

# PETITION

OF CERTAIN

RUNHOLDERS AND SETTLERS IN THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHLAND.

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Unto the Honourable the House of Representatives of New Zealand in Parliament convened, the Memorial of the Runholders in the Province of Southland,—

HUMBLY SHEWETH,—

That under the Land Laws at present in operation in this Province, your Memorialists have a right to the occupancy of Pastoral Lands in this Province, upon conditions stated in those laws, during the currency of their licenses, which are subject to be superseded only by the Proclamation of Hundreds or of Gold Fields.

That the present financial condition of the Province has led the Provincial Government to the conclusion that, in order to obtain an increase in the revenue from Pastoral Lands, it is necessary to alter those laws in a manner which would trench upon the rights of your Memorialists.

That your Memorialists, recognizing the benefit to the Province which would flow from an alteration such as would secure to it a fixed revenue of considerable amount and of a permanent character, have agreed to certain alterations, which if enacted would assimilate the Land Laws of this Province to those in operation in the Province of Canterbury as lately amended.

That the Provincial Council has recommended those alterations with the following exceptions, namely, to reduce the price of Land to twenty shillings per acre and to extend the Hundreds.

That your Memorialists are of opinion that such a reduction in the price of Land would operate prejudicially on their interests. That those interests merit consideration, inasmuch as your Memorialists are the producers of the chief, almost the only export of this Province, while it would lead to a sacrifice of the territory of the Province at a price which your Memorialists deem to be inadequate; and that the further extension of Hundreds would not be beneficial to this Province, and cannot be required to facilitate its settlement by agriculturists if free selection is permitted within it.

That your Memorialists are willing to accede to the recommendations of the Provincial Council with the exceptions above referred to, as a fixed revenue of considerable amount would thereby accrue to the Province; but in the event of the recommendations of the Provincial Council, bearing upon the price of Land and the extension of Hundreds, being embodied in an Act of the General Assembly, such Act might operate so injuriously on the interests of your Memorialists as to deter them from accepting Pastoral Leases under the altered conditions, and thus for a number of years the Province would fail to obtain the contemplated revenue referred to.

Your Memorialists therefore pray that your Honourable House would take the circumstances into your consideration, and determine the nature of the alterations to be made in the Land Laws of the Province of Southland as may be just.

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

[Here follow twenty-two signatures.]