

the Government to prepare and issue to Returning Officers and their Deputies a short and concise set of printed instructions to be observed by them in the discharge of their duties. (5.) The Committee had evidence submitted that Returning Officers in some places have been precluded from obtaining the services of suitable and competent men employed in the public and municipal offices, simply on the ground that they were so employed whilst others were unemployed. The Committee are strongly of opinion that this restriction on the choice of suitable officials by Returning Officers should be removed. (6.) If the foregoing recommendations are given effect to, and reasonable care exercised in the selection of officials for this important work, the Committee believe that greater confidence in the conduct of elections and polls will be secured.

25th August, 1904.

No. 658.—Petition of GERHARD J. MUELLER, of Auckland.

PETITIONER prays that he may be granted a pension on account of his retirement from the position of Assistant Surveyor-General and Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Provincial District of Auckland.

I am directed to report that the Committee is of the opinion the petitioner is only prevented by a technicality from receiving a pension, and that if the pension cannot be granted without a special Act, the Government be requested to introduce such a measure this session.

26th August, 1904.

No. 29.—Petition of JOHN JOSEPH STEPHENSON, of Auckland.

PETITIONER, late assistant magazine-keeper in the Defence Department, prays that he may be granted a pension or be reinstated in his office.

I am directed to report that this Committee finds the petitioner has served since 1871 in the Armed Constabulary Force and as arms-cleaner at Auckland; that during all that time the petitioner was under the impression he would be entitled to a pension on retirement; that in the year 1888 a return, B. - 18, was presented to Parliament showing the petitioner's name as being one of those entitled to a pension; that on the 30th April, 1904, the petitioner was retired, being granted three months' leave of absence on full pay, and was offered £319 11s. 1d. as a retiring-allowance. The petitioner asks to be granted pension in lieu of allowance. The Committee is of opinion that the petitioner has a moral claim to a pension.

30th August, 1904.

No. 342.—Petition of J. A. L. MEIKLE and 8 Others.

PETITIONERS pray that the names of their father, J. J. Meikle, and their deceased brother, Arthur Meikle, may be removed from the criminal records of the colony; and that they be granted the sum of £5,000 as compensation for the sufferings, &c., endured by them.

I am directed to report that the Committee is of opinion steps ought to be taken without further delay to attach to the criminal records of the colony a statement of the fact that J. J. Meikle was convicted on the evidence of a man named Lambert, who was subsequently imprisoned for having given perjured evidence in the case; that in view of the previous payments made to J. J. Meikle of £294 16s. for legal costs and £500 by way of compensation, and taking into consideration the fact that the said J. J. Meikle has given a receipt for same in full satisfaction of all claims and demands in connection with the case, the Committee cannot make any recommendation for compensation to the petitioners.

8th September, 1904.

No. 460.—Petition of R. H. TRAVERS and 42 Others, of Ngapenga, &c.

PETITIONERS pray that the Korapupu - Te Kume Road may be constructed.

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

8th September, 1904.

No. 566.—Petition of C. D. SCARROW, and 259 Others, of Taihape, &c.

PETITIONERS pray that portions of the Ohakune - Taihape Road may be metalled.

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

8th September, 1904.

No. 567.—Petition of T. G. PAYNE and 257 Others, of Mount Somers, &c.

PETITIONERS pray that a sufficient sum of money may be granted for the erection of certain bridges over the River Hinds, Bowyer's Stream.

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

8th September, 1904.