

materially assisted by the increased spirit of enterprise which will be fostered, and the means which will be supplied by the coal trade.

Northern Extremity District.—The district of which Westport constitutes the head-quarters comprises a good deal of country to the north of the Mokihinui of which I have no personal knowledge. From such information as I am able to gather, I think it will be a good thing for all parties when the progress of events establishes a more frequent communication between us and the localities along the coast in the direction of Little Wanganui and the Karamea.

There are always a few miners working steadily on or near the beach at those places, and a more regular communication, with greater facility in getting provisions, would probably be attended with a considerable increase of population.

Sale of Lands.—Now that the Provincial Government has announced the intention of putting up for sale the lands on and near the line of railway from Westport to Ngakawhau, I think it would be desirable to lose no time in withdrawing them from the operation of the Gold Fields Act. The number of applications for agricultural leases made before the intention of the Government was announced, proves that there will be a great demand for this land; and it is quite possible that a number of applications for half acres as residence areas may at any time be made for speculative purposes.

This would be prevented by withdrawing from the gold fields those lands which it is intended should be sold.

Licensing Law.—I may venture to express a hope that the licensing law will be amended in the next Session of Parliament. The Act of 1873 cannot be pronounced convenient or satisfactory in its operation. Whether there is any feature in the Act to compensate for the trouble of defining the boundaries of districts all over the country, and of appointing Commissioners, I will leave to those who have had the task of carrying out these provisions to say. I may, however, say that the provisions for the appointment of members of the Licensing Court do not appear satisfactory. It is impossible that the Government at Wellington can have sufficient local knowledge of persons proper to be appointed Commissioners; and if a popular element is to be introduced, it would seem better to let there be an election by the people either specially or by entrusting the administration of the licensing law to Borough Councils and such like local authorities. I am not prepared to find fault with the limitation of the times of granting licenses to one annual Court, but I think this provision requires to be supplemented by some means of effecting the transfer of licenses at other times. To prohibit a man from selling his business except on one day in the year is a serious penalty on any calling. I must add that, so long as the Legislature expresses its intentions as to the principles upon which licenses are to be granted so vaguely as in section 22 of the Act of 1873, the manner in which the law is administered will depend on the opinions entertained by the members of the Court on questions of social economy and politics. The word "necessity" in the above-mentioned clause affords an illustration of this. A Good Templar might think there can be no necessity for any public houses, and accordingly might refuse to grant any licenses at all. On the other hand, a political economist of the strictly scientific school might recognize the existing demand for any commodity as the only test of the necessity for a supply, and of such necessity the proposed vendor must be the best judge. It may be added that a Magistrate who is in the daily habit of inquiring into the legal rights of individuals, may fairly decline to interfere with the *prima facie* right of every citizen to buy or sell as he pleases, further than the express letter of the law makes it his duty to do so.

In the above remarks I have refrained from expressing any opinion upon the principles which ought to regulate the licensing system, and have only pointed out what appear to me to be palpable defects in the practical working of the present law.

To complete my report I append the usual tables of statistics.

I have, &c.,
JOSEPH GILES,
Warden and Resident Magistrate.

DISTRICT OF BULLER.—Statistics of Resident Magistrate's and Warden's Offices, for the Year ending 31st March, 1874.

	Westport.		Charleston and Brighton.		Total.
Miners' Rights	315	...	492	...	807
Business Licenses	32	...	43	...	75
Summons in Warden's Court	15	...	49	...	64
Applications for Registrations	228	...	682	...	910
Gold Mining Leases	17	...	9	...	26
Agricultural Leases	10	...	None actually executed.	...	10

RESIDENT MAGISTRATE'S COURT.

	Westport.		Charleston and Brighton.		Total.
No. of Criminal Cases	190	...	88	...	278
Civil Cases	246	...	197	...	443

REVENUE.

	Westport.			Charleston and Brighton.			Total.		
Fees and Fines, Resident Magistrate's Court	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Provincial Account	361	12	4	231	18	0	593	10	4
Provincial Treasurer	1,165	5	9	1,346	2	0	2,511	7	9
	1,077	16	5	870	10	0	1,948	6	5