

No. 232.—Petition of GEORGE BROADBENT and other Residents of Dunedin.  
In favour of the Gaming and Lotteries Bill.

I am directed to report that, the subject-matter of these petitions being now under the consideration of the House, the Committee do not consider it necessary to make any special recommendation.

4th August, 1881.

No. 233.—Petition of EDWARD SMETHURST, of Kaiapoi.

THE petitioner prays that sand, grit, or gravel may be carried on the railways at an uniform rate.

I am directed to report that the Committee refer the petition to the Government for consideration.

4th August, 1881.

No. 100.—Petition of CHRISTIAN BLUCHER, WILLIAM BLUCHER, and GUSTAVE BLUCHER,  
of Dairy Flat, Waitemata.

THE petitioners state that they reside at Dairy Flat, Waitemata; that on the 1st August, 1880, William and Gustave Blucher were arrested on suspicion of stealing a bull, and confined in gaol, bail being refused; that after seven days the case was withdrawn, without giving the petitioners the chance to vindicate their honor and good name, and they pray the House to grant them redress.

I am directed to report that, having inquired into the case of the petitioners, and obtained the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, the Committee find that they have a remedy at law if they can prove that a prosecution was improperly commenced against them for the commission of an indictable offence of which they were innocent. The Committee cannot therefore recommend the prayer of the petition to the favourable consideration of the House.

5th August, 1881.

No. 205.—Petition of STEPHENS AND STEPHENS.

THE petitioners, by their agent Mr. William Hunter Reynolds, state that they petitioned the House last session, asking redress on behalf of the persons interested in the will of the late James Schoefield Douglas; that one Edward Ffrancis Ward, Registrar of the Supreme Court of Dunedin, by order of the Court, was appointed trustee of the estate; that the said trustee left Otago without rendering an account; that the petition was referred to the Public Petitions Committee, and it was reported on as follows:—"That, taking into consideration the fact, that the Registrar of the Supreme Court was appointed trustee without the usual bond for the proper performance of his duty, the Committee are of opinion that the Government cannot divest itself of moral responsibility, and recommend that the Crown Prosecutor be instructed to take action against the said Edward Ffrancis Ward, on behalf of Jane Douglas, to recover the property which appears to be misappropriated." That during the recess the Government have been frequently appealed to to give effect to the above report, which has not yet been done. The petitioner now prays that further action may be taken.

I am directed to report that it appears, from the evidence before the Committee, that money to the amount of at least £1,226 has been received by Edward Ffrancis Ward, as trustee for the estate of the late James Schoefield Douglas, and that no account whatever has been furnished by him to the Supreme Court, as ordered by Mr. Justice Chapman on the 5th day of September, 1873, to be made on or before the 10th August, 1874, and therefore there appears a *prima facie* case of misappropriation of the estate. The Committee are of opinion that it was clearly the duty of the Registrar of the Supreme Court at Dunedin to see that the order of the Court was complied with; this duty not having been performed by their officer, the Government cannot escape responsibility in the matter. The Committee therefore recommend the Government to instruct the Registrar of the Supreme Court at Dunedin to take action against Edward Ffrancis Ward, to cause him to furnish a true account of his administration of the estate of the late James Schoefield Douglas, and that, failing the furnishing of any satisfactory account of his administration, to take such further action as may be deemed advisable in the public interest.

9th August, 1881.

No. 45.—Petition of HECTOR MCNEIL CAMPBELL.

THE petitioner states that he was employed as Sheep Inspector in the Poverty Bay District; that a charge was preferred against him, by Mr. Poynter, of insobriety, upon which he was suspended, and told that if he resigned he would be reappointed in a short time; upon this promise he resigned, and that such promise made twelve months since has not been fulfilled. He prays that the House will inquire into the charge made against him, and make such recommendation as may seem meet.

I am directed to report that, having made inquiry into the petitioner's case, the Committee do not see any sufficient cause to recommend that the decision of the Government be departed from; but as it appears that some promise was made to him, that his application for re-employment would be considered if his conduct for the next twelve months would justify it, the Committee recommend the Government to give such employment when opportunity offers, if the conditions under which the promise was given have been complied with.

9th August, 1881.

No. 141.—Petition of G. KINGE and Others, Dairymen, of Christchurch.

THE petitioners state that a tax is proposed to be imposed upon the dairymen of Christchurch, and pray the House will resist the imposition of the proposed tax, as it will prove ruinous to them.

I am directed to report that the Committee are of opinion that the House should deal with the subject-matter of the petition during the present session.

11th August, 1881.