

To the Honourable the Members of the House of Representatives for the Colony of New Zealand in Council assembled.

The Memorial of the Provincial Council of the Province of Nelson in the Colony of New Zealand in Council assembled.

Sheweth—

That by the terms of agreement entered into between the purchasers of lands in the Settlement of Nelson in the Province of Nelson aforesaid, and the New Zealand Colonization Company, in the year 1842, it was especially provided that certain portions of land within the said Province should be set apart and conveyed to Trustees for the sole use, benefit, and advantage, of the Natives resident in the said Province.

That by a certain Deed of Grant from the Crown, bearing date the twenty-fifth day of July, 1853, certain Lands, purporting to be two blocks of Crown Lands, containing in the whole six hundred and sixty (660) acres, and by a certain other Deed of Grant from the Crown, bearing date the fourth day of August, 1853, certain blocks of Native Reserves, containing in the whole four hundred and eighteen (418) acres and five (5) perches, were conveyed by His Excellency the Governor of this Colony by a Crown Grant to the Right Reverend the Bishop of New Zealand in trust for an Industrial School at Motueka, in the Province of Nelson aforesaid, for the education of the children of both races.

That this Council protest against the said Grants for the following reasons:—

1st. Because a Grant of the Reserves set aside for the benefit of the Natives of New Zealand for purposes other than those contemplated by the terms of purchase of the Nelson Settlement, whereby the funds arising from the same are liable to be expended for the benefit of Europeans and of Natives throughout the Pacific Islands is a violation of the contract in virtue of which the settlement was founded.

2nd. Because in endowing with public Lands an Institution for education and industrial training, the utmost care should be taken that public property is not made subservient to sectarian religious teaching, and a blow thereby given to religious equality; but that an Institution so founded should be established on a basis which will admit children of all sects and creeds to partake of its advantages. Whereas the Grant given to the Bishop of New Zealand and his successors, of nearly eleven hundred (1100) acres of the most valuable land in the district of Motueka, is made over (without this necessary restriction) to the head of a particular Church, who may use it as an instrument of proselytism and religious aggrandisement.

That in calling the attention of your Honourable House to these Grants, this Council does not question in the smallest degree the philanthropic feeling which induced His Excellency Sir George Grey to endow the Institution in question, neither is this Council aware that the Bishop of New Zealand is cognizant of the Grant, or that he has accepted the Grant, or the trust therein imposed upon him by the same, but for the reasons hereinbefore set forth, this Council is of opinion that His Excellency the Governor, in his anxiety to benefit the Aborigines, has lost sight of the broad rule of justice, which can never be violated even for a benevolent end, without endangering the object it is intended to serve. And if there be one leading principle which this Council is desirous to see maintained, and which it believes to be essential to the future welfare and happiness of the Province, it is, that all religious bodies shall stand on a perfect equality in the State, and that no preference or privilege shall be obtained by any one sect or creed, to which all others shall not be equally entitled. The preference therefore given to the Bishop of New Zealand by these Grants, and the endowment of the Protestant Episcopal Church, with public land, and private reserves of great value and large extent, this Council cannot regard otherwise than as a most serious infringement of that religious equality which it is desirous to see maintained.

Your Memorialists therefore pray that the necessary steps may be taken to set these Grants aside.

Signed in the name and by order of the Council,

DONALD SINCLAIR,
Speaker.