

for the communication of religious instruction in State schools, and pray that effect may be given to the foregoing representations.

I am directed to report that, the subject-matter of this petition being one of public policy, the Committee have no recommendation to make to the House.

20th July, 1881.

No. 22.—Petition of WILLIAM WILSHIRE and Others, of Christchurch.

THE petitioners state that they have to pay a carrier's license, and that contracts for three years were made privately with Heywood and Co., for the conveyance of goods from the Railway-station, Christchurch, which they believe to be prejudicial to the owners of goods and to themselves, and pray that the contract may be cancelled or the valuation cause expunged.

The petitioners are in error in supposing that the contract for delivery of goods was let privately by the Railway Department to Messrs. Heywood and Co., as public tenders were called for in May, 1880.

I am directed to report that the Committee are of opinion that, in any future contract made out for the delivery of goods from the Railway-station to consignees, that clause 29 of the conditions, by which the successful tenderer is bound to take over the plant of outgoing contractor, be expunged.

22nd July, 1881.

No. 43.—Petition of ANDREW BLAIR, of Dunedin.

THE petitioner states that he was employed as engineer to the Port Chalmers Graving-dock, and that his services have been dispensed with. He prays that he may receive compensation for loss of appointment, or be reinstated.

I am directed to report that the Committee are of opinion that, under the circumstances of the petitioner's employment, he is not entitled to a retiring allowance; and, with respect to the petitioner's claim for reinstatement, the Committee have no recommendation to make.

22nd July, 1881.

No. 109.—Petition of G. STEVENS and Others, of Wellington.

THE petitioners state that labour executed at the printing office in Lyttelton Gaol is competing against free labour, and submit that the contest entered into is of an unjust nature. They pray that the House will afford such relief as it may seem meet.

I am directed to report that the Committee, having considered the prayer of the petitioners, are of opinion that it is not advisable to restrict the employment of prisoners in the direction asked for by the petitioners, as the recognition of such a principle would have to be generally applied to all trades, and thus prevent the employment and improvement of prisoners in gaol.

22nd July, 1881.

No. 47.—Petition of SHIPOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, of Auckland.

THE petitioners pray that, in justice to the shipping interests of the colony, the House will alter the pilotage exemption certificates now in force, and assimilate them to those of the neighbouring colonies of Australia.

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

27th July, 1881.

No. 136.—Petition of SAMUEL STEPHENSON, of the Thames.

THE petitioner states that he resided and held a license as hotelkeeper at Grahamstown, that he deposited with the Collector of Customs in due time the sum of £40 and received his license, and that his house was destroyed by fire; he then purchased the adjoining premises, but was refused the transfer on the ground that the license had been illegally issued. He prays the House to award such compensation for the loss he has sustained as it shall see just.

I am directed to report that the Committee is of opinion that the Borough Council of the Thames should refund the license fee of £40, as it appears it was paid for a license which was never given effect to, owing to a doubt as to its legality; and recommend the Government to withhold any money due to the borough until this money is paid to the person entitled to it.

27th July, 1881.

No. 126.—Petition of W A MOSLEY, of Inch Clutha.

THE petitioner states that he has sustained heavy damages upon his property on Inch Clutha, caused by the railway embankment at Balclutha damming back the flood-water of the river, and causing the river in 1878 to overflow his property for eight months, whereby he suffered great loss. He prays that the case may be heard by an Arbitration Court, or by the Law Courts of the land; also that steps be taken to prevent further loss and damage.

I am directed to report that there is no satisfactory evidence before the Committee to show that the damage to the petitioner's land has been caused by the railway embankment; but the Committee recommend the Government to make inquiry into the question of whether the railway embankment has the effect of damming back the river when flooded, and if such is found to be the case, that suitable openings be made to relieve the flood-waters, and so prevent, as far as possible, any damage arising in the future.

27th July, 1881.

No. 56.—Petition of J E F COYLE, of Dunedin.

THE petitioner states that in June, 1878, he contracted to survey certain Crown lands in the Provincial District of Canterbury; that having to send in preliminary plans of his work, and alterations made in