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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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PETITION OF SETTLERS AT KORORAREKA.

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*Presented to the House of Representatives 9th August, 1856, and ordered to be Printed.*

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TO THE HONORABLE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

*The Memorial of British Settlers at Kororareka, who suffered loss of Property in the Government Wars with the Natives, in the years 1844 and 1845.*

Humbly sheweth,—

That in order, for the introduction of circumstances which led to the disastrous losses which brought poverty and ruin to your memorialists,

Your memorialists respectfully beg to state, that on the 17th June, 1843, twenty-two of the most influential of the Nelson Settlers were barbarously massacred at the Wairau by the Natives of New Zealand, under their unbridled and furious leaders Rangihæta and Rauparaha.

That Mr. Willoughby Shortland was then Acting Governor of New Zealand, and the above outrage was permitted to remain unnoticed until the arrival of a new Governor, then shortly expected.

His Excellency Captain Fitzroy (having been appointed Governor of New Zealand,) reached Auckland in December, 1843, and arrived at Wellington in February, 1844; from thence he proceeded to Nelson, and afterwards sailed for Waikanae where Rauparaha and his tribe were located, and with whom his Excellency had an interview upon the subject of the massacre above stated, on which occasion his Excellency was pleased to convey to them his pardon with explanations of the greatness of the English nation which would not endure a repetition of such displays of barbarism.

That this temporising policy of his Excellency Governor Fitzroy engendered in the minds of at least) the disaffected Natives at the Northern part of the Island, a contemptuous consideration of his Excellency's declarations of the greatness of the British nation, and promptitude in punishment of aggression.

That on the 4th July, 1844, the Native chief Honi Heki landed at the town of Kororareka with a number of armed followers, and remained there three or four days, during the whole of which period he and his party behaved insultingly to the British Settlers; plundering some of their stores, killing their pigs, and to display his contempt for British authority, cut down the flag-staff; Honi Heki having exclaimed in the hearing of several of your memorialists, that "Rauparaha killed white men at the Wairau, why should I not do the like here?"

That upon his Excellency Governor Fitzroy receiving intelligence of the destruction of the British flagstaff, he chartered the ship "Sydney"—then lying at Auckland—and dispatched her to Sydney; upon her arrival there, Sir George Gipps ordered the embarkation of two hundred of Her Majesty's troops, and the same were landed at the Bay of Islands about 20th August, 1844.

His Excellency Captain Fitzroy also landed at Kororareka prepared with this force to take Hone Heki; but yielding to the advice contained in a letter from a member of the Church Mission, his Excellency desisted from this course of procedure, and a meeting was arranged to take place instead at the Waimate between his Excellency and Hone Heki. The failure of this expedient excited fresh feelings of ridicule and contempt in the war party, for British authority. Native chiefs on friendly terms with the Church Mission there, told his Excellency "not to be discouraged if they, (of Heki's party) should cut down the flagstaff again." Hone Heki did not present himself at the meeting, but sent a letter to his Excellency promising not to indulge in any more pleasantries if he could possibly help it, but feared the disease in his blood was not to be easily eradicated. His Excellency's clement speech finished with the request for some muskets as payment for cutting down the British Flag, about ten muskets were laid at his feet, and his Excellency graciously returned them to their owners, shook hands, and amidst rubbing of noses, the matter was proclaimed to be settled. His Excellency dispatched the troops back to Sydney, deeming their presence unnecessary after the moral victory which His Excellency had gained. Your memorialists would here beg to remark, that the whole of the ceremony was conducted by the aid and advice of the Missionaries and Native Protector, and it is also within the knowledge of several of your memorialists that the scheme of delivering up the muskets originated with them some time previous to the conference; and your memorialists viewed with deep regret, that his Excellency should have substituted so inapplicable a mode—however commendable as an example of mercy and forbearance in a more advanced state of the Maori condition—for one of prompt punishment especially during the period of so unprotected a position that of your memorialists, (whilst their properties and lives were menaced by merciless savages) treated as men whose opinions were valueless, and rendered objects of sacrifice to the experiments of introducing a semblance of British authority without the presence of a necessary physical force, by which means only the same was at that period capable of being established.

That in October, 1844, Hone Heki cut down the flagstaff a second time; it was again erected at the Government expense; in December following he cut down the British flagstaff a third time, and committed numerous robberies whereby your memorialists were sufferers. His Excellency at this time appeared to regard his advisers as having induced him to adopt erroneous measures, by his having dispatched to Kororareka thirty soldiers of Her Majesty's 96th Regiment, where the largest of some buildings belonging to one of your memorialists (Mr. Benjamin E. Turner,) was rented as Barracks by the Government; expensive alterations having been made by the owner, in order for their reception and convenience; these buildings were burnt down whilst in the occupation of the troops.

That no payment for such engagement, or compensation for this and other following losses has been made by the Government, nor from any other source.

That for the occupation of another detachment of troops under the command of Lieutenant Barclay and Ensign Campbell, a Block House was erected near the flagstaff, which had been demolished by Hone Heki a fourth time.

That in June, 1845, his Excellency again wrote to Sir George Gipps for more military aid, and about the latter end of February, 1845, the followers of Hone Heki took forcible possession of a farm belonging to the aforesaid Mr. Benjamin E. Turner, making the men in charge of same prisoners; they cut down all the fruit trees, plundered the house and buildings of every available article within the same, carrying off also one entire horse, three mares and foals. Captain Robertson of Her Majesty's ship "Hazard," dispatched an armed boat for the purpose of cutting off the marauders whilst crossing the river; the boat's crew were fired upon, but without injurious effect. A few days after this occurrence, Hone Heki and Kawiti returned and again took possession of said farm—destroyed all the crops thereon—killed every head of cattle, and held the buildings in occupation whilst masters of the field, from whence they gave notice of their intention to attack the town of Kororareka.

That on the morning of Tuesday 11th March, 1845, the Native war party burned down the above mentioned farm buildings, and attacked the town on three sides, headed by Hone Heki, Kawiti, and the sons of the latter chief; Hone Heki led the attack against the Block House which defended the flagstaff, and owing to reported mismanagement of the officer in command, carried this important post, thereby levelling the British flagstaff the fifth time; the fight lasted for about two hours, during which time the women and children of the Settlers were removed to the ships in port, when the town was abandoned to the victorious Maories; Her Majesty's ship "Hazard," the Government brig "Victoria," United States corvette "St. Louis," and the English whaling ship "Matilda," conveyed to Auckland the inhabitants of Kororareka, numbering six hundred persons, deprived of every earthly possession—homeless and disheartened—the majority of whom by frugal industry had preserved or amassed a competency, landed penniless.

That the town of Kororareka was thoroughly sacked, and nearly all burnt to the ground within thirty-six hours after the engagement.

That the plunder obtained by the Natives, together with other losses amounted to upwards of forty thousand pounds sterling, from the most reliable estimates made at that period.

Your memorialists would respectfully beg to present to your honourable House the foregoing sketch of disastrous results of a mistaken policy pursued by the Government at that period, in its regulation of the Native population of this Colony, between whom and the European Settlers at Kororareka, an amicable interchange of dealings and understanding had long existed; the obnoxious nominal display of authority made by the Government in the repeated erection of the unprotected flagstaff after its demolition by the Natives; inciting them to boldness, defiance, warlike thoughts against the white people, and eventually abandonment of peaceful pursuits.

That from infirm and hollow measures adopted by the Government at that time to allay the turbulent spirit of the Maories, (who had been aroused into excitement and desire for a trial of strength with its boasted but inefficient display of power and authority,) arose the ruinous losses sustained by your memorialists; for which not any of your memorialists have received the least payment or compensation.

Your memorialists, therefore, beg most respectfully to entreat your honourable House to take into consideration their claims that the painful effects of their losses may be alleviated; and beg humbly to suggest that a portion or portions of land be set apart for such purpose, or any other Grant which your honourable House may determine upon.

And your memorialists will ever pray, &c., &c.

BENJAMIN E. TURNER,

For and on behalf of sufferers set forth in Schedule appended.

SCHEDULE.

MEMORIALISTS who suffered, and number of their Houses destroyed.

Memorialists Names.	Houses Destroyed.	Place of Abode, or Absent.
Benjamin E. Turner .. ..	8 houses, one of which was barracks for troops.	Auckland
George Russell .. ..	3 houses.	do.
John Salmon ... ..	1 do.	do.
Walter Brodie .. ..	1 do.	do.
Joseph England ... ..	1 do.	Waiu
J. Cook .. ..	1 do.	Bay of Islands
William Baker .. ..	1 do.	do.
William Moore .. ..	1 do.	Coromandel
J. Johnson ... ..	1 do.	Bay of Islands
J. Steward .. ..	1 do.	
J. S. Polack .. ..	1 do.	Absent
Eugene Casler .. ..	3 do.	Wangarei
George Clayton ... ..	1 do. 1 store.	Absent
Greenea .. ..	2 do.	do.
J. Scott .. ..	1 do.	do.
W. Smith .. ..	1 do.	do.
Aderline .. ..	1 do.	do.
B. Quaff .. ..	1 do.	do.
John Wearel .. ..	1 do.	do.
J. Robinson .. ..	1 do.	do.
Francis Hodgskinson .. ..	1 do.	do.

