

petitioners understand there is no legal power to compel husbands to support their families if the wives decline to prosecute; that some of the husbands leave for the neighbouring colonies, and that the law is powerless to bring them back or compel them to support their families. They pray the House will enact such measures as may be necessary, or that an extradition treaty might be obtained to bring back husbands, or make them support their wives and families.

I am directed to report that the law on the point referred to in the petition appears to the Committee unsatisfactory, and that, with a view of amending the law to meet the circumstances, the Committee refer the petition to the Government for consideration.

1st October, 1884.

No. 54, Sess. II.—Petition of SMITH, ANDERSON, and Co., and Others.

THE petitioners, residents of the Provincial District of Otago, state that the report of the Benevolent Institution shows that the amount of subsidy for twelve months received for charitable aid by that institution was £2,159; that Canterbury received in 1882 nearly £13,000, in 1883 £13,000, and up to March of this year Canterbury had received £6,000 from the Government out of votes for charitable purposes. They further state that the Benevolent Institution of Otago finds it impossible to meet the present demands upon its charity. They pray that Otago may be placed on the same footing as Canterbury with respect to charitable aid.

I am directed to report that the Committee consider that the unequal distribution of funds in aid of charitable institutions is unsatisfactory, and recommend this matter to the Government for consideration.

1st October, 1884.

No. 52, Sess. I.—Petition of D. H. McKENZIE and Others, Auckland.

THE petitioners, merchants, shipowners, and shipmasters, state that they have on several occasions petitioned the House on the subject of pilotage-exemption certificates, with a view of assimilating the certificates of New Zealand to those of the Australian Colonies, but so far with only partial success. They point out that the wording of clause 26 of the amended Harbours Act of 1883 is obscure. They also state that the clause enforcing annual payment of pilotage is still retained. They pray that this clause may be repealed.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommend the consideration of the Government to paragraph 3, with a view of amending the clause alluded to therein, so as to make its meaning more clear.

1st October, 1884.

No. 203, Sess. II.—Petition of W. G. GARRARD (No 1), Auckland.

THE petitioner states that he was falsely imprisoned at the hands of Thomas Cotter, Registrar of the Supreme Court. He prays for compensation, or that a new trial may be granted him.

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

1st October, 1884.

No. 257, Sess. II.—Petition of J. G. KINROSS and Others, Napier.

THE petitioners state that they are ratepayers in the Provincial District of Hawke's Bay, and pray that the Napier Harbour Boards Empowering and Loan Bill, 1884, may not pass into law, but that the House will cause the appointment of a Commission to investigate the whole question of the construction of a harbour for large ships.

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

1st October, 1884.

No. 65, Sess. II.—Petition of JAMES WILKIE, Waikato.

THE petitioner states that he has always been a duly-qualified elector; that on going to record his vote in June, 1884, he found his name had been struck off the roll. He prays that his name may be restored to the roll, and an inquiry made as to the reason of its omission.

I am directed to report that the Committee, having caused inquiry to be made into the matter, find there was no intentional neglect on the part of the Registration Officer, and have therefore no recommendation to make.

1st October, 1884.

No. 147, Sess. II.—Petition of C. W. HURSTHOUSE.

THE petitioner states that, while in the prosecution of his duties as a servant of the Government, he was, on the 20th March, 1883, violently seized by Maoris and taken to Te Kuiti, where his feet were chained together, and his hands tied, for forty-one hours, including two nights and one day; that he was robbed of all he had except his socks, trousers, and shirt, in which he had to pass the whole time, without food or water fit for human consumption. During the whole time he was in fear that he would be killed or allowed to perish from cold and hunger. He was rescued by friendly Maoris, and most of his property restored to him. That he suffered both in body and mind, and that he has not recovered from the shock then sustained.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommend the petition to the consideration of the Government.

3rd October, 1884.