

1922.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEFENCE COMMITTEE

(REPORTS OF THE).

(MR. GLENN, CHAIRMAN.)

Presented to the House of Representatives, and ordered to be printed.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

FRIDAY, THE 14TH DAY OF JULY, 1922.

Ordered, "That Standing Order No. 219 be suspended, and that a Select Committee be appointed, consisting of twelve members, to deal with all matters in connection with defence; with power to call for persons, papers, and records; three to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. Burnett, the Hon. Mr. Coates, Mr. J. S. Dickson, Mr. Glenn, Mr. Mackenzie, Mr. McNicol, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Munro, Mr. Potter, Mr. Seddon, Mr. R. W. Smith, and the mover."—(Hon. Sir R. H. RHODES.)

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REPORTS.

No. 305/1921.—Petition of MARY WINIFRED MILLER, of Wellington.

FOR a grant to cover expenses incurred through ill-health contracted while acting as a V.A.D. nurse at Trentham.

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

12th September, 1922.

No. 217.—Petition of CHRISTIAN KIENELE, of Auckland.

FOR compensation for alleged wrongs suffered through his internment during the war.

I am directed to report that, as this petition refers to a matter of policy, the Committee makes no recommendation.

12th September, 1922.

No. 253/1921.—Petition of W. H. BARBER, of Ongarue.

FOR compensation for losses incurred through his absence from his farm on military service.

I am directed to report that, as the subject-matter of this petition is one for legal redress, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

12th September, 1922.

No. 76.—Petition of OSWALD F. HOLLAND, of Dunedin.

PETITIONER alleges that he is suffering serious disabilities through illness contracted on active service, and he prays for relief.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommends that this petition be referred to the Government to favourably consider the granting of a compassionate allowance.

12th September, 1922.

No. 98.—Petition of Major J. T. BOSWORTH, of Palmerston North.

THAT the recommendations of the Defence Committee of the 3rd November, 1920, and the 19th January, 1922, may be given effect to.

I am directed to report that the Committee repeats the recommendation made in this case—viz., that, in view of the petitioner's services having been availed of during the term of his final leave, he should be paid an extra six months' salary.

12th September, 1922.

No. 10.—Petition of ANNIE WAINHOUSE, of Devonport, Auckland.

PETITIONER, who is the widow of the late Sergeant-major Wainhouse, who died whilst in the employ of the Defence Department, prays for an allowance sufficient to maintain herself and family.

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

12th September, 1922.

No. 97.—Petition of MRS. ADA HERMINAH FULTON, of Te Awamutu.

THAT continuance of the pension of £182 per annum, originally awarded to her as the widow of the late Brigadier-General Fulton, may be affirmed by legislation.

I am directed to report that, as a matter of policy is involved in this petition, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

12th September, 1922.

No. 85.—Petition of IRENE ANNIE DAWSON, of Wellington.

PETITIONER prays for payment of full amount of pension in respect of her son, whose father was killed in action during the war.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommends that the petition be referred to the Government for consideration.

12th September, 1922.

No. 338/1921.—Petition of the TRUSTEES OF THE WELLINGTON SOCIETY FOR RELIEF OF THE AGED AND NEEDY.

THAT a gratuity be paid to the superintendent and matron of their home, in recognition of extra services rendered during the war.

I am directed to report that, as the matter has now been settled by Cabinet, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

12th September, 1922.

No. 361/1921.—Petition of D. PRINGLE and 4 Others.

THAT section 75 of the Defence Amendment Act, 1912, may be amended so as to exclude the property owned by the Manawatu Mounted Rifles in Palmerston North, and used as an orderly-room, &c., from the operation of the said section.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommends that, as the petition refers to a matter of policy, it should be referred to the Government for consideration.

12th September, 1922.

No. 131.—Petition of THOMAS MULCAHY, of Auckland.

PRAYING for a pension or other relief on account of serious disabilities caused by his war services.

I am directed to report that, as the petitioner still has a right of appeal to the Imperial Naval authorities for recognition of his services in the Navy, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

28th September, 1922.

No. 99.—Petition of FREDERICK ANNEAR, of Wellington.

PRAYING for a pension or other allowance in recognition of his arduous services during the war.

I am directed to report that, the petitioner having died, the Committee makes no recommendation.

28th September, 1922.

No. 296.—Petition of Mrs. HONORAH ANNEAR, of Wellington.

PRAYING for a compassionate allowance on account of the loss of her husband, who lost his life through illness contracted whilst acting as stevedore for the Defence Forces during the war.

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

28th September, 1922.

No. 362.—Petition of JOHN STEVENSON, of Waianiwa.

PRAYING that his war pension may be increased to £60 per annum as from the date of granting of the existing pension.

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

28th September, 1922.

No. 316.—Petition of LENNOX G. PIRIE, of Wellington.

PRAYING for a war pension or other relief.

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

4th October, 1922.

No. 60.—Petition of FLORENCE E. HESLIN, of Dunedin.

FOR pension in recognition of her late husband's war services, he having died from disease contracted whilst serving at the front.

I am directed to report that the Committee finds that since the Pensions Board considered the case and refused to grant a pension fresh evidence as to cause of death has become available; it therefore recommends that this petition should be referred to the Government for favourable consideration.

4th October, 1922.

No. 261.—Petition of Mrs. HARRIET SIMEON, of Epsom, Auckland.

THAT she be granted the difference between the New Zealand and Imperial rates of gratuity for services on the nursing staff during the war.

I am directed to report that the Committee is of opinion this petition should be referred to the Government to favourably consider the granting of a compassionate allowance.

4th October, 1922.

No. 94.—Petition of F. BURTON MABIN, of Wellington.

PRAYING for reinstatement in the Civil Service in a position equivalent to that he had before enlisting for active service, or for adequate compensation for loss of employment.

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

5th October, 1922.

No. 153.—Petition of WILLIAM WEST and Another, of Wellington.

FOR a compassionate allowance to cover expenses incidental to death of their son, Victor West, a returned soldier.

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

13th October, 1922.

No. 309.—Petition of HECTOR STEELE, of Mamaku.

FOR payment of difference in pay between Imperial and New Zealand rates.

I am directed to report that, as this petition refers to a matter of policy, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

13th October, 1922.

No. 212.—Petition of WILLIAM JAMES ALEXANDER, of Auckland.

PETITIONER alleges that he has been wrongfully debarred from returning to Samoa, and prays for compensation and permission to return.

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

13th October, 1922.

No. 170.—Petition of ERNEST ARTHUR DOWNES, of Matakura.

PRAYING for a compassionate allowance or a pension in recognition of disabilities caused through his military duties during the war.

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

13th October, 1922.

No. 349.—Petition of Captain WILLIAM THOMAS BECK, D.S.O., of Auckland.

HAVING been retrenched from the Defence Department, he prays for adequate compensation for loss of employment.

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

13th October, 1922.

No. 110.—Petition of CHARLES and MARGARET EDWARDS, of Wellington.

FOR compensation equivalent to the pension their son E. E. Edwards, should have received from the date of his discharge to date of his death; also that all reference to his alleged malingering shall be removed from the records.

I am directed to report that the Committee finds there is nothing on the records to the effect that the petitioners' son was a malingerer or that he knowingly deceived the authorities; it therefore recommends that this petition be referred to the Government to favourably consider the granting of a compassionate allowance.

13th October, 1922.

Nos. 307/1921 and 163/1922.—Petitions of R. O. FULLBROOK, of Taihape.

FOR compensation for alleged injustice inflicted by the Defence Department.

I am directed to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make with regard to these petitions.

17th October, 1922.

No. 277.—Petition of CARLIN GILL, of Okato, Taranaki.

PETITIONER alleges that he is suffering disabilities through wounds and illness contracted while on active service in the South African War, and prays for relief.

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

17th October, 1922.

Nos. 360/1921 and 133/1922.—Petitions of JAMES HUGHES, of Wellington.

PETITIONER alleges that through his military services he has incurred severe monetary losses, and prays for a compassionate allowance to meet same.

I am directed to report that the Committee considers that this petition should be referred to the Government for consideration.

17th October, 1922.

No. 54.—Petition of MATAVAKA JESSOP, of Niue.

PETITIONER alleges that he was wrongfully imprisoned and detained by a military guard, and prays for compensation.

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

17th October, 1922.

No. 166.—Petition of JOHN SWANN, of Aotea, Raglan.

PETITIONER complains of alleged neglect and maltreatment by medical staff, and prays for compensation.

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

17th October, 1922.

No. 164.—Petition of GILBERT WEATHERSTON, of Green Island, Otago.

FOR further allowance for disabilities resulting from services in a Territorial camp.

I am directed to report that the Committee considers that this petition should be referred to the Government for favourable consideration.

17th October, 1922.

No. 344.—Petition of MABEL WRIGHT, of Auckland.

FOR a compassionate allowance as the widow of the late Sergeant-major S. E. Wright, who was killed by a motor-bus at Devonport, Auckland.

I am directed to report that the Committee is of opinion that this petition should be referred to the Government to favourably consider the granting of a compassionate allowance.

17th October, 1922.

No. 188/1921.—Petition of R. O. CHESNEY, of Wellington.

THAT he be reinstated in the Staff Corps of the Defence Department, or be granted adequate compensation for loss of office.

I am directed to report that, as a request has been made to withdraw this petition, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

26th October, 1922.

No. 332.—Petition of M. J. CLEARY, of Greymouth.

THAT his war pension of £1 10s. per week may be renewed.

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

26th October, 1922.

No. 396.—Petition of ALBERT THOMAS GRIFFIN, of Trentham.

PETITIONER alleges that he contracted tuberculosis whilst serving in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and is now unable to earn sufficient to maintain his family. He prays for suitable permanent employment or financial assistance.

I am directed to report that the Committee is of opinion that this petition should be referred to the Government for consideration with a view to some suitable employment being found for the petitioner.

26th October, 1922.

No. 289/1921.—Petition of K. S. HENRY and 19 Others, of Wellington.

PETITIONERS, who are returned disabled soldiers, pray for light employment.

I am directed to report that, as a request has been made to withdraw this petition, the Committee makes no recommendation.

26th October, 1922.

No. 314.—Petition of Major T. N. HOLMDEN, of Auckland.

FOR payment of differences in pay and gratuity between Imperial and New Zealand rate.

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

26th October, 1922.

No. 353.—Petition of H. S. OSGOOD and Another, of Blenheim.

COMPLAINING of inadequate pension allowed for severe injuries received by the male petitioner during the war, and praying for allowance of full pension for total disablement.

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

26th October, 1922.

No. 188.—Petition of ROBERT M. THOMSON, of Cashmere, Christchurch.

PETITIONER complains of treatment he received at the hands of the United States Veterans' Bureau, and prays that a claim for compensation may be made on his behalf.

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

26th October, 1922.

No. 268.—Petition of A. E. WELLBOURN and Another, of Broad Bay, Otago.

PETITIONERS state that through ill health contracted by the male petitioner while on active service during the war they are unable to earn sufficient for their maintenance, and they pray for relief.

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

26th October, 1922.

No. 372.—Petition of OLAF B. BERNTSEN, of Waitara.

FOR adequate relief on account of wounds received on active service during the war.

I am directed to report that the Committee is of opinion that this petitioner's case is one for the War Relief Fund, and therefore makes no recommendation.

26th October, 1922.

No. 62, Petition of A. H. CARRINGTON; No. 86, Petition of R. N. J. FRASER; No. 100, Petition of JOHN N. GROVER; No. 117, Petition of CHARLES POLLARD; No. 171, Petition of O. P. MCGUIGAN; No. 187, Petition of N.Z. RETURNED SOLDIERS' ASSOCIATION, on behalf of Sergeant-major SPENCE; No. 222, Petition of J. G. W. SALT; No. 255, Petition of G. S. BISHOP; No. 291, Petition of J. R. HOPKINSON.

PRAYING for reinstatement in the Defence Department, or adequate compensation for loss of office.

I am directed to report that, as these petitions refer to a matter of policy, the Committee makes no recommendation, but it is of opinion that these officers should receive the same treatment as those retired in 1920-21—viz., be granted one month's pay for each year's service, and the usual three months' leave on full pay.

28th October, 1922.

No. 382.—Petition of JAMES HARTLEY, of Wellington.

For a grant of £1,000 as compensation for injuries received whilst serving in the Defence Force.

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

28th October, 1922.

No. 310.—Petition of WALTER REYNOLDS, of Christchurch.

For compensation for injuries received whilst on military duties.

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

28th October, 1922.

No. 342.—Petition of SYDNEY TOVEY, of Wellington.

For compensation for alleged neglect in treatment for injuries received while on active service during the war.

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

28th October, 1922.

REPORT ON STATEMENTS BY COLONEL McDONALD.

THE Defence Committee, having heard the evidence of Colonel McDonald, Colonel Nichols, and also of responsible officers from the Defence, Treasury, and Audit Departments, finds:—

1. That in 1918 a number of obsolete rifles of various antiquated patterns held in the charge of the Defence Department were given to Colonel J. Cowie Nichols, C.B.E. These rifles were reported to be of no use to the Department, and were despatched to Colonel Nichols, who has paid all expenses in connection therewith.

2. That in 1920 the Department established a museum of old arms, and found that about twelve of the rifles given to Colonel Nichols would be suitable for museum purposes, and, on the assumption that the rifles were on loan, asked for their return. On ascertaining that the rifles had been handed over unconditionally to Colonel Nichols the Department withdrew its request.

3. That in 1918 two obsolete muzzle-loading guns, which had been discarded from the Otago coast defences, were occupying space at Port Chalmers which was urgently needed by the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company. Colonel Nichols requested that he be allowed to take these guns. As they had been offered to local bodies and been refused by them, Colonel Nichols's request was acceded to by the Defence Department. Colonel Nichols presented one of the guns to the Oamaru Borough Council, and the other he had taken to his home. All cash expenditure by the Government was borne conjointly by the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company and Colonel Nichols. A few Permanent Artillery men were, however, used to move the guns at Port Chalmers, and some technical Royal New Zealand Artillery personnel were employed to mount them on their permanent sites at Oamaru and Colonel Nichols's residence respectively. The Defence Department subsequently considered that a charge should be made for use of horses and for wages of the Royal New Zealand Artillery men employed in mounting the guns. The matter was referred to the Solicitor-General, who advised that Colonel Nichols was not liable for this expense. In view of this advice the Department took no further action. There was no cash expenditure from public funds involved.

4. It is clear from the evidence that Colonel McDonald does not charge the Minister of Defence or his Department with irregularities or maladministration.

5. All stores alleged by Colonel McDonald to be missing have been audited by the Government Auditor, and properly written off in accordance with the authority of Parliament. The majority of the stores referred to were not actually missing, but had been used by the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and taken overseas; the hurried mobilization in 1914, and the transfer of responsible officers for service in the war, being the chief causes of apparent deficiencies in the stores accounts. A large surplus of stores was discovered, but these were not allowed by regulations to be credited against shortages.

6. The shortage of arms and equipment mentioned by Colonel McDonald took place between the years 1911 and 1920. The causes contributing to these shortages were—(a) Want of system of audit and control of stores then in force; (b) the mobilization of the Expeditionary Force and the consequent disorganization in the country.

7. The lost stores were written off in 1920 at their depreciated value, amounting to £26,000, leaving £3,000 yet to be written off this year.

8. Surplus equipment exists to the value of £8,914 4s. 6d., which should be offset against the losses.

9. A system of audit and control of stores has now been inaugurated, which should prevent losses in the future.

10. The Committee is of opinion that losses were inevitable. Many of the 100,000 men mobilized for the Expeditionary Force left their rifles and equipment in their homes or elsewhere, and these have never been accounted for. Members of the Expeditionary Force also (against orders) took arms and equipment overseas. These would eventually be taken into store overseas or used by the men, therefore the loss under this head would be a loss on paper only. It was impossible to trace the stores lost under the conditions mentioned above. The Committee is of opinion that the military authorities took immediate action to minimize the losses, and that no irregularities took place, and that there is no reflection on the Department or the Minister.

With respect to further charges made by Colonel McDonald against the Defence Department, and referred to in the House by the Hon. Mr. Hanan and Mr. S. G. Smith, the Committee is of opinion that the time now at its disposal is too short to enable it to make full inquiry; it therefore recommends that it be left to the Minister to make a statement in reply.

30th October, 1922.

SPECIAL REPORT.

I AM directed to report that the Committee desires to place on record its appreciation of the services of its clerk, Mr. J. B. Hackworth, whose work has been most painstaking and thorough.

30th October, 1922.

SPECIAL REPORT.

I AM directed to report that the Committee desires to place on record its appreciation of the services of its Chairman, Mr. W. S. Glenn. His tact and judgment and his sympathetic treatment of all matters that came up for consideration helped considerably in the smooth working of the Committee.

The cases of returned soldiers and their dependants have been numerous.

The Committee held eighteen meetings, and the average attendance of members was more than eight per meeting, which is equivalent to 75 per cent. of the number of members.

THOMAS E. Y. SEDDON,
Member of the Committee.

30th October, 1922.

FINAL REPORT.

I AM directed to report that the Defence Committee held its final meeting this morning.

During the session the Committee held eighteen meetings, the average attendance of members at each meeting being over eight. Fifty-four petitions were received for consideration, and all of these were duly considered and reported on. The Committee also inquired into statements made by Colonel McDonald as to alleged losses of Ordnance stores, and has prepared a report to be presented to the House.

30th October, 1922.

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