

10. Your petitioner finds in several dredging companies the capital is being utilised for purposes other than those for which the public subscribed it, and that no genuine attempt is being made to carry out the purport of the prospectuses.

11. While your petitioner has found the Press of the colony ready and willing to aid him in exposing the flagrant breaches of the law, and the unscrupulous tactics which have been resorted to by vendors and their employes, he has at the same time been unable to thoroughly set out as a warning to investors in mining stock many of the unscrupulous tactics and utterly indefensible practices of certain promoters and others whom he desired to specifically name and criticize. Your petitioner found that the Press, while showing him every consideration, and granting him large space in the mining columns for setting forth the grievances of which he has to complain, were deterred by the drastic libel laws of the colony from publishing much that should have appeared, and if it appears to your honourable Council that what your petitioner has said on this subject is worthy of its consideration, he prays that greater freedom should be given to the public Press of the colony in the publication of facts concerning glaring evils that are being perpetrated in connection with an industry which is of vast importance to the colony.

12. Your petitioner has, during the past six months, continually inserted charges, over your petitioner's name and address, in the public Press of the colony on the irregularities complained of, none of which have been repudiated by the parties interested, and it is the humble opinion of your petitioner the present mining and companies laws are being openly ignored, proving in some respects the law is in urgent necessity of amendments, as under the present laws the investing public have not sufficient protection against the unscrupulous.

13. Your petitioner, on the 1st instant, forwarded to your Government his suggested amendments, which he has formulated as the result of actual and costly experience, and your petitioner believes that such amendments will, if made law, go far towards effectually removing the gross and highly flagrant abuses the dredging and mining industries are now suffering under, and which, to your petitioner's knowledge, are bringing serious discredit on the commercial morality of this colony.

Your petitioner humbly prays that your honourable Council will in its wisdom grant the relief desired, and, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Dated this 13th day of July, 1901.

HERBERT E. EASTON.

[NOTE.—A similar Petition, No. 231, was presented to the House of Representatives.]

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

FRIDAY, 16TH AUGUST, 1901.

THE Committee met at 11 a.m.

Present: Hon. the Chairman, Hon. Mr. Barnicoat, Hon. Mr. Jennings, Hon. Mr. Kerr, Hon. Mr. A. Lee Smith, Hon. Mr. Swanson, Hon. Mr. Twomey, Hon. Mr. W. C. Walker, C.M.G.

Order read referring to the Committee the petition of Herbert Ernest Easton.

Petition read.

Resolved, That the evidence given on this petition be taken on oath.

Petitioner attended, was sworn, and gave evidence.

Resolved, That Mr. W. R. Cook be summoned to attend the Committee in order to his being examined on this petition.

Then the Committee adjourned.

FRIDAY, 23RD AUGUST, 1901.

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Present: Hon. the Chairman, Hon. Mr. Barnicoat, Hon. Mr. Jennings, Hon. Mr. A. Lee Smith, Hon. Mr. Swanson, Hon. Mr. Twomey, Hon. Mr. W. C. Walker, C.M.G.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

Petition of Herbert Ernest Easton further considered.

Hon. Mr. Pinkerton attended.

Mr. Easton, the petitioner, and Mr. W. R. Cook attended. Petitioner gave further evidence.

Certain documents relating to the Lees Ferry Dredging Company were laid before the Committee.

Ordered, That copies of petitioner's evidence be supplied to the persons against whom charges have been made by the petitioner—viz., Mr. Cook, Mr. William Holsted, and Mr. William Howes.

Then the Committee adjourned.

THURSDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 1901.

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Present: Hon. the Chairman, Hon. Mr. Barnicoat, Hon. Mr. A. Lee Smith, Hon. Mr. Swanson, Hon. Mr. Twomey.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

Petition of Herbert Ernest Easton further considered.