

You may perhaps say to us, If all you say is true, how is it that you remained silent till now? Why, you well know that we are not like you—quick in the race of mental attainments; we are lagging far behind in these things. When these land transactions took place, our chiefs were scarcely able to read written language; they were often too ready to consent their names to be signed under writings the contents of which were either in part or totally absent from their minds. Judge yourselves, the Honorable Members of Parliament, who listen to our complaints in this petition: Had the eyes of these our chiefs been open in those days, would they have consented to part with all the heritage that God has given them and their future offspring and descendants—all this vast territory—for the crumbs that fell from the white man's table—for this £2,000 odd?

The daylight was slow in dawning upon us. It's only after one of our race entered Parliament that we became acquainted, little by little, with the ways by which the white man's land-purchasers beguiled the whole island from us. What these land-purchasers said to our elders who ceded the land is indelibly written in their and their children's minds, but this writing does not correspond to those of Mr. Kemp in his deed. Wakefield said, "One out of every ten acres shall revert to the Natives." Has this condition of sale ever been fulfilled during these thirty years which have rolled past since our elders made this contract with Wakefield? Those threats with which Kemp intimidated us: is it not the white man's law that intimidation will annul the validity of a contract?

Those promises of Mr. Mantell: He will ask Her Majesty's Minister to pay for that vast territory which we never ceded to Kemp (a territory amounting to more than thirteen millions of acres). The fault is not his that these promises were never made good to us.

These promises are a condition attached to the land. If the condition is not fulfilled, the land is not redeemed. Nevertheless we are dispossessed of all the land: is it because we are so few and powerless? no doubt, had Naboth been the stronger Jezebel would not have gloried over his vineyard.

Some may perhaps suppose that all these arguments have been settled in the Land Court, at its sitting at Christchurch and Dunedin in the year 1868. It is not so. We never expected that Court to be invested with power to settle complaints of such vast interest to us. We were therefore not prepared to submit our case to that Court. Our estimation of that Land Court was completely confirmed when it stumbled over the Crown grant by which the Princess Street Reserve was made over to the Province of Otago. If that reserve was ours by right, could a Crown grant have the effect to turn right into wrong?

Could such a Court investigate our declaration that Kemp's Land Purchase Deed is null and void? 1st. Because it was extracted from us through intimidation. 2nd. Because the consent of cession was obtained at sea, on board of a man-of-war; our elders could not know but that a continued refusal on their part would transform that man-of-war into a prison, or something still worse to them. 3rd. Because the boundaries mentioned in that deed are not the boundaries which were settled verbally between Kemp and our elders, the land-sellers.

It is often said in the North Island—The Natives of the Middle Island are well off; they are living by the rent of their lands. This is not so. If the land given us by the Government is individualized, the proportion to each Native is as follows:—

At the Heads, Otago, about ...	...	...	...	...	50 acres each.
„ Waikouaiti, about ...	...	...	...	...	20 „
„ Moeraki, about ...	...	...	...	...	5½ „
„ Waitaki, about ...	...	...	...	...	7½ „
„ Waikawa, about ...	...	...	...	...	10 „
„ Tauhina, about ...	...	...	...	...	3 „
„ Arowhenua, Waipopo, Te Waiateruati, Timaru, and Taumutu, taken all together ...	...	...	...	...	6 „
„ Rapaki and Port Levy ...	...	...	...	...	14 „
„ Kaiapoi ...	...	...	...	...	16 „

The condition of the Natives of the Middle Island is bad. As long as we have strength to work as servants to the Europeans, as long as the market is accepting that servitude, we are keeping ourselves and families above want. Should this strength and the market fail—and the time will come that it will—then we Natives will be little better than a mass of paupers thrown upon the present lords of the land.

The burden of our petition is, that the white man has grasped at our fifty millions of acres in the Middle Island without any equitable return or provision for the Natives. That such transactions as C. Wakefield's, and his friends Kemp and Mantell, are unintelligible and unjust without the condition of one acre out of every ten for the Natives; for instance, Kemp extorts the consent of the cession of about seven million acres at Akaroa for £2,000, and, not content with that, worded his deed so loosely as to convey the idea of having agreed for twenty millions of acres (namely, nearly all the land included in the Otago and Canterbury Provinces). Is this equitable without the condition of one in ten acres out of the cession for the Natives?

The proof of this condition has lately been required from us. Why, if this condition is not expressed in the deed, the fault is not ours. If it is, why has it never been fulfilled to us?

Governor Sir G. Grey says that the Otepoti acre (Princess Street Reserve) was a tardy act of justice to the Native sellers of the Otago Block, who were entitled, by the terms of the original scheme of the Company, to have reserved for their benefit one acre to every ten of the allotments sold in the town of Dunedin, &c. But this condition embodies a sufficient provision for the Natives of the Middle Island if applied in its true spirit to all the land ceded to the Company—the Otepoti acre is a mere mockery. Loud and universal was the cry formerly against private traders buying landed estates for fish-hooks and scissors in New Zealand; but without that condition of one out of every ten acres over the whole cession, Wakefield's, Kemp's, and Mantell's transactions would leave the worst of private land-sharking far behind.