

No. 280.—HAWKE'S BAY AGRICULTURAL and PASTORAL SOCIETY.

THE petitioners pray that a remission of the duty charged on cups given as prizes by their Society be made to them.

I am directed to report that the Committee cannot recommend any alteration of the law with regard to a remission of duty on plate and plated ware in favour of agricultural societies.

15th October, 1878.

No. 316.—T. W. PORTER.

THE petitioner states that he has served the colony for fifteen years as private and officer in active service against rebel Natives, during which he received three wounds, and in several civil departments, and that, owing to a policy of retrenchment, the Government has dispensed with his services, but, owing to the fact that military service does not legally entitle him to consideration under the Civil Service Act, he has received no consideration for loss of permanent employment. He prays the House to consider his case and grant him relief.

The Committee find the petitioner did render service to the colony in a military capacity at a period when such services were essentially valuable, and ought not to go unrewarded.

I am directed to report that the Committee is of opinion that the petitioner is entitled to consideration on account of the special services rendered to the colony as an officer engaged in active operations against the rebel Natives on the East and West Coasts from 1866 to 1869, and therefore recommend the Government to deal favourably with his application.

17th October, 1878.

No. 304.—JOSEPH LOWNDES.

THE petitioner states, on behalf of himself and others engaged in the fish and oyster trade, that they view with alarm the intention of Government to pass a new Fisheries Bill this session. That some of the provisions of the proposed Bill will tend to destroy the trade and ruin the persons engaged in it. He prays that their views may receive favourable consideration.

I am directed to report that the Committee is of opinion that the petition be referred to Government for consideration.

17th October, 1878.

No. 146.—ANN COOMBES and JAMES GROVE.

THE petitioner, Ann Coombes, prays for inquiry into the circumstances which, she alleges, tended to hasten the death of her late husband.

The petitioner, James Groove, prays that an inquiry be instituted into the circumstances connected with his action in the above case, and especially into the circumstances of his committal for trial on an action for libel instituted against him by one of the members of the Wakefield School Committee, on account of a letter he wrote to the Board of Education, showing how harshly the Wakefield School Committee treated the schoolmaster, Mr. Coombes.

From inquiry made by the Committee, it appears that the School Committee appears to have acted harshly towards the schoolmaster and the petitioner, James Groove, and that the petitioner, James Groove, only acted with ordinary humanity in protesting to the Education Board with respect to the arbitrary acts of the Committee.

With respect to Ann Coombes the Committee has not directed me to make any report; but with respect to James Groove I am directed to report as follows:—

That the Committee recommend that the petitioner be paid the cost of defending the action instituted against him for libel—namely, £31 11s.—as the Committee consider that the case ought not to have been sent to the Supreme Court.

21st October, 1878.

No. 256.—W. RATTRAY and Another.

No. 272.—A. SCOTT and Others.

THE petitioners pray that certain amendments be made in the Education Act, which will bring it more into harmony with their views.

I am directed to report that, as the subject-matter of these petitions involves a question of public policy, the Committee do not consider it necessary to offer any opinion to the House.

21st October, 1878.

No. 260.—JAMES PATERSON and Others.

No. 283.—RESIDENTS of ROXBURGH.

No. 287.—THOMAS TAYLOR and Others.

No. 288.—W. J. G. BLUETT and others.

No. 314.—F. A. LEARMONTH and Others (No. 2).

THE petitioners pray for the construction of certain railways and bridges in their districts.

I am directed to report that, as the subject-matter of these petitions involve questions of public policy, the Committee do not consider it necessary to offer any opinion to the House.

21st October, 1878.