

Petitions have been received from men who had already earned grants of land for services in the Imperial Forces, for additional grants of land earned as Volunteers; and others from retired soldiers or sailors who have received grants of land for service in the Colonial Forces, but who did not receive land for the services they had rendered in the army or navy. It appears that, in either category, these claimants were entitled to grants of land under their separate engagements, but subsection 2 of clause 10 of "The Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteers' Land Act, 1889," prohibits all such claims. That policy, however, does not appear to have been recommended in the report of the Committee of the 21st August, 1889, and your Committee can see no reason why the conditions of a separate and entirely different enrolment should be set aside because the claimant was entitled to a grant of land for other services.

There are also cases of men who were allotted grants of land, which they occupied for limited periods, but who were unable to remain upon their allotments, either from actual danger from hostile Natives or from the unsettled state of the district, were unable to earn a subsistence for themselves and families, and consequently migrated to other parts of the colony where employment was obtainable. And there are others, again, who retired from the Imperial services to settle in New Zealand, and who, on arriving in districts where there was no law in force granting land to retired soldiers or sailors, and who nevertheless remained in such districts, the Committee consider these cases differ in so small a degree from many which have already been favourably reported on, that they recommend these also should be dealt with in a liberal manner.

The position of claimants, being the widows (or children) of men who retired from the Imperial service to settle in New Zealand, or of men who served in the Colonial Forces, has also been considered; and your Committee is of opinion that, where it can be satisfactorily proved that had the husband (or father) been alive he would have been entitled to a grant of land, such grants of land should be allotted to the widow or children.

Applications have been received from men who served in New Zealand, but who, subsequent to their retirement from the service, have been domiciled beyond the limits of the colony. As the special object of the Acts granting land to naval and military settlers was to induce settlement in the colony, these applicants, not having complied with the spirit of the law, cannot, in the opinion of this Committee, have any claim upon the colony.

Your Committee are of opinion, therefore, that, to give effect to these recommendations, a special Commissioner should be appointed to inquire into all alleged claims under the foregoing categories; and, if such claims are substantiated, a list thereof be sent to the Government to be included in a Bill authorising the issue of land-orders, and a notification forwarded to each applicant of the decision arrived at in his case by the Commissioner. And, in order that due publicity may be attained, an advertisement should be inserted in at least one newspaper circulating in each district, stating that no claims will be considered after the 31st March, 1892, and also that a copy of this report, printed in large type, be posted in a conspicuous place at every post office throughout the colony.

And, further, that a Bill be introduced this session to amend "The Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteers' Land Act, 1889," in the directions indicated in this report, and to authorise the immediate issue of land-orders to all claimants recommended by the several Commissioners of Crown Lands under the provisions of the Act.

13th August, 1891.

W. R. RUSSELL, Chairman.

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