

1873. Legislative Council. Petition From Renata Kawepo, And Twenty-Four Others.

(Presented by the Honourable Mr. Ngatata.)

Ordered by the Honourable the Legislative Council to be printed, 27th August, 1873.

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Council, in Parliament assembled.

This communication is from us, Native Chiefs now residing in Wellington.

Friends, we greet you. Our first word is to tell you the reason of our coming to Wellington, lest you be of the opinion that we are acting without authority; we have been sent here by our own people to listen to the speeches and to take notice of the doings of this Assembly. We would also say that this letter is no act of presumption of ours; indeed it is rather an indication to you of the pain, the sadness, the weeping and lamenting of our hearts, caused by the rules included in the Bill introduced before the Parliament regarding Native Reserves. Who is the Native that will submit to the load of this law? It is altogether impossible for us to trace out the intricate diction of this Bill; hence our decision to request that this Bill may be left in abeyance. Friends, it is for you to pay some attention, to our great anxiety, sadness, and grief; and we leave you to cause our requisition to meet with some respect, so that all the tribes may have a look at the Bill, and each tribe have an opportunity of considering its respective clauses, inasmuch as this law places difficulties upon the land, and is the cause of oppression to the Native; besides it violates the Queen's law as it tramples upon the root from which grew the Parliament of this Colony. This law places us under an unbearable restraint, and there is no such law for you the white people.

We are endeavouring to find out the reason why the Government have acted with such haste, especially as it has been said that the errors of the laws previously made would be eradicated,—nevertheless, they remain still. Another peculiarity is the sudden manner in which this Bill was sent to us; we had not the slightest knowledge of its contents, and we only heard a few of the clauses by chance. This law resembles the law for Pakeha children, drunkards, and lunatics. And we are compared by this law to infants, inebriates, and idiots, while according to our own knowledge we are no such people that we should be likened unto madmen; and therefore we beg that this law should be left without force, so that a new law for us may have proper publicity given to it in the Maori language, in order that it may be heard by all the loyal tribes living throughout the whole extent of this Island.

Ki te Tumuaki o te Runanga Kau matua.

He. Kupu atu tenei na matou no nga Rangatira e noho nei ki Poneke.

E hoa tena koe ko ta matou kupu tu atahi he korero atu na matou kia koe, i te take i haere mai ai matou ki Poneke nei, kei ki koe he pokanoa na matou. Na te iwi nui tonu matou i tonu mai ki to whakaronga i nga korero, ki te tiroiro i nga mahi o tenei whakaminenga. Waihoki ehara tenei Pukapuka i te whakahihi na matou, engari he whakaatu kia koe i te mamae i te tangi, i te pouri, i te aue o te ngakau, mo nga ritenga o tenei Pire i tapaea atu nei ki te aroaro o te Paremata, mo nga Whenua Rahui mo nga tangata Maori. Ko wai ra te tangata hei Waha i tenei Ture? Ekore rawa e taen e matou te whakataki i nga kupu kopikopiko o tenei Pire koia ta matou tino kupu tuturu kia waiho tenei Pire i te takiwa. E hoa, mau e ata titiro maitemamae nui, me to pouri, me te tangi, me te aue, mau ta matou tonu e whakamana, kia kite nga iwi katoa, kia ata hurihuri mi ata hurihuri ai tena iwi tena iwi no te mea e whakahe ana tenei ture i te whenua, e whakamate aua i te tangata. Ae whakahe ana ia i te Ture a te Kuini. Ne te te moa e takahi ana i te putake i tupu ai te Paremata o tenei Koroni.

He Ture whakatina tenei ia matou, kahore hoki he Ture i penei mo koutou mo nga Pakeha; e kimi ana matou i te take o tenei mahi porahurahu a te Kawanatanga, i kiia hoki ka murua nga he o era Ture kua oti nei i mua, otira e mau tonu nei ano, ko tetahi he mea tuku whakarere mai tenei Pire, kahoro rawa matou i mohio noa ki nga ritenga o roto i tenei Pire, i rongo noa matou, i etahi rarangi e korerotia ana.

E rito an a tenei Ture ki te Ture mo nga Tamariki Pakeha, mo nga Pakeha haurangi, mo nga Pakeha porangi a e whakaritea ana matou e tenei Ture ki nga Tamariki ki nga porangi ki nga haurangi. Ki to matou nei whakaaro e hara matou i te iwi pena, i whakaritea ai nga tangata Maori ki nga porangi. Koia matou ka tonu nei, kia waiho atu tenei Ture i te takiwa, kia panuitia marie tia tetahi Ture hou mo matou ki te reo Maori kia rongo katoa nga iwi e noho tika ana ki tenei Motu puta noa puta noa.

