

on the part of the State to make concessions to any one particular class of land-occupants unless it is prepared to do so to every other class under similar circumstances, there being but little distinction as regards the question at issue between the case of the petitioners and that of those who have acquired land from the Crown on freehold for cash at prices which may have proved to be out of keeping with the subsequent market-value of produce; that, while the petitioners' case is undoubtedly one of hardship, it is hoped that the recent rise in the market-value of wool may go far to improve their position. For these reasons the Committee cannot recommend the prayer of the petitioners.

28th July, 1886.

No. 95.—Petition of THOMAS BRYDONE and Others. (For minutes of evidence *vide* I-4A.)

THE petitioners state that they are pastoral tenants of the Crown in the Provincial Districts of Otago and Southland; that they acquired their holdings in 1882 and 1883 at public auction; that the rabbit pest has since reached its climax, and that wool and other produce has greatly fallen in price; that the prices they paid for the land were too high. They pray for inquiry into the condition of the pastoral tenants, and for such relief as the circumstances may demand.

I have the honour to report as follows: Having carefully considered the subject of this petition, and taken evidence thereon, the Committee are of opinion that it would be injudicious and impolitic on the part of the State to make concessions to any one particular class of land-occupants unless it is prepared to do so to every other class under similar circumstances, there being but little distinction as regards the question at issue between the case of the petitioners and that of those who have acquired land from the Crown on freehold for cash at prices which may have proved to be out of keeping with the subsequent market-value of produce; that, while the petitioners' case is undoubtedly one of hardship, it is hoped that the recent rise in the market-value of wool may go far to improve their position. For these reasons the Committee cannot recommend the prayer of the petitioners.

28th July, 1886.

No. 133.—Petition of WILLIAM MOORE and Others.

THE petitioners state that in 1871 and 1872 they were enrolled as members of the Bruce Rifle Volunteers under "The Volunteer Act, 1865;" that they served as efficient Volunteers for five years, and became entitled to receive land-scrip to the value of £30; that the then captain of the company undertook to put in their claims for scrip; that he omitted to do so in time; that a Royal Commission was held in Dunedin to inquire into similar claims to the petitioners', but neither the petitioners nor the captain received any intimation whatever of the sitting of such Commission, and did not appear in consequence. They pray for inquiry and relief.

I have the honour to report as follows: The Committee recommend the prayer of the petition for the consideration of the Government, it being a case which demands inquiry.

28th July, 1886.

No. 145.—Petition of SARAH R. McLEOD.

THE petitioner states that her late husband served as a Volunteer and acted as Interpreter during the Maori war at the Bay of Islands, in consideration whereof the Government gave him scrip for forty acres of land; that about ten years ago she gave the scrip to her solicitor (Mr. Brandon) at Wellington to put in at a Government sale; that he has mislaid it, and has not applied it to her advantage, or that of her husband. She prays for redress.

I have the honour to report as follows: That, after making a number of inquiries, the Committee are unable to obtain sufficient information to enable them to come to any satisfactory conclusion in this matter, and consider the Government department should prosecute the investigation in the recess.

3rd August, 1886.

No. 443.—Petition of BRIDGET BURGESS.

THE petitioner states that in the year 1873 her husband (Eugene Tweeney) was employed on the railway works at Pukekohe, and was accidentally killed by a fall of earth; that he left no issue and had made no will; that at the time of his death he owned seventeen acres at Pukekohe, of five of which he was the grantee under the New Zealand Settlements Acts, and the remainder he had purchased; that, owing to the law in force at the time, she was unable to deal with the said lands; that in 1881 she petitioned the House, and it was recommended that the petitioner, if equitably entitled, should have the land; that since that time she has made inquiries by letter and otherwise in Australia and Great Britain, and has been unable to discover any relatives of the said Eugene Tweeney; that she is unable to participate in the benefits of the Act of 1885 relating to persons dying intestate, as her husband died prior to the passing of that Act, and its provisions are not retrospective. She prays for relief.

I have the honour to report as follows: That this is a matter of legal administration, and consequently this Committee have no recommendation to make.

5th August, 1886.

No. 431.—Petition of BENJAMIN SAVAGE.

THE petitioner states that in 1844 he bought from the Natives a certain piece of land—about three acres—situate at Matata, Bay of Plenty; that he cultivated and lived thereon for twenty years; that his title was never disputed; that at the end of this time the Native rebellion broke out, and he and his family had to take flight to Mercury Bay; that when he returned to Matata after an absence of five years he found his property destroyed and his land surveyed as part of a town-