

No. 108.—Petition of WILLIAM KEALL and Others.

THE petitioners pray that more stringent measures be passed for the protection of girls and young women, and especially that the age of consent may be raised to eighteen.

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

10th June, 1886.

No. 104.—Petition of ANDREW PRIMROSE and Others.

THE petitioners, members of the Waikato County Council and the local bodies within the county, pray for amendments in "The Hospital and Charitable Institutions Act, 1885."

I am directed to report that, in the opinion of the Committee, this petition should be referred to the Government for consideration.

10th June, 1886.

No. 11.—Petition of WILLIAM CAMERON and Others.

THE petitioners state that they have had contracts under the Public Works Department, and, when suitable opportunities offer themselves, will be found ready to tender again; but they are seriously deterred from doing so, owing to the very stringent character of the conditions, which in tendering they are required to submit to. They allege that these conditions are open to two grave objections: (1.) They abound with great uncertainty, the consequences of which are made to fall on the contractor. (2.) They confer very great powers upon the Engineer, which may be most arbitrarily exercised, without any appeal therefrom. They pray for relief.

I am directed to report that, in the opinion of the Committee, this petition should be referred to the Government for consideration. The Committee would direct the attention of the Government to the mode of settling disputes between the Government and contractors in Victoria, as contained in their conditions of tendering.

10th June, 1886.

No. 46.—Petition of CHARLES WHISKER and Others.

THE petitioners state that a portion of the Borough Councillors of Newmarket are trying to have Newmarket and York Roads closed against traffic, and the course of the same changed, which will be of great loss to them; that the roads have been used by the public for twenty-five years; and that gates at the railway-crossings would answer all purposes. They pray that the said roads may not be closed.

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

10th June, 1886.

No. 52.—Petition of ROBERT COBB.

THE petitioner states that he is the breeder of a stud-flock of sheep, and exhibits at the various shows in the North Island; that in November, 1885, he returned from the Wairarapa shows by steamer to Foxton, bringing with him several of his stud sheep; that he telegraphed to the Inspector to the effect that he would hold his sheep at wharf for dipping; that on arrival at Foxton he was compelled to land the sheep, in order to allow the steamer to discharge cargo, but held them until the Inspector arrived, when they were found clean; that he was then informed he had committed a breach of section 35 of the Sheep Act, by landing the sheep previous to inspection on board; that in January, 1886, he pleaded guilty to the charge, and was fined £100, the Magistrate regretting that he had not the power to inflict a nominal fine. He prays for the fine to be returned, or other relief.

I am directed to report that, as the Magistrate imposed the fine because he had no option, and as it was far in excess of what it should have been, the Committee would recommend that, on the petitioner paying the costs incurred by the department, viz., £7 6s., the balance of the fine should be remitted.

11th June, 1886.

Nos. 2, 12, 22, 26, and 32.—Petitions of ARTHUR STEELE FORD, WILLIAM WHELAN, ALBERT H. RUSSELL, DAVID KENEALY, and ROBERT STEVENS.

THE petitioners allege that they are entitled to grants of land for military services.

I am directed to report that, in the opinion of this Committee, these petitions should be referred to the Waste Lands Committee.

15th June, 1886.

No. 15.—Petition of JOHN DOW BUSBY.

THE petitioner states that in 1883 he discovered that a portion of his sheep was infected with scab; that the infection was caused by wild sheep on neighbouring lands; that as soon as he discovered the disease he proceeded to clean his sheep, but could not succeed in doing so until August, 1884; that at the expiration of nine months, the period allowed by law, he was convicted of having scabby sheep, and fined £269 17s. 6d.; that he was not compelled to pay, but gave his bond to do so, under the full belief that it would be cancelled when his sheep proved to be clean; that his flock has been entirely free from scab since August, 1884; nevertheless, he has been compelled to pay the fine. He prays for relief.

I am directed to report that the Committee can see no reason to alter the decision arrived at last year.

15th June, 1886.