

PETITION.

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

THE petition of Joshua Jones, of Mokau, Taranaki, humbly sheweth,—

1. That your petitioner arrived in this country in 1876, and shortly afterwards proceeded to open friendly negotiations with the King-country Natives with a view of settling at Mokau. That at this named period the Government of the colony and the Natives of that part of the country were at variance, no Europeans being allowed by the Natives to even enter their territory, and an armed force of Constabulary at large expenditure was maintained by the Government to protect European settlers from Native aggression.

2. That upon the accession to office of Sir George Grey as Prime Minister in 1877 the leading chiefs of the King-country and their people desired to renew the friendship with that statesman that had existed with him as Governor before troublesome times arose. That your petitioner was entrusted with the correspondence and negotiations, verbal and in writing, which led to friendship being again established between that statesman, representing the Government, and the Natives, which has remained unbroken.

3. That the cementing of friendship between Sir George Grey and the Natives, and the opening of the King-country at Mokau on the south by his personal visits to Waitara and at Te Kopua on the north, led to the establishment of permanent peace and the disbanding of the armed forces, thereby saving the colony an enormous annual expenditure.

4. That in consideration of the services rendered by your petitioner in assisting to establish peaceable relations he was assured personally and in writing by the Government of its support in negotiating for the lease of a block of land on the south bank, Mokau River. That upon a change of Government taking place this pledge became violated in a most unrighteous manner, and obstructions were for several years thrown in the way by Government officials of your petitioner acquiring any titles or secure occupation of the said land.

5. That in addition to the obstructions set up by Government officials your petitioner was further thwarted in his dealings by the passing of the Native Land Alienation Restriction Act, 1884, which by a mistake included the Mokau lands and prevented his dealings with the same.

6. That in 1885 your petitioner was compelled to appeal to Parliament for relief from the disability named in the last preceding paragraph, and provision was granted in the Special Powers and Contracts Act, 1885, and by notice in the *New Zealand Gazette*, 8th October, 1885, page 1180, removing the disability and facilitating the negotiations.

7. That your petitioner, believing his troubles were at an end, proceeded under the special provisions of the Act of 1885 to complete his titles, but was again prevented by a decision of the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court that this land was subject to certain prohibitive provisions in a statute of 1886; that the decision was such that could not be reviewed by a higher Court; that consequent upon this said decision your petitioner was compelled to again petition Parliament in 1888, when the decision of the Chief Judge was held to be wrong.

8. That in 1888 a Royal Commission was set up by the Government to inquire into the whole of your petitioner's dealings with respect to this land. The inquiry was most searching, extending from Wellington to Taranaki, Auckland, and the King-country. The report of this Commission, dated the 20th August, 1888, found no fault with my dealings, but, on the contrary, reflected upon the actions of the Government and its officers in preventing me completing my titles, and stated that I had suffered loss through being unable to do so. Your petitioner asks leave to quote the following, paragraph 9, from page 4 of the report: "The said Joshua Jones has undoubtedly suffered serious loss and injury through inability to make good his title, but we are unable to form any pecuniary estimate thereof."

9. That pursuant to the report of the said Royal Commission of 1888, the Government recommended and Parliament passed the Mokau-Mohakaiti (Local and Personal) Act, 1888.

10. That with respect to compensation for losses sustained through the actions of Government officials, as found by the Commission, your petitioner would state that the Prime Minister of the day, Sir Harry Atkinson, suggested to the Hon. G. M. Waterhouse and myself that if I put in a reasonable claim for compensation he would support it, but I replied to the Minister that, as his Government had considerably passed the local and personal statute, which I trusted would terminate all difficulties, I would not ask the colony for compensation. Both these gentlemen expressed the opinion that my attitude was generous, considering that I would yet have to incur much expense and loss of time in completing the titles that would have been unnecessary but for the difficulties before named.

11. That, during the period of the difficulties before named, certain gentlemen in Australia, comprising a syndicate with capital to work the minerals on the property at Mokau, sent an agent to this country for the purpose of commencing operations, but finding the difficulties with respect to the title he returned to Australia, and the project was abandoned. Also, an Auckland syndicate, who chartered a steamer to Mokau and inspected the property, refused for the same reason to embark their capital.

12. That after the passing of the Act of 1888 your petitioner proceeded to complete the titles, and the deeds of the owners who had signed the various instruments were confirmed by the Trust Commissioners after examination of the signatories, the titles being leasehold.

13. That at about the time the titles had become presentable to capitalists a financial crisis arose in New Zealand and in Australia, and your petitioner was compelled in 1892 to proceed