, namely, our debts, and thus in some cases we are subjected to such an intolerable burden of taxation as practically amounts to the confiscation of our property.
- (b.) No other class of citizens in New Zealand is taxed upon its debts or upon property not owned by such citizens.
- (c.) Under the same Act we are as landholders made liable to no less than thirteen degrees of progressive taxation, of such severity as to make in many instances the taxes imposed on us penal and confiscatory, and equal to an income-tax of at least 5s. in the pound of our net incomes calculated on an interest-basis of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum, which is equivalent to confiscating at least one-fourth of the capital-value of the property so taxed.
- (d.) That money-lenders having mortgages on such lands are not subject to any progressive taxation, and are not liable to pay more than an income-tax of 1s. 3d. in the pound, calculated on an interest-basis of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and the owners of other kinds of property have only one stage of progressive taxation, and on the lowest scale are taxed only to the extent of 6d. in the pound of their net incomes, and on the highest scale are taxed only upon 1s. in the pound of their net incomes.
- (e.) We respectfully submit to your honourable House that such unequal and excessive taxation, amounting to five times as much as is paid by the owners of personal property, should not be imposed upon us.
- (f.) Under the same laws many of us owning not more than 400 acres of land, whose total value does not exceed £8,000, and in which our interest does not exceed £3,000, and our net income from such land does not exceed £300 yearly, are made liable to pay a progressive or penal tax in addition to our ordinary taxes, while no mortgagee of lands, though his interest in such lands may amount to £50,000 or upwards, and his income from such mortgages may exceed £3,000 per annum, pays any progressive tax, and no town-dweller pays any progressive tax unless his income is at least £1,000 yearly, which, calculated on a  $6\frac{1}{2}$ -per-cent. basis, represents a capital-value of over £16,000.
- (g.) Under the same laws many of us owning not exceeding 300 acres of land whose total value does not exceed £1,500, and the yearly income from which does not exceed £150, about the amount of a mechanic's yearly wages, are subject to direct taxation, while many other citizens, dwellers in the towns, though deriving income from business-profits or personal employment, and the ownership of town property