

Nos. 460 and 461.—Report on the Petitions of ALEXANDER C. BEGG and FRANCIS WILKINSON. PETITIONERS complain of the arbitrary conduct of the Otago Education Board in dismissing Mr. David McLaughlan from the position of headmaster of the Kaikorai School.

I have the honour to report that the Committee is of opinion that the subject-matter of the petition is one which concerns only the administration of the Education Act under the powers conferred upon Education Boards and School Committees, and that, if the Education Board did not first consult the School Committee before dismissing the teacher as alleged, the provisions of clause 45 of the Act have not been strictly complied with.

The Committee recommends (1) that the Government should take the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown upon the point raised, and transmit such opinion to the petitioners; (2) and, if the Act is not sufficiently clear as to the relative positions of the Boards and Committees, that the Government should amend the Act; (3) that, as there seems to be considerable feeling in the locality on the subject of the petitions, special inquiry by the Resident Magistrate of Dunedin should be made into the matter.

14th December, 1887.

GENERAL REPORT.

THE Committee has taken evidence upon the question of education—oral, when available, and written, from witnesses at a distance.

Some of the evidence has been printed and circulated among the members of the House for their information, and some more has yet to come in.

The Committee has to report that, in consequence of the evidence not being all to hand, and the shortness of time at its disposal to consider such a large question, it is not in a position to make any report this session, but recommends that a similar Committee should be again set up next session, when there would be time to take any further evidence necessary, give full consideration to the question, and make an exhaustive report.

Pending such report, the Committee is of opinion that it would be inadvisable at present to seriously interfere with the education system.

15th December, 1887.
