

1881.  
NEW ZEALAND

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# PETITION OF J. B. BEECHE, OF REEFTON.

(CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND MR. DISTRICT JUDGE WESTON, AND EVIDENCE BEFORE THE PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE OF MR. T. S. WESTON, M.H.R.)

*Laid on the Table with leave of the House, and ordered to be printed.*

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. WESTON

The Hon. the MINISTER of JUSTICE to Mr. District Judge WESTON

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 14th September, 1880.

IN accordance with the decision of Parliament, Government contemplates abolishing certain Judgeships, and among them the one held by you, and providing for performance of your duties by making other arrangements than those now existing. I take the earliest opportunity of apprising you of this in order that you may have as much time as possible for considering your future plans. You will be good enough to send in your claim for compensation on account of loss of office on the ordinary form of voucher.

I have to convey to you the high sense entertained by the Government of the manner in which your duties have been performed, and that it is only the exigencies of the service which have rendered this step necessary. It is proposed to relieve you on the 31st proximo.

T. S. Weston, Esq., District Judge, Hokitika.

W ROLLESTON.

Mr. District Judge WESTON to the Hon. the MINISTER of JUSTICE.

(Telegram.)

Reefton, 28th October, 1880.

I AM engaged in a large amount of business here, and I do not see my way to finish by Saturday, the 31st. Moreover it is almost certain my judgments will be reserved to enable me to look up authorities at Hokitika. I have one case in which claim is made for £2,000, another for £1,000, a third for £200, and there are many other matters. About forty or fifty witnesses, professional and others, from a distance are in waiting, counsel from elsewhere have been specially retained; large mining interests and the value of mining stocks are at stake; and to delay would prove very serious to the several parties. What arrangements will you make under the circumstances, that is to say, if I am to be cruelly sacrificed on the 31st. If I am to receive my dismissal, justly or unjustly, as it may be, a month to me can make no difference; indeed the sooner I look for another field the better. At the same time, I desire to regard the interests of suitors standing before me, and do not wish to be compelled from want of time or opportunity to weigh lengthy evidence, to pronounce unsound judgments, and so involve the litigants in future costs.

The Hon. the Minister of Justice, Wellington.

THOS. S. WESTON.

The Hon. the MINISTER of JUSTICE to Mr. District Judge WESTON.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 28th October, 1880.

GOVERNMENT regrets that you should have been unable to inform it previously of possible difficulties. It is too late now to alter its arrangements, your successor having been appointed. I hope that the embarrassment you speak of will not arise. In the absence of knowledge of particulars it would be impossible for me to indicate the course which you should pursue, the responsibility for which rests with you. I can only rely upon your taking such action as will prevent public inconvenience.

T. S. Weston, Esq., District Judge, Reefton.

W ROLLESTON.

Mr. District Judge WESTON to the Hon. the MINISTER of JUSTICE.

(Telegram.)

Reefton, 28th October, 1880.

KNOWING, as Government do, the dates of the sittings, I concluded they would provide against difficulties. It is impossible for the Court to judge of the length of sittings to a day until the opening of the Court; and, until last night, I had no idea that so many witnesses had been subpoenaed. Again, at the last moment, a criminal case arose which occupied me yesterday until late at night. I never could have thought you would have gazetted my successor without first communicating with me, inasmuch as in your first announcement to me you said Government proposed to relieve me on the 31st October. If you had consulted me, as I naturally thought you would do, I most certainly should have advised you how to act to save the possibility of inconvenience to the public, and I quite intended