

I am directed to report that, in the opinion of the Committee, these petitions should be referred to the Government for favourable consideration, and that the Government be recommended to grant the said widow—Clara Batty—some annuity.  
20th November, 1903.

No. 686.—Petition of A. J. BRADLEY and 56 Others, of Helensville.

PETITIONERS pray that steps be taken to develop the hot springs of Helensville as a tourist resort.

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

21st November, 1903.

No. 673.—Petition of W. H. CONBOY, of Wellington.

PETITIONER prays that an inquiry be made into certain charges against various Government Departments, and that certain wrongs be redressed.

I am directed to report that, at the request of the petitioner, the consideration of this petition is postponed till next session.

21st November, 1903.

No. 87.—Petition of WALTER JAMES HUNT, of Wellington.

PETITIONER prays that compensation be granted him on account of the loss of timber-rights in Ngarara Block.

I am directed to report that, after taking some evidence thereon, the Committee have postponed the consideration of this petition till next session.

21st November, 1903.

No. 88.—Petition of ALFRED LINDSAY and Others, of Wellington.

PETITIONERS pray that compensation may be granted W. J. Hunt on account of his loss of timber-rights in the Ngarara Block.

I am directed to report that, after taking some evidence thereon, the Committee have postponed the consideration of this petition till next session.

21st November, 1903.

No. 720.—Petition of FRANK W. ISITT and 6 Others, of Wellington.

PETITIONERS pray that inquiry be made into the abstraction of a ballot-paper, and that steps be taken to prevent a recurrence of such.

I am directed to report: (1.) That the Committee, having taken evidence from various witnesses, finds that Mr. Isitt at 8.53 a.m. on the morning of the day of the election for the Licensing Committee in the City of Wellington, and prior to the opening of the polling-booth thereat, was illegally in possession of a stolen ballot-paper, such paper being printed for and intended to be used at the said election. (2.) That the Committee examined Mr. Isitt as to the manner in which the said ballot-paper came into his possession, but though he alleges that it was given to him he, at different periods of the inquiry, absolutely declined to give the Committee the name of the person from whom he received the said ballot-paper. (3.) That the Committee is of opinion that the said ballot-paper was stolen for the purpose of manipulating the result of the said election, and thus defeating the will of the electors. (4.) That the Committee finds that Mr. Isitt, on or about the 29th day of December, 1902, wrote to eleven of the Returning Officers in the colony requesting them to supply him with copies of the ballot-papers used in their respective districts at the local-option poll. Mr. Isitt admits having received such ballot-papers from three of these Returning Officers, but at the inquiry positively declined to give the Committee the name of any of these Returning Officers who had thus illegally supplied him with such ballot-papers. (5.) That the Committee is of opinion that these ballot-papers could have been used as a ground for upsetting the local-option poll in some of the electorates. (6.) That the limited time at the disposal of the Committee makes it impossible to fully investigate, at this late period of the session, the serious import of the issues involved in the prayer of the petition. (7.) The Committee therefore recommends that the prayer of the petition, with the evidence taken thereon, together with the report of the Commissioner, be referred to the Government for consideration; and further recommends that the Government be requested to make further investigation into the matters above referred to and the other irregularities as prayed for by the petitioners. (*Vide Appendix I.—1B.*)

21st November, 1903.

#### FINAL REPORT.

I am directed to report that your Committee has held thirty meetings, and has received 296 petitions for consideration, of which 30 have been recommended to the Government for favourable consideration, 92 have been recommended to the Government for consideration, 159 have received no recommendation, 12 have been referred to other Committees, and 3 remain unconsidered.

21st November, 1903.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, not given; printing (1,250 copies), £8 11s. 6d.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1903.

Price 6d.]