

that in the opinion of the Committee this petition should be referred to the Government for favourable consideration" (22nd October, 1906), and the House on that referred the petition to the Government for favourable consideration.

23. Now, were there any other petitions in the same year?—Yes, one on the 10th October from Mr F V Lysaght and three others.

24. Was that also presented by Mr Symes?—Yes, by Mr Symes.

25. And what was the report on that petition?—"Petitioners pray for a refund of money paid to uplift award under the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act, 1881. I am directed to report that in the opinion of the Committee this petition should be referred to the Government for favourable consideration" (22nd October, 1906); and the petition was referred by the House to the Government for favourable consideration. [Three petitions put in, marked Exhibits A, B, C.]

26. That is all you know of the matter?—That is all I can find.

27. You have no knowledge of what was done in consequence of those reports?—No, nothing at all.

Mr Skerrett I have no questions.

28. *Right Hon. Sir J G Ward.*] Can you tell the Committee what Petitions Committees those different petitions were referred to?—The first one, dated 15th August, 1905, No. 292, was referred to the Public Petitions M to Z Committee, 1905, and the two others were referred to the A to L Committee, Session II, 1906.

29. I want to know if you can inform the Committee who were the members of the M to Z Committee, 1905, and also the members of the A to L Committee, 1906, upon both occasions on which the two petitions were referred?—The names of the members of the M to Z Committee in 1905 were Messrs. Allison, Buddo, Davey, Fowlds, W Fraser, Kidd, Rhodes, Rutherford, Smith, and the mover, the Hon. Mr Mills. Mr Buddo was the Chairman.

30. And the A to L Committee, 1906?—The A to L Committee, Session II, 1906, was composed of Messrs. Symes, Hall, Lewis, Lethbridge, Lawry, R. McKenzie, Remington, Gray, Wood, and the mover, the Hon. Mr Millar. Mr Lawry was Chairman.

31. That was the same Committee for both petitions of 1906?—Yes.

32. *Hon. Mr Millar.*] Are those petitioners who petitioned in 1906 a portion of the same who petitioned in 1905—were those who again petitioned in 1906 amongst the original petitioners in 1905?—They were not.

33. I thought I heard you read the name of Lysaght in the first petition, and also George Hutchison. Did they sign the original petition?—No.

34. Mr Myers made a great point in regard to the speeches made by Mr Symes. Is not that the usual course—for a member of the House in charge of a petition unfavourably reported upon to make a speech asking that it be referred back again to the Committee, it is the general practice?—Yes, it is very often done.

35. So that Mr Symes took no unusual course?—No, nothing unusual.

36. *Mr Massey*] Mr Millar asked you whether it was not the general rule for a member in charge of a petition, when receiving an unfavourable report, to ask that it should be referred back. I think we ought to have a definite reply to that. It is not the general rule to make a speech?—It is frequently done, but it is not the general rule.

37. Is it possible to produce the minutes of the proceedings of the Committees on those occasions when the petitions were being considered?—I have not had them hunted up. We had a great number of papers destroyed in 1907 by the fire, but I could have these minutes looked up if the Committee desires.

38. *The Chairman.*] You will undertake to produce them?—Yes, if they are in existence.

Mr Skerrett Permit me to make an explanation, Mr Chairman. It appears from the evidence given by Mr Otterson, and I think it is common ground between Mr Myers and myself, that, although the signatories to the two petitions in 1906 were not the signatories to the first petition in 1905, the grounds of the petition of 1906 were on all-fours with the earlier petition of 1905—the same claim, the same ground, and the same relief; but three or four lessees were omitted, either by accident or design, from the first petition.

Mr Myers. Perhaps I may add to that: There were a number of other lessees who did not petition at all, but who, after these petitioners had been paid, sent in their claims to the Government and received payment, but I should not say perhaps just now from what source.

BRIAN CUTHBERT LYSAGHT SWORN and examined. (No. 2)

1. *Mr Myers*] You are a sheep-farmer?—Yes.

2. And where do you live?—About nine miles from Hawera.

3. Are you, Mr Lysaght, one of the executors and trustees of the will of your late father?—Yes.

4. What was his name?—James Richard Lysaght.

5. How long has he been dead?—About seven years.

6. Was he the holder of one of the leases known as the west coast leases?—Yes.

7. And I think that he and a number of other lessees surrendered their leases in the expectation of getting new leases?—That is true.

8. And the question of the new rental went to arbitration?—Yes.

9. And that, in consequence of some Government regulations being *ultra vires*, the awards were abortive?—Yes.

10. Your father's expenses, I think, in connection with the award amounted to something like £347 5s. 4d.?—Yes, I think that is the sum.

11. Were there, to your knowledge, a large number of other persons in the same position as your father?—Yes.