

PURCHASE OF THE OTAHU ESTATE.

THE Waste Lands Committee, to whom above-mentioned subject was referred for investigation and report, have the honour to report that, having heard the statements of Mr. J. McKerrow, Chairman of the Land Purchase Board, also the Hon. J. G. Ward, M.H.R., Mr. Batger, and Mr. J. W. Kelly, M.H.R. (who withdrew all charges of impropriety against the department), they are satisfied there is no ground whatever for any charges in connection with the purchase of the Otahu Estate having been made against the Hon. Mr. Ward or the Land Purchase Department.

A copy of the evidence and proceedings of the inquiry is attached. (*Vide* Appendix I.—5A.)
23rd September, 1898.

No. 172.—Petition of THOMAS BARTON and Others, Woodleigh, Raglan.

PETITIONERS pray that their holdings may be revalued, with a view to the reduction of the rents paid by them.

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

4th October, 1898.

No. 179.—Petition of R. J. TRACEY and Others, Peria.

PETITIONERS pray for a Government grant of £400 for the purpose of widening and bridging the road between Peria and Mangatanewha.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommend that this petition be referred to Government for consideration.

4th October, 1898.

No. 174.—Petition of J. A. RIDDELL and Others, Otago Heads Road Board.

PETITIONERS pray that a Government surveyor be appointed to perform the survey-works of the Otago Heads Road Board.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommend that this petition be referred to Government for consideration.

4th October, 1898.

No. 235.—Petition of DUNCAN McRAE and Others, Strath Taieri.

PETITIONERS pray that their holdings in Strath Taieri, Otago, may be revalued, with a view to a reduction in the rents paid by them.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommend that this petition be referred to the Hon. the Minister of Lands for consideration.

4th October, 1898.

No. 202.—Petition of C. VINCENT and Others, Whangamarino.

PETITIONERS pray for a grant of money for the purpose of removing snags from the Whangamarino River.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommend that this petition be referred to Government for further inquiry.

4th October, 1898.

No. 190.—Petition of A. FINLAYSON and Others, Dipton.

PETITIONERS pray that Government will grant a subsidy of £200 towards opening 140 chains of road through Taringatura Survey District.

I am directed to report that the Committee have no recommendation to make upon this petition.

4th October, 1898.

No. 177.—Petition of GEORGE WARD DRAPER, Ratanui.

PETITIONER prays for compensation for the closing of a road which ran through his property at Ratanui.

I am directed to report that the Committee see no reason to vary the report brought up by the Waste Lands Committee in the session of 1897 upon a similar petition from the same person—viz., that the Committee have no recommendation to make upon this petition.

18th October, 1898.

Nos. 229, 310, and 313.—Petitions of DONALD McRAE and Others, ALEXANDER McLEAN and Others, and W. J. BAXTER and Others.

THE petitioners pray that the rents of their leaseholds may be reduced.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommend that these petitions be referred to the Government for consideration.

18th October, 1898.

No. 252.—Petition of E. WAGNER and Others, Opaheke.

PETITIONERS pray for a grant of money to form and metal a road through the Opaheke district.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommend that this petition be referred to the Government for consideration.

18th October, 1898.