

1937-38.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

(REPORTS OF THE).

(MR. W. J. LYON, CHAIRMAN.)

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

THURSDAY, THE 30TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1937.

Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed, consisting of ten members, to consider all matters in connection with defence which may be referred to it: the Committee to consist of Mr. Anderton, Mr. Barclay, Mr. Christie, Mr. Cullen, Colonel Hargest, Mr. Lee, Mr. Lyon, Mr. Roy, Mr. Sexton, and the Mover."—(Hon. Mr. JONES.)

THURSDAY, THE 30TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1937.

Ordered, "That all petitions not finally dealt with during the session of 1936 be again referred to the same Committee as they were referred to during the said session."—(Right Hon. Mr. SAVAGE.)

WEDNESDAY, THE 24TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1937.

Ordered, "That the Defence Committee have leave to sit during the present sitting of the House."—(Mr. LYON.)

THURSDAY, THE 25TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1937.

Ordered, "That the Defence Committee have leave to sit during the present sitting of the House."—(Mr. LYON.)

REPORTS.

No. 62.—Petition of ADA M. P. BOURNE, of Auckland.

PRAYING that she be granted a war widow's pension.

I have the honour to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make.
20th October, 1937.

No. 8.—Petition of MARY H. HOUGHTON, of Sydney.

PRAYING for retrospective payment of pension granted on account of her husband's war service.

I have the honour to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make.
20th October, 1937.

No. 72.—Petition of ANN BATE, of Wanganui.

PRAYING that she be granted a war widow's pension.

I have the honour to report that in the opinion of the Committee the petition should be referred to the Government for most favourable consideration. The Committee is of the opinion that when a man is in receipt of a soldier's pension at the time of death the Government should consider granting the widow a widow's pension, irrespective as to whether the cause of death is attributable to war services or not.

26th October, 1937.

No. 6.—Petition of J. J. WILSON, of Whakatane.

PRAYING for compensation for injuries allegedly sustained while employed with the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy.

I have the honour to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make in respect of the prayer for compensation. The Committee, however, is of the opinion that the Pensions Department should make inquiries as to whether the petitioner has any claim on the Imperial Government. The Committee recommends that this report be referred to the Government.

26th October, 1937.

No. 74.—Petition of J. S. BEAUMONT, of Palmerston North.

PRAYING for compassionate allowance on account of injury allegedly sustained during the period he was undergoing military training.

I have the honour to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make.
26th October, 1937.

No. 77.—Petition of J. HUGHES, of Wellington.

PRAYING for compensation on the account of the alleged forced sale of his property.

I have the honour to report that in the opinion of the Committee the petition should be referred to the Government for consideration.

17th November, 1937.

No. 93.—Petition of L. SAYERS, of Auckland.

PRAYING for inquiry into the circumstances surrounding his retirement from the Defence Department, reinstatement in the Public Service, and compensation on account of alleged wrongful retirement.

I have the honour to report that the Defence Committee has exhaustively and carefully considered this petition and has no recommendation to make. The petition involved grave charges against officers and staff in charge of the Wigram Aerodrome. This is the fourth occasion upon which the petition has been heard. On the first occasion the Committee found for the petitioner, and recommended that the petition be referred to the Government for favourable consideration. On the motion of the then Minister of Defence, the Hon. J. G. Cobbe, that petition was referred back to the Committee, and after an exhaustive hearing the Committee decided unanimously that it had no recommendation to make. The petition was presented to the House again in 1936, and the Committee again, after an extensive hearing, had no recommendation to make. Because of the way in which the petitioner on presenting another petition this year sought to incriminate responsible officers, the Defence Department asked

the Committee this year to make a most thorough inquiry. Witnesses were brought from the South Island at considerable expense. The Department produced all records and reports asked for by Mr. Sayers, and the Department also arranged for witnesses to be present at Mr. Sayers's request. After a searching inquiry lasting two days, the Committee are of the opinion that none of Mr. Sayers's charges has been substantiated, and that responsible officers of integrity and ability have been slandered. Group Captain the Hon. R. A. Cochrane said that sometime after his arrival in New Zealand he discovered that Mr. Sayers had issued circular letters to all the Members of Parliament, in which he made glaring charges against the Department, and that the correspondence he had maintained was causing people to refer to the charges, and asked that the Committee make a complete statement. The Committee are unanimously of the opinion that the charges existed mainly in the imagination of the petitioner. The Committee congratulate the officers, N.C.O.s, and the men of the Department for the straightforward manner in which they gave their evidence. The Committee wish to place on record that Mr. W. J. Scott, late of the Audit Department, to whom Mr. Sayers had made complaint, but who was not the subsequent investigating officer, and who had commenced by supporting Mr. Sayers, after hearing all the evidence, had assured the Committee that he had completely changed his mind. It is the opinion of the Committee that to Mr. Sayers this matter has become an obsession, and the Committee draw the attention of the House to the fact that a person suffering from a persecution complex or like obsession can continue to repeatedly petition the House, and by making a host of totally unsupported charges and by amending his charges from year to year put a Department to considerable expense to reply. In addition, the effluxion of time and the dispersal of staff make a reply to charges that were immediately disproved more difficult to verbally rebut as the years go by. In the opinion of the Committee, Mr. Sayers, storeman, conceived it to be his duty to be Mr. Sayers in charge of Wigram Aerodrome and in charge of Defence policy generally. This lengthy addendum has been added in fairness to the officers and staff of Wigram Aerodrome, and so that the addendum might be publicly placed on record, as in the view of the Committee the petition may recur annually.

9th December, 1937.

No. 103.—Petition of W. A. CLINTON and 5 Others (representing the Disabled Soldiers' Welfare Association).

PRAYING for relief in respect of war pensions and other action providing for the general welfare of returned soldiers and their dependants.

I have the honour to report that in the opinion of the Committee the petition should be referred to the Government for favourable consideration. The Committee desires to express its opinion that the cost of administration in relation to the hearing and granting of applications for war pensions and the cost of distribution of general war funds should be investigated by a special parliamentary Committee.

9th December, 1937.

No. 125.—Petition of F. W. SCHRAMM and 2,356 Others, of Auckland.

PRAYING for a commission to inquire into the report upon the system of selection, training, &c., of horses used by the Volunteer Forces.

I have the honour to report that in the opinion of the Committee the petition should be referred to the Government for consideration.

9th December, 1937.

No. 73.—Petition of W. MCG. TURNBULL, of Sumner.

PRAYING for compassionate allowance on account of his discharge from the Defence Forces, allegedly due to disabilities contracted while on active service.

I have the honour to report that in the opinion of the Committee the petition should be referred to the Government for favourable consideration.

17th November, 1937.

No. 99.—Petition of C. A. B. MARTIN, of Auckland.

PRAYING that he be granted a war pension or compassionate allowance in lieu thereof.

I have the honour to report that the Committee has no recommendation to make.

9th March, 1938.

No. 151.—Petition of ELSIE M. MATTHEWS, of Auckland.

PRAYING for a pension or such other compassionate allowance as may be considered equitable.

I have the honour to report that in the opinion of the Committee the position should be referred to the Government for favourable consideration.

9th March, 1938.

W. J. LYON, Chairman.

SPECIAL REPORT.

I HAVE the honour to report that the members of the Defence Committee desire to place on record their cordial appreciation of the ability, tact, and unfailing courtesy during the session manifested by the Chairman, Mr. Lyon, in the conduct of the business of the Committee; and the members of the Committee further desire that this resolution be recorded on the minutes of the Committee, and also that it be reported to the House.

J. HARGEST, a Member of the Committee.

15th March, 1938.

SPECIAL REPORT.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Defence Committee desires to place on record its appreciation of the efficient services rendered by the Clerk of the Committee, Mr. E. B. Harman.

15th March, 1938.

FINAL REPORT.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Defence Committee, consisting of ten members, has held twelve meetings, with an average attendance of six members. Twelve petitions were considered and reported on to the House.

W. J. LYON, Chairman.

15th March, 1938.

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