

No. 397.—Petition of D. NICOLSON and 53 Others, of Central Otago.

PETITIONERS state that they are occupiers of certain small grazing-runs in Central Otago; that owing to the very severe winter just past they have lost the greater part of their stock, &c. They pray that the next twelve months' rent may be remitted by the Government.

I am directed to report that, as the circumstances set out in this petition are of an exceptional character, the Committee recommends the petition be referred to the Government for favourable consideration.

1st October, 1895.

No. 356.—Petition of A. PLUMMER, of Ormondville.

PETITIONER prays that he may be granted compensation for loss sustained in connection with a contract entered into to supply the Maori prisoners at the Chatham Islands in the year 1868.

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

1st October, 1895.

Nos. 348, 349, 350, 364, 396, and 447.—Petitions of Rev. WILLIAM WILLIS and 39 Others, ELIZABETH HOOPER and 34 Others, SAMUEL HOWARD and 21 Others, CHARLES HUNTER and 24 Others, CHARLES AITKENHEAD and 26 Others, and Mrs. HAM and 9 Others.

PETITIONERS pray that the proposed amendment of the laws of divorce may not be passed, except such as will place husband and wife on the same footing in regard to the dissolution of the marriage-tie.

I am directed to report that, as there is legislation now before Parliament dealing with the matter, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

1st October, 1895.

No. 97.—Petition of JOHN JAMES MEIKLE, of Southland.

PETITIONER states that in the year 1887 he was charged with the larceny of twenty-seven sheep belonging to the New Zealand Mortgage and Investment Association (Limited), and convicted on the evidence of one William Lambert; that he, on his release, after serving his term of imprisonment, instituted proceedings against the said William Lambert for perjury, who, after trial, was convicted, and sentenced to four years' imprisonment for perjury in his evidence against petitioner when on his trial for sheep-stealing; that petitioner and his family have been caused pecuniary loss and mental suffering through the said imprisonment. He prays that his name may be removed from the prison records of the colony, and that he be granted £10,000 as compensation for false imprisonment and financial loss sustained by him.

I am directed to report that the Committee are of an opinion that, after eliminating Lambert's evidence, who has since been convicted, and is now serving a sentence for perjury, there was not sufficient evidence adduced at petitioner's trial to warrant his conviction on the charge preferred against him.

The Committee are also of an opinion that the request of petitioner to have his name removed from the prison records of the colony merits the serious consideration of the Crown.

The Committee recommends the Government to make provision on the supplementary estimates for the payment to petitioner of a sum of money by way of compensation for the loss he has sustained in connection with his business, the legal costs incurred in defending the charge preferred against him, and in securing the conviction of Lambert for perjury, and also by way of compensation for the imprisonment he has suffered.

9th October, 1895.

Nos. 459, 460, and 461.—Petitions of C. F. GRIFFITHS and 409 Others, C. W. STEWART and 313 Others, and S. H. MATHEWS and 11 Others, of Auckland.

PETITIONERS pray that legislation may be passed prohibiting property-owners from planting, &c., *Pinus insignis*, cypress, and macrocarpa trees within 60ft. of the boundaries of their respective properties.

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

9th October, 1895.

No. 290.—Petition of GEORGE JOHNSTON SMALL, of Wanganui.

PETITIONER prays that he may be granted the New Zealand Cross for an act of bravery performed at an attack on the Taurangaika Pa in the year 1868.

I am directed to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make, as the regulations for granting the New Zealand Cross have not been complied with; but recommends that a copy of the departmental reports, dated the 2nd September and 1st October, 1895, be forwarded to the petitioner.

9th October, 1895.

No. 427.—Petition of GEORGE PRITCHARD, of Danevirke.

PETITIONER prays that he may be re-employed in the Railway Department, or some other branch of the public service.

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

11th October, 1895.