

The Committee's report on this petition, having been referred back by the House for further consideration, I am directed to report that, in consideration of the age and poverty of the petitioner, the Committee recommends the Government to grant him a gratuity of £50.

19th August, 1891.

No. 445, Sess. II.—Petition of JOHN MALCOLM McCASKILL, of Hikutaia.

PETITIONER states that his father's property, at Hikutaia, was destroyed by Natives during the Maori war. He prays for relief.

I am directed to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make.

19th August, 1891.

No. 337, Sess. II.—Petition of JOHN JAMES W. WHITE, of Blenheim.

PETITIONER states that he was for sixteen years and a half in the Provincial Government and fourteen years and three-quarters in the General Government service, but has only been offered compensation for fourteen and three-quarter years' service only. He prays for relief.

I am directed to report that, in the opinion of the Committee, petitioner is only entitled to compensation for his service under the General Government, and that there are no special circumstances in connection with his case to justify the Committee in recommending any compensation for his Provincial Government service.

19th August, 1891.

No. 434, Sess. II.—Petition of J. W. THOMAS and DAVID BROWN, of Amberley.

PETITIONERS state that they tendered for the New River contract, and accompanied tender with a deposit-cheque for £100, and were not informed that their tender was not accepted until four months afterwards. They pray for relief.

I am directed to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make.

19th August, 1891.

Nos. 48 and 143, Sess. II.—Petitions of the Rev. J. S. LEWIS and 515 Others, and M. TREVEY and 120 Others, of Wellington.

PETITIONERS state that they believe that serious wrongs have been inflicted upon one G. W. Ell by the process of the Court of Bankruptcy having been used improperly to stay him in vindication of certain claims urged by him against Mr. Leonard Harper and others. They pray for relief.

I am directed to report: (1.) That one George Waldock Ell was formerly connected in business with the Messrs. Harper, of Christchurch, in cattle-, stock-, and other dealing. (2.) That on ceasing business operations legal proceedings were commenced by Ell against the Harpers, and by the Harpers against Ell. (3.) That Ell obtained judgment against Harper and Hanmer for upwards of £2,000, for which, together with costs, in all £2,400, judgment was signed in Christchurch, which judgment still stands, but is unsatisfied. (4.) That in the action against Ell accounts were taken by the Registrar, at Christchurch. (5.) That the said Registrar, in disobedience to an order of the Supreme Court, went behind a settlement of accounts made between the contending parties in 1873, and brought in a verdict for the Messrs Harper against Ell for upwards of £2,000. (6.) That thereupon Ell appealed against the said last judgment, and the judgment was set aside by the Court of Appeal, and referred back to the Registrar (and accountant), at Christchurch, on the ground that he had no right to inquire into accounts prior to the settlement between the parties in 1873. (7.) That when the verdict of the Court of Appeal, under the hand of the Chief Justice, was transmitted to Christchurch, all the papers were then sent to the Registrar there by Mr. Cooper, then Deputy-Registrar, at Wellington. (8.) That on returning to Christchurch Ell received notice from the Registrar to attend for the purpose of completing the accounts. (9.) That on Ell attending the office of the Registrar for that purpose the Registrar stated that he had not received the papers from Wellington, though, as a matter of fact, he had received them, and they were in his office at that time. (10.) That pending the proceeding with the accounts, the delay being thus caused, proceedings in bankruptcy were taken against Ell, and he was adjudicated a bankrupt. (11.) That the three debts upon which he was adjudicated and kept in the Bankruptcy Court were proofs—(a) by T. S. Weston for upwards of £5,000, arising in three years out of an alleged debt of £103, of which Ell states only £17 was due, as the Trustee in Bankruptcy could have satisfied himself if he had ordered Mr. Weston to produce the books; (b) a proof for £121 by F. J. Haskins, which was subsequently illegally altered to £21 odd, which £21 odd had already been recovered by the said F. J. Haskins against Ell in the Resident Magistrate's Court, at Christchurch, and paid by him, as the Court proceedings showed; (c) the whole claim proved in this case had been already paid by Ell's Assignee in Bankruptcy under former proceedings against Ell. (12.) That the Registrar on Ell's bankruptcy refused to go on with the accounts in the second action, and they have never been taken by the Registrar to this day, although the whole of the proofs on both sides have been lodged in Court. (13.) That two several Commissioners have been appointed on petitions by Ell to examine into this case, the first addressed to Mr. (now Mr. Justice) Conolly, who reported partially in Ell's favor and partially against him, the second to Mr. C. C. Graham, the Official Assignee in Bankruptcy, who inquired more minutely into the proceedings of the Bankruptcy Court, and who ordered an investigation into the accounts in the second action by Mr. Kember, a certified accountant. (14.) That the said accountant, Mr Kember, examined into the accounts furnished by both parties in the second action, and certified that in that action there was due to Ell a further sum of £1,530. (15.) That the total amount in the two actions, therefore, with costs and interest at 10 per cent., as stated by Ell to have been ordered by the Supreme Court, would amount to a sum of between £6,000 and £7,000. (16.) That upon the proofs of debt before