

deserving of consideration at the hands of the Legislature, so as to enable them to fulfil their engagements, and, with this view, the Committee hopes to submit suggestions when its report on the Government Land Bill is brought up.

3rd August, 1882.

LAND BOARDS BILL.

THE Waste Lands Committee, to whom was referred the above Bill, are of opinion that the proposed change, by which the Waste Lands Boards would become elective bodies, would in several cases involve reconstitution of districts and other changes in the existing land law which could not be effected hastily without creating confusion and causing considerable extra expense. They are of opinion that the question should be further considered by the Government in the recess, with the view of ascertaining whether any plan can be devised by which a representative character should be secured to these Boards, where they continue to exist, without diminishing the responsibility to Parliament of the Ministerial head of the department.

4th August, 1882.

DISPOSAL OF PASTORAL LANDS BILL.

THE Waste Lands Committee, to whom was referred the above Bill, having taken evidence upon the subject, have duly considered the Bill.

I am directed to report: From the evidence before the Committee, it appears that, with the exception of the pastoral leases in Otago, which fall in in February, 1883, the provisions of this Bill would be practically inoperative for the next eight years; (2) that, with the exception of the provision which limits the tenure of pastoral land to ten years, the runs falling in next year can be advantageously dealt with under the law at present in force; (3) that the Committee will recommend an amendment in the Government Land Bill, having for its object an extension of tenure in respect of purely pastoral lands.

4th August, 1882.

No. 328.—Petition of J. C. WASON.

THE petitioner states that he is a farmer in the Ashburton County, and, having planted 125 acres with pines and deciduous trees, he applied to the Christchurch Waste Lands Board for a grant of land in respect thereof, in terms of "The Forest Trees Planting Encouragement Act, 1871," but the Board declined to receive his application. He then appealed to the Supreme Court, the Judge of which considered him entitled to receive 250 acres, and, having selected land to that extent, the Board duly forwarded his application to the Government, who, however, refused to grant it. He now prays for relief.

I am directed to report: That, as the subject matter of Mr. Wason's petition is one of law, and as a Judge of the Supreme Court has given a judgment on the point, your Committee recommend that the Government should accept the Judge's interpretation of "The Forest Trees Planting Encouragement Act, 1871," and grant Mr. Wason's application.

8th August, 1882.

No. 372.—Petition of THEODORE ARNOLD and Others.

THE petitioners are village settlers of South Rakaia under the deferred-payment system, and state that no commonage reserve has been made, as was proposed, for such settlements. They therefore pray that fifty acres may be set apart for the use of *bona fide* village settlers, and vested in either the South Rakaia Road Board or the Ashburton County Council.

I am directed to report: That the petition be referred to the Government.

8th August, 1882.

No. 341.—Petition of JAMES SKEAT and Others.

THE petitioners took up and occupied on the deferred-payment system sections in Block XI., Te Aroha (Waitoa), Provincial District of Auckland, under a promise that the land would be drained by the Government. The drains, however, when completed, were found quite inadequate to carry off the water, and the petitioners are consequently unable to fulfil the conditions of their tenure. They pray that the lands may be properly drained, so that they may beneficially occupy them.

I am directed to report: That the petition be referred to the Government for their favourable consideration.

8th August, 1882.

No. 285.—Petition of WILLIAM COURTNEY.

THE case of the petitioner is that, in 1876, he took up on the deferred-payment system three allotments in the Taranaki Land District, and expended thereon £220; but owing to the depression caused by the unsettled state of Native affairs he became unable to continue the payment of his instalments, and so forfeited his selection. Subsequently he became the transferee of a section at Opunake, taken up on deferred-payments by one Walton Pell, who, from ill-health, had failed to comply with the conditions of his license. The Commissioner of Crown Lands at Patea declined to transfer this section to the petitioner upon the grounds that petitioner, having already held and forfeited one section, was ineligible as the holder of another; and, further, that the transferrer, Walton Pell, being himself a defaulter, was not in a position to transfer his interest.

I am directed to report: That the Committee is unable to recommend compliance with the petition, inasmuch as it would thereby be establishing a precedent which would virtually set aside the provisions laid down by the Legislature for the disposal of land on deferred payments.

8th August, 1882.