

Petition 63/1914

20/652

Porirua, 14th September, 1914.

TO: THE HON. THE SECRETARY AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT  
OF THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS IN THE PARLIAMENT  
OF THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

MEMORANDUM:

This is a petition from us - one of your Maori tribe - that is from the hapus of the Whakatoheo tribe, and the petition sheweth:-

1. FIRST: We pray to your Honourable Assembly to look carefully into the great calamity that has befallen all our hapus. At the time the Government of New Zealand confiscated all our lands - known as Opitiki in the District of the Bay of Plenty in connection with the war of 1865 - boundaries starting at Turokeha, thence westwards by the sea shore for nearly twentyfour miles, extending to Te Horo; thence inland southwards to the confiscated boundary; thence eastwards by the said confiscated boundary to Potara-pa-hekeheke, thence to the north-east to Turokeha the commencing point. The breadth of this district is 22 miles - that is from Potara-pa-hekeheke to the sea shore.

FIRST explanation: is in respect to the nature of the great wrongs that were done to our hapus at the time this district was confiscated by the Government of New Zealand on account of the troubles caused by the war; all the permanent properties of our ancestors were taken right down to our parents, in the time of this confiscation; these properties were ancient Maori pas, cultivations, burial grounds, harbours for Maori shipping, pipi fishing, grounds, bush places for tawhara food, and snaring birds.

Second explanation: is in explanation in respect to the nature of the great wrongs that were done to these hapus of your Maori race. When the troubles were over and the confiscation had been established, a pape reserve was returned to the hapus of Whakatoheo. Past Governors have heard the great lamentation of this division of the Maori people on account of the sterility of the land - broken with numerous cliffs and gullies - only about 200 acres of pape reserve being ploughable - this being for six hapus of Whakatoheo.

2. SECOND: These troubles were not caused by our hapus and therefore why should our lands be taken. Now that we have been many years awaiting redress for your hapus, therefore we pray your Honourable Assembly to return to us our permanent kaimingas, mentioned in the first explanation given heretofore, in the same way as the Government returned their former permanent kaimingas to others.

3. THIRD: Your petitioners therefore pray to your Honourable Assembly to appoint a Commission to inquire into all these matters and to report to your Honourable House and your hapus will ever pray.

AND SAVE THE KING!

(SIGNED): WHAKA MATENE  
TAUHA NEKEWA  
PARA KALA

and 166 others.

36  
L. T. NEAL  
23/1/17

TO THE HON. THE SPEAKER AND HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The humble petition of your petitioners, aboriginal natives of New Zealand, representing the Whakatōhea Tribe, in the Bay of Plenty, sheweth:

1.-- That in January 1866 the Government of New Zealand confiscated about 450,000 acres of land in the Ōpōtiki district, including the whole of the land of the Whakatōhea tribe: their ancient Maori pas, cultivations, burial grounds, harbours for Maori shipping, fishing grounds and forest food procuring places.

2.-- That this confiscation of the lands of Whakatōhea tribe was made as a punishment for the part which it was then considered the Whakatōhea tribe had taken in the murder of the Revd. Volkner at Ōpōtiki in April 1865.

3.-- That although the murder of Rev. Volkner took place at Ōpōtiki the deed was not the work of the Whakatōhea tribe; but of Kereopa and his associates, who were not of that tribe but belonged to other parts of New Zealand, and who had then just made an expedition in force into Whakatōhea territory for the purpose of imposing upon that tribe a new and savage creed, with its crazy and brutalised rites: that many of the Whakatōhea (at least one half) remained loyal and had no participation in the murder, and that many others conformed to the new religion with fear and dislike, and were coerced and incited by Kereopa and his party into unwilling participation in the murder.

4.-- That the evidence of official documents clearly shows that Kereopa was the principal if not the sole instigator of the crime; that he alone conceived and planned the murder and that he was the ringleader and moving spirit in the execution of the wicked design, and the barbarities which accompanied it.

5.-- That as retribution for the murder many of the Whakatōhea tribe were killed by a punitive expedition in September, 1865,

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that after trial, several were executed on the scaffold, and the arch-criminal Meropeo himself after trial and confession, paid the extreme penalty of the law.

6.-- That within a very few years the whole of the disaffected and rebellious portion (less than one-half) of the tribe had returned to their allegiance, and had resumed the peaceful and industrious pursuits which they had followed before the outbreak, and which had been the subject of comment by our war visitors to their district.

7 - That in 1866 before the last of the sheketohea tribe had again rendered submission to European rule a Parliamentary Commission had reported that:-

"as about one-half of the original native owners had been freed; or neutral one-third of the whole land must be returned to them" and that in accordance with the conditions upon which the confiscated lands were granted to the Imperial Government provision should also have been made for released rebels: It is therefore clear that a large area of the confiscated land should have been given back to the sheketohea tribe.

8.-- That neither the recommendation of the committee, nor the conditions imposed by the Imperial Government were ever carried out, only small areas being returned to the sheketohea and the native land commission was compelled to report in 1868 that "they have little land left in their hands"

9.-- That your petitioners humbly submit that for a crime for which they were not responsible and in which they did not willingly participate, they have been doubly punished, firstly by the killing and execution of many of their members, and secondly by the confiscation of the greater part of their lands; that except for the short period of the outbreak at a time when the whole of the Maoris of the North Island were convulsed and

frenzied by war and superstition, they have, from the time of the advent of Europeans to the present time, been a consistently loyal peaceful and industrious people; and that, as compared with some other tribes - such as the Urewera who themselves were always disloyal, whose country was long a safe refuge for rebels and criminals and who yet suffered no confiscation, - the punishment meted out to the Whakatohea tribe has been heavy and grievous.

WHEREFORE your Petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable House may be pleased to recommend the Government to return to us some portions of our confiscated lands in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Imperial Government when assenting to confiscation of Maori lands.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

Legat. Whakatohea Whakatohea and others.