

The Committee has made a careful inquiry into the petitioner's case, having examined the petitioner and Mr. Barron, Office Surveyor, and read the reports of the Surveyor-General and the Chief Surveyor of Canterbury Provincial District.

The Committee find that the terms of the contract contained in the copy furnished by the department are different in one very essential particular from that furnished by the petitioner; the copy furnished by the petitioner being admitted by Mr. Barron to be a correct copy of the original in the Survey Office, Christchurch. The discrepancy referred to is contained in clause 34 of the special conditions. The copy furnished to the Committee by the Survey Department reads, "34. Special attention to be paid to the *written* applications." The copy furnished by the petitioner reads, "34. Special attention to be paid to the *within* applications." Clause 27 of the specification provides that in case of any dispute the matter is to be referred to the Surveyor-General, whose decision shall be final and conclusive.

I am directed to report that, owing to the absence of the personal evidence of the Chief Surveyor of the Provincial District of Canterbury, who arranged the terms of the contract with the petitioner, and supervised the execution of it, the Committee is unable to make a recommendation of a specific and final character.

The Committee is, however, of opinion that the petitioner has shown that some remuneration is due to him for the delay he has been subjected to in consequence of the terms of his contract not having been strictly complied with by the Survey Department. The Committee regrets that the Surveyor-General should have given an opinion on the case before the matter had been submitted to him in his judicial capacity, as provided by the terms of the specification, as such a premature decision prevents him from considering the case of the petitioner on its merits. The Committee recommends the Government to take all the circumstances of the case into consideration, and grant the petitioner fair compensation for loss occasioned by delay, and for the extra work which appears to have been performed by him.

27th August, 1880.

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No. 69.—Petition of W. CLARK and Others employed on the Auckland Railways.

THE petitioners state that they are entitled under regulations to receive a yearly increase of pay, but have not received it. They pray that relief be given them.

I am directed to report that it appears the regulations referred to have not the force of law, as they were issued under Ministerial authority, and were liable to be cancelled by the same authority, and were so cancelled. The Committee has therefore no recommendation to make on the petitioners' case.

27th August, 1880.

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No. 346.—Petition of RESIDENTS of Marlborough.

THE petitioners pray that one Robert Francis Bayley be restored to his position as mounted constable.

I am directed to report that, as the person who is said to be injuriously affected by loss of his appointment has not petitioned, the Committee consider the petition informal, and cannot therefore be dealt with.

27th August, 1880.

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No. 363.—Petition of FITZCLARENCE ROBERTS.

THE petitioner complains of a decision of the Police Magistrate by which he was unjustly fined £5 and costs for assaulting the police. He prays for inquiry.

I am directed to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make on the subject-matter of this petition.

27th August, 1880.

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No. 282.—Petition of W. J. GARWOOD.

THE petitioner prays that immediate steps be taken to give relief to one John Smart, on account of injuries he has sustained by an accident while employed as a navvy on the Wellington and Masterton Railway.

I am directed to report that, as the grievance complained of has not been sustained by the petitioner, but by another person who has not petitioned, the Committee consider the petition informal, and cannot therefore entertain it.

27th August, 1880.

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Nos. 321, 328, 334, and 336.—Petitions of MARSHALL AND COPELAND and Others, of Dunedin; MERCHANTS, BREWERS and HOTEL PROPRIETORS, and Others, of Wellington; LICENSED PUBLICANS of Westland; and MERCHANTS, BREWERS, and TRADESMEN of Christchurch.

THE petitioners state their objections to the provisions of the Licensing Bill, and pray that the House will not pass it in its present shape.

I am directed to report that, as the Licensing Bill has been discharged, the subject-matter of these petitions cannot now be dealt with. The Committee has therefore no recommendation to make.

27th August, 1880.

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No. 318.—Petition of ANNIE A. SPEAR and Others.

THE petitioners pray that the reading of the Bible be allowed in public schools.

I am directed to report that, as the subject-matter of this petition is now before the House, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

27th August, 1880.