

several sums earned by them on said contract. Petitioners are firmly of opinion that settlers cannot remain to make homes for their families in this place while the present Resident Agent has the control of affairs; neither can the settlement become a success.

Petitioners hope that you will cause an immediate inquiry to be held, where settlers will have an opportunity of giving evidence or stating grievance, and petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

E. Barff, Esq., Wellington.

[Here follow thirty-six signatures.]

SIR,—

Jackson's Bay, 8th August, 1878.

The people here are in a very miserable condition, and the Resident Agent is now going to Wellington to get still greater power over the unfortunate few settlers who are compelled to remain. This petition is forwarded to you in the hope that you will use your influence to cause an inquiry to be held, when many matters of a startling character will possibly be brought to light.

At the present time the Resident Agent will only pay for work on the 1st of the month with an I O U, which is only cashable at Mr. Marks' store, and then only goods are obtainable, and goods must be taken for the full amount of it, and goods are very dear. Copies of the petition have been sent to the Hon. Mr. Macandrew, Hon. Wm. Gisborne, and also F. A. Krull, Esq., German Consul.

I have, &c.,

E. Barff, Esq., M.H.R.

MICHAEL DWAN.

SIR,—

Hokitika, 7th December, 1878.

I desire to call your earnest attention to the fact that the Jackson's Bay Commission should commence its labours in Hokitika, for a variety of reasons. The return repeatedly promised by the Government, to show in detail the manner in which the sums set apart for the settlement had been expended, together with the names of the persons who had received the money, can, I presume, be only prepared from the Hokitika documents. This question was repeatedly brought under the notice of the Government in the House; and on one occasion, when I asked when the return would be laid on the table, I was informed from the Government benches "that it would be unnecessary to prepare the return, as the Commission about to be appointed would investigate the whole question." Again, a large number of persons who have at various times been driven from the settlement after being completely ruined, are now residing in Hokitika and the surrounding districts, and are anxious to give evidence before the Commission. I may add, that the industrious, hardworking lives of these men furnish a practical contradiction to the statements repeatedly set forth in the official reports, to the effect that those who complained, and left the settlement, were lazy "ne'er-do-weels," and that Jackson's Bay was well rid of them. In ordinary fairness and justice to the ex-settlers now resident in this district, I do sincerely trust that they will have full opportunity afforded them of giving evidence upon oath as to the treatment they have received.

I have, &c.,

Hon. Robert Stout.

EDMUND BARFF.

P.S.—But for the fact that I have been ill, and confined to bed during the whole of the past fortnight, I should write at greater length.—E. B.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Bankton, Dunedin, 21st December, 1878.

I am in receipt of your letter regarding the Jackson's Bay Commission. The Commissioners have been informed that they must make full inquiries at Hokitika, so that the whole truth regarding the settlement may be brought out. I feel sure that the Commissioners would take it as a favour if you could assist them by informing them of the persons likely to be able to afford them aid in their inquiries. I exceedingly regret that the settlement has not been a success, but I still hope brighter days are in store for South Westland.

I have, &c.,

E. Barff, Esq., M.H.R., Hokitika.

ROBERT STOUT.

SIR,—

Kumara, 6th March, 1879.

I should have replied to your telegram and letter before this, but I have been seriously ill, and confined to bed since Monday last. I might perhaps have written yesterday, but for the fact that the failure of the Government Printing Department to circulate *Hansard* among members has given me no small amount of inconvenience; and, even now, there are, I believe, one or two references to Jackson's Bay which, after a most wearisome search through the weekly numbers, I have failed to discover. I beg to call the attention of the Commission to such references as I am enabled to make. On the 7th of August, 1878, I asked the Premier, "Why a Commission to inquire into and report upon the working of the Jackson's Bay and Karamea Special Settlements has not been appointed in accordance with promises made last session?" Sir George Grey gave a very indefinite reply, which was most unsatisfactory to me. On the 9th of August I asked the Premier, "If he will lay before this House a return showing, in detail, the manner in which the funds expended in connection with the Jackson's Bay Settlement have been spent, and the names of the persons who received the money, with the amounts, in detail, placed opposite the names of the recipients." I lay special stress upon this return, which, if prepared in detail, with the vouchers and sub-vouchers, will prove at once, either that the money has been wisely expended—and, in that event, the result will be most satisfactory—or if, on the other hand, the return shows anything of an opposite nature, then it will be apparent that the public interest demanded the inquiry. Sir George Grey replied to my question by promising that the return asked for would be laid upon the table. Later on in the session, I asked, without notice, when the above return would be procurable, and the reply from the Government benches was, that the Royal Commission would be instructed to inquire into the matter, and furnish the return. On the 29th of August I moved, "That the Government be requested to take immediate steps to cause a public and impartial inquiry to be held into the working of the Jackson's Bay Special Settlement, and that any persons who may feel themselves aggrieved may have ample opportunities afforded them of giving evidence on oath before any tribunal that may be appointed." This was seconded by the Hon. Mr.