

I quote from the *Southern Cross* newspaper of 21st September, 1849:—

Mrs. Margaret Forbes

12 Aug., 1861.

"On Wednesday, in accordance with the Proclamation in the *Government Gazette*, the Colonial Treasurer offered for sale—to an audience, we believe, of two individuals,—fifty-three allotments of land, near the Pensioner village of Onehunga, of which he sold three allotments, amounting to thirty pounds! There is a voice in this result which may be disregarded, but must be heard. If there was nothing connected with the result of this renewed effort to sustain a false and unsound system beyond what lies upon the surface, it would be proof sufficient of the paralysed state of the Colony, and the absurdity of still continuing the attempt to force the sale of land at exorbitant prices. But what must we think of the result of this sale, when we remember that even this paltry amount was unrighteously obtained. It was the proceeds of a part of the inheritance of the fatherless—the price of part of the portion of a widow! Of all the broad acres that the Government could fairly and honestly offer for competition, not one single rood was sold, and but one solitary bidder—Mr. W. F.—could be found for the stolen property.

"Our local readers are well aware that the allotments purchased by Mr. F—— were not honestly acquired by the Government; but it may be necessary for the information of others at a distance to explain briefly how this land came into their possession.

"Some years back, when the Colony was at the lowest position, and when Governor FitzRoy by removing the land monopoly, inspired new life into the expiring energies of the colonists, Mrs. Forbes purchased about nine acres of land at Onehunga. The claim was examined by the Commissioners and favourably reported on; the report was finally ratified by Governor Grey, and a notice inserted in the *Gazette* about two years ago, that deeds were being prepared for it. Before they were ready, however, His Excellency, for some reason or other, altered his mind, and told Mrs. Forbes that she had too much land, and would only allow her one and a quarter acres.

"The allotments offered on Wednesday were part of the land which had thus been unceremoniously and despotically cut off the widow's claim. Now, we appeal to men of honesty and uprightness, is such policy to be tolerated? Can it be reconciled with truth and justice? If Mrs. Forbes had "too much land," it must be presumed that she had more than she had validly bought—but did the Commissioner say so? Quite the contrary.

"The widow's claim was found just and good, the Commissioner's award was favourable, and deeds were actually being prepared for it, when the grasping, covetous, Ahab-like policy of the Governor, led him to conceive and execute this act of spoliation!

"We speak of this matter in strong and indignant terms—not because we hope to make any impression upon the local Government; the moral sense of our present rulers is utterly perverted, and their consciences so completely cauterised, that we neither expect nor hope to excite anything like shame or compunction in their bosoms."

3. *Mr. Firth.*] Have you any reason to give us as to what induced Sir George Grey to refuse to issue the grant after the intimation contained in the *Gazette* of its being about to be made out?—I believe he wanted it for a township: it was sold for a township.

4. Was any offer of compensation made for the land taken away from you?—I was paid £13 and some shillings to cover the expense of survey and other items; which I accepted.

5. *Mr. Weld.*] Among those items was any part for compensation for any of the land taken away?—I cannot say.

6. *Mr. Firth.*] Do you recollect what was the original purchase money paid to the Natives for the land?—One silver watch, worth £5, and one double-barrel gun, to purchase which I had to sell two rings for £4.

7. In what year was the purchase made?—Between October, 1844, and beginning of 1845.

8. *Mr. Weld.*] Had you made any improvements upon the land before it was taken away?—It was all but two acres fenced in and cultivated.

(Witness here put in *Gazette* of 10th September, 1849, in which is published her Memorial as follows:—)

The Memorial of Margaret Forbes of Onehunga, widow, respectfully sheweth:—

"That, from family circumstances of peculiar hardship, well known to the community, the support of a large family, seven in number, was thrown on your Memorialist, who finding herself otherwise unable to maintain herself and family, availed herself of the Proclamation issued by Governor Fitzroy on the 10th October, 1844, and purchased from the Native owners a small portion of land, situated at Onehunga, supposed to contain about eight acres, though the actual measurement, on being surveyed, proved to be nine acres, three roods and thirty perches. Small as the amount of the required purchase money was, viz., £9 10, your Memorialist was unable to pay it without disposing of a watch and the rings off her fingers—which, though of little intrinsic value, were only parted with through extreme necessity.

"That by her own industry and ceaseless exertion your Memorialist succeeded in getting a small raupo whare, for which a bush license to sell spirits was obtained, and she was thus enabled to maintain herself and family.

"That the claim for the land was duly heard and proved before Major Matson, the Commissioner appointed for that purpose, whose favorable award was made and notified in the *Government Gazette* for 1847, page 95, in which *Gazette* it was likewise officially intimated that the title deeds for this, as well as various other claimant's lands were "in the course of preparation."

"That subsequently to this notification, various verbal statements were made by the surveyors, as if from His Excellency, to the effect that the Government could not permit your Memorialist to retain so large a piece of ground, and that 4½ acres only could be allowed. Your Memorialist being entirely ignorant of her legal rights in the matter, and being unwilling even to seem to oppose any proceedings of Government, had suffered the 4½ acres to be pointed out to her. Fences were