

1898.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC PETITIONS M TO Z COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF) ON THE PETITION OF COLEMAN PHILLIPS, OF FEATHERSTON, TOGETHER WITH PETITION, MINUTES OF EVIDENCE, AND EXHIBITS.

Brought up on the 2nd August, 1898; ordered to be printed, 15th September, 1898.

REPORT.

PETITIONER states that at the last general election he was a candidate for a seat in the House of Representatives as member for the Electorate of Wairarapa; that, through the action of the Returning Officer, Mr. Adam Armstrong, in fixing the 25th November, 1896, instead of the 27th November, as the latest day for receiving nominations, his own nomination, presented on the 26th November, was returned as being too late; that the action of the Returning Officer was not in accordance with "The Electoral Act Amendment Act, 1896"; and that he has suffered great personal inconvenience and loss thereby. He prays that for the future greater care may be exercised in selecting Returning Officers; and for other relief.

I am directed to report: That, in the opinion of the Committee, the evidence goes to show that, during the last general election, the conduct of Mr. Adam Armstrong, Returning Officer for the Electorate of Wairarapa, was irregular and improper; that the Committee thinks it is expedient in the future the Government should make careful inquiries before appointing Returning Officers; and that the Committee recommends the Government to amend "The Electoral Act Amendment Act, 1896," clause 15, with the view of definitely fixing the day and hour in which nominations for candidates for the House of Representatives shall close.

2nd August, 1898.

R. MEREDITH,
Chairman.

PETITION.

To the Honourable the Members of the House of Representatives of New Zealand in Parliament assembled.

THE petition of Coleman Phillips, of "The Knoll," Featherston, a barrister-at-law of the Supreme Court of New Zealand, humbly sheweth,—

1. That your petitioner was a candidate for Parliament at the last general election for the Wairarapa Electorate, Messrs. W. C. Buchanan and J. T. M. Hornsby being also candidates.

2. That Mr. Adam Armstrong was appointed the Returning Officer, to the general surprise of the whole district.

3. That the proper time (as fixed by section 15 of "The Electoral Act Amendment Act, 1896") for receiving nominations was up to Friday evening, the 27th day of November, 1896, "being the evening of the seventh day before the day of election"—viz., 4th December, 1896.

4. That, at 10.30 a.m. on the morning of Thursday, 26th November, your petitioner saw the Returning Officer, the said Mr. Adam Armstrong, with respect to his accepting his nomination, but he was informed that he, Mr. Armstrong, had closed the time for receiving nominations the previous day (Wednesday, 25th November).

5. That, at 11.15 a.m. on the said Thursday, your petitioner tendered Mr. Armstrong his nomination-paper in proper form, which he declined to accept.

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