

## No. 423.—Petition of JOHN KINNEAR McDONALD, of Waingaro.

PETITIONER prays for a grant of land for military services.

I am directed to report that, as the Waste Lands Committee has already reported favourably on this petition, the Committee is of opinion it should be referred to the Government for consideration.

24th September, 1896.

## No. 513.—Petition of HENRY McLAUGHLAN, of Auckland.

PETITIONER prays that certain legislation may be introduced in regard to private benefit societies, &c.

I am directed to report that, as the matters contained in this petition are of such an important nature; the Committee recommends it be referred to the Government for favourable consideration.

8th October, 1896.

## No. 498.—Petition of JAMES WRIGHT and 110 Others, of Catlin's District.

PETITIONERS pray that they may be granted a sum of money in order to metal the Catlin's-Waikawa Road.

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

8th October, 1896.

## No. 522.—Petition of THOMAS WOOD, of Auckland.

PETITIONER prays that he may be granted a refund of £45, being an alleged excess of *ad valorem* duty charged on certain conveyances of shares and property.

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

8th October, 1896.

## No. 6.—Petition of WILLIAM ALEX. TRIBE, of Christchurch (No. 1).

PETITIONER prays that he may be granted a refund of £23, being Customs duty on part of a shipment of oilskins, *ex* "Matatua," found to be worthless.

I am directed to report that, as the claim has already been settled by the Customs Department, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

8th October, 1896.

## No. 476.—Petition of WILLIAM ALEX. TRIBE, of Christchurch (No. 2).

PETITIONER prays that he may be granted a refund of £50, being Customs duty on part of a shipment of oilskins, *ex* "Aorangi," found to be worthless.

I am directed to report that, as there appears to have been no neglect shown on the part of the Customs officials, in the opinion of the Committee the petitioner has no claim upon the colony.

8th October, 1896.

## No. 452.—Petition of JOHN ROSS and Another, of Patea.

PETITIONERS pray that they may be granted relief on account of certain alleged wrongs done them by Mr. George Hutchison, M.H.R., and the Public Trustee.

I have the honour to report that the petitioners are settlers, and reside at Otauto, near Patea. In the year 1894 Mr. Ross, one of the petitioners, borrowed considerable sums of money from Mr. George Hutchison, M.H.R., and mortgaged to that gentleman all his leasehold property and stock. The land was Native land, and under the control of the Public Trustee. After being mortgaged, the farm, which comprised 1,000 acres, was subdivided, and 360 acres placed in the name of a Mr. P. F. Verdon. The mortgage and instruments secured only money actually advanced and disbursements, and the rate of interest was the same as Mr. Ross had paid to a former mortgagee. Mr. Ross alleges non-fulfilment of a verbal agreement alleged to have been entered into under the following circumstances: Mr. Hutchison, while mortgagee, through his manager, entered into an agreement, dated the 16th July, 1894, with Messrs. Ross and Verdon regarding the security which he held. Messrs. Ross and Verdon allege that to enable this agreement to be executed Mr. Hutchison's manager (Mr. Muldrock) verbally agreed with them "to take over the property and stock it, and to take 10 per cent. of the profits, and the balance of the profits" were to go to them. There were other and minor matters referred to. This is denied by Mr. Muldrock, and letters to that gentleman instructing him bear out Mr. Hutchison's statement that he was never authorised to make any such proposal. Though this verbal agreement is alleged in the petition, the whole case of the petitioners is admitted in evidence to stand upon a subsequent agreement which was reduced to writing. Apart from any agreement, Mr. Hutchison had at this time full powers to sell under his mortgages, and he had actually realised upon some of the stock. The allegations made against the Public Trustee were abandoned by the petitioners during the hearing of the case, and the claim resolved itself into a demand by the petitioners that Mr. Hutchison should specifically carry out the terms of a letter dated the 7th August, 1895. This letter or agreement has been the ground of a Supreme Court action against Mr. Hutchison. The case, after great delay, was settled by the petitioners consenting to judgment being entered up against them, and in favour of Mr. Hutchison. The subsequent proceedings were the ordinary proceedings to enforce a judgment against an unsuccessful litigant. During the hearing of the petition it was sought to establish the fact that great cruelty had been shown to the petitioner's family by persons acting on Mr. Hutchison's behalf, but the evidence showed that that gentleman used every endeavour to minimise the effects of the proceedings necessary to recover possession of his own property. The evidence failed completely to establish that the estate had been mismanaged by Mr. Hutchison, or that the petitioners had been defrauded of their just rights, or that no accounts had been rendered to them. The Committee accordingly has no recommendation to make.

8th October, 1896.