

No. 344.—Petition of H. G. ELL, of Christchurch.

PRAYING that inquiry be made into the proposed change in the location of departmental offices in Christchurch.

I am directed to report that in the opinion of the Committee it is desirable that such Departments as the Lands and Survey and Deeds Registration Departments should be accommodated in the same building, and that this petition should be referred to the Government for favourable consideration.

1st October, 1915.

No. 16.—Petition of W. J. GEDDIS and Another, of Auckland.

PRAYING for refund of costs incurred in defending an action for libel.

I am directed to report the Committee has no recommendation to make on this petition.

1st October, 1915.

No. 323.—Petition of WILLIAM A. JOHNSTON, of Auckland.

PRAYING for compensation for expenses and loss incurred by him through defending charges in the Magistrate's Court and Supreme Court.

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

1st October, 1915.

No. 320.—Petition of ROBERT CAIRNS, of Auckland.

PRAYING for recognition and compensation for alleged unlawful dismissal from the Waerenga Experimental Farm.

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

5th October, 1915.

No. 163.—Petition of FREDERICK EDWARD NORMAN GAUDIN, of Auckland.

PRAYING for inquiry before a Judge or Judges of the Supreme Court, or by a Select Committee of the House, into charges of war treason of which he was convicted.

I am directed to report that in the opinion of the Committee Frederick Edward Norman Gaudin committed offences against the military laws and Government of Samoa by removing gold in wilful defiance of a Proclamation issued by the Administrator, and also by carrying correspondence which had not passed the Samoan censorship. Such offences could not be overlooked by the military authorities of Samoa; but the sentence imposed by the Military Court, that of imprisonment for five years with hard labour, was out of all proportion to the offences committed.

There was no reason to suppose that in acting as he did the petitioner was animated by any intention to assist the enemy by any traitorous or disloyal purpose.

The evidence shows that the petitioner has suffered and is still suffering considerably as a result of the misconception in the public mind that he has been guilty of treason, which feeling is largely caused by the severity of the sentence imposed.

The Committee therefore recommends that the Government take immediate steps to put on public record that the petitioner, while he was guilty of and punished for breaches of military law, was in no way guilty of either treasonous conduct or treasonous intent, and recommends this petition, with the minutes of the evidence, to the Government for favourable consideration. (*Vide* Appendix I.—1A.)

5th October, 1915.

No. 328.—Petition of MARGARET HELM, of Dunedin.

PRAYING for a refund of police expenses incurred in connection with the extradition of James Chapman from Australia.

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

5th October, 1915.

No. 141.—Petition of DUNCAN ANDERSON, late of Wellington.

PRAYING for compensation for services rendered and loss incurred while in the Auckland Militia.

I am directed to report that in the opinion of the Committee this petition should be allowed to lapse.

7th October, 1915.

No. 258, Petition of C. E. BALDWIN and 599 Others; No. 277, Petition of E. G. BALL and 599 Others; No. 356, Petition of E. WHITTAKER and 99 Others; and No. 381, Petition of E. McAuliffe and 600 Others.

PRAYING that the land-tax be increased, and the Customs taxes on the necessities of life be reduced.

I am directed to report, as the matter involved is a question of policy and at present before the Government, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

7th October, 1915.