

suitability; (2) ability to work and utilise land; (3) capability to fulfil conditions of lease; (4) capital, plant, stock, and other aids for working the land; (5) condition in life, whether married or single and the number of persons dependent upon him, whether landless or otherwise, and as to any other matter affecting the applicant and his application.

2. The Board should be empowered to give preference and priority to applications from (a) married men, widowers, widows, and women judicially separated from their husbands, with families, who are capable and suitable, by reason of possessing the necessary experience and means (including labour-power of family) and who are not only landless but really in need of land, (b) married men without families, with the necessary experience and other qualifications, (c) single men possessing the necessary experience and other qualifications, (d) applicants who have most frequently unsuccessfully applied at previous Government ballots.

3. The Board should also be empowered to reject any application (especially where the number of applicants exceeds the number of allotments available) including those of persons with sufficient means to acquire land in the open market; inexperienced, unsuitable, or undesirable persons; those not absolutely in need of land as a means of support; and those incapable of utilising the same to the best advantage; married women whose husbands already hold sufficient land; more than one member of a family; those who had secured an allotment at a previous ballot or sale; and the former owner of the land, his relatives and connections.

4. The Board should further be empowered to disallow an application for an allotment which, in the Board's opinion, is beyond the requirements, means, capability, or experience of the applicant.

5. Your Committee is also of opinion that in the case of Crown lands reasonable provision might be made for enabling men in business, artisans, and workmen to select and hold land if they are prepared to improve the same with the view of making provision for themselves and their families. It is considered that where such persons are able to comply with the other conditions exemption from residence might be granted, extending over a limited term of years, at the discretion of the Board and with the authority of the Minister. Provided that in all such cases the residential conditions are complied with by a registered substitute.

20th November, 1903.

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No. 462.—Petition of JOHN WILLIAM FREEMAN.

PETITIONER prays for a grant of land as a discharged soldier.

I am directed to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make.

21st November, 1903.

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No. 624.—Petition of PATRICK BROWN.

PETITIONER prays for 5 acres of land he did not receive for military services.

I am directed to report that, as petitioner had accepted compensation in cash for any deficiency, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

21st November, 1903.

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No. 656.—Petition of ARTHUR McKEOWN, Farmer, Pihama. (Second Report.)

PETITIONER prays for compensation for legal expenses paid owing to the action of the Public Trustee.

I am directed to report that the Lands Committee, to whom was referred its first report for reconsideration, has the honour to recommend that the petition be forwarded to the Government with a recommendation that a speedy and equitable settlement be made.

21st November, 1903.

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No. 665.—Petition of WILLIAM ROBERTSON, Sandymount. (Second Report.)

PETITIONER prays for compensation for land taken for roads.

I am directed to report that the Lands Committee, to whom was referred its first report for reconsideration, has the honour to recommend that the matter be allowed to remain over till next session, in order to give petitioner the opportunity of appearing before the Committee.

21st November, 1903.

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No. 719.—Petition of J. GORDON-JONES and Others.

PETITIONERS pray for relief in connection with their tenure of the Punakitere lands.

I am directed to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make.

21st November, 1903.

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No. 784.—Petition of M. W. LETTS, and 50 Others.

PETITIONERS pray for a grant of £1,000 for repairs to the Pakanae-Waimamamaka Road.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommends that the petition be referred to the Government for favourable consideration.

21st November, 1903.

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No. 818.—Petition of W. J. KATTERNS.

PETITIONER prays for inquiry into certain land transactions in Katikati.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommends the matter be left to the Commissioner of Crown Lands and the Land Board, Auckland, to deal with.

21st November, 1903.