

1915.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC PETITIONS A TO L COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF) ON THE PETITION OF F. E. N. GAUDIN; WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND APPENDIX.

(MR. ESCOTT, CHAIRMAN.)

Report brought up on the 5th October, 1915, together with Petition and Minutes of Evidence, and ordered to be printed.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

THURSDAY, THE 1ST DAY OF JULY, 1915.

Ordered, "That a Committee be appointed, consisting of ten members, to consider all petitions from A to L that may be referred to it by the Petitions Classification Committee, to classify and prepare abstracts of such petitions in such form and manner as shall appear to it best suited to convey to this House all requisite information respecting their contents, and to report the same from time to time to this House, and to have power to report its opinions and observations thereon to this House; also to have power to call for persons and papers; three to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. Brown, Mr. J. S. Dickson, Mr. Escott, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Harris, Mr. Payne, Mr. W. D. Stewart, Dr. Thacker, Mr. Wright, and the mover."—(HON. MR. HERDMAN.)

THURSDAY, THE 9TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1915.

Ordered, "That the name of Mr. W. D. Stewart be discharged from the Public Petitions A to L Committee, and the name of Mr. T. W. Rhodes be added in lieu thereof."—(HON. MR. HERDMAN.)

REPORT.

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

PRAYING for the 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 takes immediate steps to put on public record that the petitioner, while he was guilty of, and was punished for, breaches of military law, was in no way guilty of either treasonous conduct or treasonous intent, and recommends this petition, with minutes of the evidence, to the Government for favourable consideration.

J. H. ESCOTT, Chairman.

5th October, 1915.

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