

1893.

NEW ZEALAND.

FEDERATED MAORI ASSEMBLY OF NEW ZEALAND

(PETITION OF THE).

Presented by Mr. Tanner, and ordered to be printed.

[TRANSLATION.]

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

THE PETITION of the MEMBERS of the FEDERATED MAORI ASSEMBLY of NEW ZEALAND humbly sheweth,—

1. That your petitioners, the children, and all the descendants of the Maori people, of their own freewill, have acknowledged and bowed to the authority of the Crown of England since the year 1835; and, in the year 1840, by virtue of the Treaty of Waitangi, the whole of the Maori people of New Zealand were declared to the whole world as British subjects.

2. That your petitioners and their progenitors have since always desired to live in amity with the white people that come to settle in these Islands, as we have always had a desire to learn from them the way to acquire wealth and to live in peace.

3. That when Christianity was received by the Maoris they began to live in peace, and to abandon their old ways.

4. Subsequently they released all prisoners heretofore captured in battles and allowed them to return to their homes and people; and were moved by a desire to follow pursuits that would tend to improve their condition and their lands.

5. When the form of government for New Zealand was changed—that is to say, when Parliament was set up, in the year 1854—your petitioners and the Maori people could not understand it, and many apprehended evil for the Maori people.

6. In consequence thereof, some proposed to set up a Maori King, who, acting with the advice of a Council, should have power to issue instructions to all Natives touching the observance of the law, but whose acts and deeds would be made subject to the approval of the Queen's Government.

7. Many were afraid that the new Government would, by its work, deprive the Natives of their lands, and that was the reason why they united themselves to oppose all Native land-laws.

8. It was due to these things that the wars and other troubles arose which ended so disastrously to the Natives.

9. Since the Treaty of Waitangi, your petitioners and many other Natives have, in the Maori-Pakeha wars, fought with the Queen's soldiers against our own relatives.

10. If these loyal Natives had not fought in those wars, the authority or sovereignty of and over New Zealand would have ceased long ago, and the white people would have abandoned these islands there and then.

11. In 1865 the Native Land Court was constituted to investigate and ascertain the owners of Native lands according to laws, customs, and usages of the Maori people.

12. The administration of the said Court has been unsatisfactory ever since; for the lands of the tribes and families have been awarded to ten persons, who, according to the laws of the new Government, are empowered to dispose of these lands as they like; and nothing has been provided to prevent them from misappropriating the tribal or family moneys.

13. Under this law, power has been vested in these ten persons to prejudicially affect their tribes and the tribal lands, and they have been regarded and have posed as the absolute owners of the tribal lands, and the real owners or tribes have been regarded as their dependants.

14. When the new Government saw the error they made by giving the tribal lands to the ten persons instead of merely appointing them as trustees, they passed, in 1867, a new law, whereby the names of all the owners were required to be shown on the face of the Court records. This prevented the ten from alienating the lands of the people.

15. Your petitioners submit that the Act of 1867 has been the best law which has ever been passed respecting Native lands.

16. In 1873 another law, different to the above, was passed by Parliament, and from that time troubles affecting Native lands began, and have since increased from day to day.

17. The administration of the Native Land Court is becoming more and more confusing and unsatisfactory. It injures, but never benefits, the people.