

1878.

NEW ZEALAND.

PETITION OF WILLIAM COLENZO.

Presented to the House of Representatives, 24th September, 1878, and ordered to be printed.

To the Honorable the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF WILLIAM COLENZO, OF NAPIER,

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH,—

THAT your petitioner was for several years, until lately, the Government Inspector of Schools for this provincial district.

That, from the formation of the Province of Hawke's Bay, in 1858, to 1st May, 1878, your petitioner has continuously held several important public offices—viz., Provincial Auditor, Provincial Maori Interpreter, Provincial Treasurer (without clerk), and (twice) Provincial Inspector of Schools.

That he, the second time, accepted the office of Provincial Inspector of Schools in 1872, and held the same until 1st May, 1878.

That for the first four years the salary was only £100, and for the last two (complete) years £150 per annum, although the visiting the distant country schools, through want of roads, was both difficult and dangerous.

That during the whole of this time all the clerical work usually pertaining to an Education Board and Secretary (there being no Education Board in Hawke's Bay) was performed by your petitioner, even to the calculating and making out of the teachers' quarterly vouchers, which duty was here particularly heavy, as all the teachers were paid by a capitation allowance, to be calculated on the daily average attendance.

That early in 1876 (after seeing the Commissioners—the Hon. Mr. Gisborne, Mr. Seed, and Mr. Knowles—appointed by your honorable House to visit the provinces, and to see the provincial officers) your petitioner wished to resign his office and to retire on some fair allowance, but was persuaded by the Superintendent and by the principal settlers to remain in office “for the benefit of the children of the district.”

That at the end of the year 1876 he, conditionally, resigned his office, unless the Education Board (then very recently appointed) would largely increase his salary, as the many heavy duties he had to perform took up the whole of his time.

That your petitioner received two pressing official replies from the Education Board to withdraw his resignation. A correct copy of one of them is here given:—

“Napier, 8th February, 1877.

“DEAR SIR,—I have laid your letter before the Board, and they, in common with myself, regret very much that you should resign.

“It is not the amount of the salary that is worth your while to stay for; but you are appealed to on other grounds—that you are eminently fitted for the post, and that you have given satisfaction to every one concerned; that the Board cannot afford to give more at present, and appeal to your public and patriotic feelings to further, as far as in your power lies, the education of the youth of this district.

“The Board, therefore, beg you to reconsider the whole question, and continue your services for another year.—I have, &c.,

“JOSEPH RHODES,

“To the Inspector of Schools.”

“Chairman, Education Board.

That, consequently, your petitioner consented to remain in office for another year.

That in February, 1878, he reminded the Education Board of his having only consented to continue to hold office at that low salary for the year 1877, which was expired.

That then the Education Board raised his salary to £300 per annum, to commence, however, from the 1st of March, 1878.

That very soon after (early in that same month of March) your petitioner found the Education Board had adopted the peculiar opinion that they could not interfere with the appointments of teachers made by country School Committees; of such, three, at least, had then just been made, and that, too, directly against a late official letter from your petitioner to the Education Board on this subject.

That this very opinion of your petitioner (as by him officially communicated to the Hawke's Bay Education Board, and by them disallowed) has since been shown to be the correct one by the Hon. the Attorney-General.

That your petitioner, finding such to be the opinion of the Education Board, and fearing a collision ere long, resigned his office, to take place at the end of the current quarter, March.