

7. That, although Europeans are exempt from land-taxes if they are but small owners, and enjoy other exemptions, there is, under the administration of the Public Trustee, no exemption for myself or my fellow-countrymen the Maoris, seeing that although all the lands on the West Coast are subdivided, and the owner of every acre known, the Public Trustee, who holds in sacred trust my land, allows the land-tax to be levied not on the individual ownership, but on large blocks of these subdivisions, so that the owner of one acre is no more exempt than the owner of a thousand.

8. That the continued administration of the lands, of which your petitioner's is part, by an officer of the Government leads European lessees and others to think that our lands are Native lands in the ordinary meaning as applied to lands over which the Native title has not been extinguished, and they do not understand that, on the contrary, though let to them by a Government official our lands are Crown-granted to us, to myself (your petitioner) and others, each in his or her own proper name, by her late Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, a title held to be the most sacred when applied to the European freehold.

9. That in consequence of such ignorance the said lessees, desirous of acquiring the freehold of lands Crown-granted to your petitioner and others, are about to petition your honourable House to make Crown grants to them for the lands which have already been Crown-granted to your petitioner and others as a provision for us and our children for ever, and which your honourable House has placed, a sacred trust, in the hands of the Government and your servant the Public Trustee.

10. That such injury to your petitioner and others may be effected through political agitation, your petitioner submits, is proved by the successful agitation of a few years ago, when half the amount of the rents of the West Coast leases was remitted for a period of five years; but your petitioner does not believe that your honourable House would sanction any such injustice and breach of trust as that now asked for after your honourable House has been placed in possession of the facts.

11. That your petitioner is, by education and experience, well able to administer her own estate, whether occupied by a European leaseholder or by herself, and that your petitioner would be increasingly encouraged to improve such estate by building and planting if the management was in her own hands, safe from all interference and free from annoying and costly imposts; but your petitioner does not ask you to alter in any way the wise restrictions and provisions in the Crown grants which gave me and my people land for myself, ourselves, and descendants for ever.

12. Your petitioner therefore prays your honourable House to so legislate that, subject to the conditions of the Crown grants, your petitioner can alone administer her lands, to the great saving of expense, to the evolution of a better home, and to the general improvement of the lands which have been her ancestors' for numberless years, have been Crown-granted to her and her heirs by Her Most Gracious Majesty the late lamented Queen at the instance of your honourable House; to the making of your petitioner a responsible citizen who can be trusted, to the increase of her self-respect and self-reliance, and to the great advantage of those who shall inherit her property, and to the immense improvement of Native settlement in the colony.

13. That your petitioner humbly prays your honourable House to legislate at once in amelioration of your petitioner's grievances, which are those also of many others.

And your petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

KUINI WI RANGIPUPU.

REPORT OF PUBLIC TRUSTEE ON ABOVE PETITION.

The Public Trust Office, Wellington, 10th August, 1904.

Petition of Kuini Wi Rangipupu.

On this I have to report as follows:—

1. The petitioner is interested in West Coast Settlement Reserve grants only by succession. She was not an original owner in them.

2. No Native Land Court partition had been made for the exclusive benefit of the petitioner. She was entitled, with six other Native beneficiaries, to undivided interests in Crown Grant 3952 No. 2, comprising an area of 300 acres. The land-tax and local rates referred to in paragraph 2 of the petition have invariably been paid by the Public Trustee, who has no knowledge that any other rates or taxes have been demanded. Petitioner is not on the roll of the county in which the land she occupies is situated. The rates on this land have in the past been paid direct from the Public Trust Office.

3. Sir William Fox was appointed Commissioner for dealing with West Coast Settlement Reserves and reported to the Government in connection therewith. The reserves are now vested by statute in the Public Trustee, and petitioner is simply a Native beneficiary therein, and not entitled to benefits outside of the interests allowed to her many co-beneficiaries.

4. Petitioner has only an undivided interest in Crown Grant 3952 No. 2, and she had been allotted a homestead-site on lines similar to those carried out in providing other Natives interested in West Coast Settlement Reserves with homesteads. In consideration, however, of the petitioner (who is better known as Mrs. R. S. Thompson) being to some extent Europeanised, the Public Trustee in her case issued, in place of the usual occupation license, a lease under section 4 of "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act Amendment Act, 1893," which gives her a perpetual right of renewal to this allocation.

5. Petitioner has no specific "portions of land." Reserves she is interested in together with other beneficiaries are leased, and the Public Trustee charges only the regulation office rate of commission for collecting the rents, which are disbursed after paying rates on the portions occupied by the Natives only, and Government land-tax.