

We notice from the papers that a petition has been laid on the table which prays that a second-rate station should be put on our section. We know for a fact it would be a great convenience to many of the settlers round the mine and the men working at the mine, and be an item of revenue to the department.

F. J. Moss, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman,  
Public Accounts Committee, Wellington.

I have, &c.,  
T. JAMES,  
Secretary, Whangarei Coal-mining Company.

The SECRETARY, Whangarei Coal-mining Company, to the CHAIRMAN, Public Accounts Committee.

DEAR SIR,— The Whangarei Coal-mining Company (Limited), Auckland, 15th July, 1886.

It may be impossible for the next few days for the company to send to Wellington any representative to give evidence *re* Whauwhau Branch-line. So, in lieu thereof, we append a few of the principal reasons for our asking the Government to take over the line, for the Committee's consideration.

We have divided them in two parts: First, that the Government, recognizing and wishing to foster native industry, intended to construct this line—as shown by actual grant of £2,000; but, things turning out differently to expectations, the company provided the money for construction under the distinct verbal promise that within a short time the Government would take it over. Secondly, the injustice of paying full freight for coal from mine, a quarter of the distance being over our own line, the interest and cost of maintenance being a yearly charge of about £600; the inconvenience of the present system; the revenue, and how it might be increased.

There are a few minor points which we have mentioned in ours to the Premier of the 21st June, which we will not now recapitulate. We think Mr. Mitchelson would give information in regard to these points raised.

F. J. Moss, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman,  
Public Accounts Committee, Wellington.

I have, &c.,  
T. JAMES,  
Secretary, Whangarei Coal-mining Company.

#### WHAUWHAU BRANCH-LINE.

*Actual Grant of £2,000.*—A number of years ago Mr. Ormiston, then member for Mangapai, obtained a grant of £2,000 to be put aside by the Government for the purpose of making a tram-line from our mine to the river. It was about the time of the change of Governments from Provincial Councils, and, consequent on this and Mr. Ormiston's death, together with the influence brought to bear by the owners of the Kamo Mine (just discovered at this time), the money was used to pay for compensation on the line to the Kamo Mine.

*Ministerial Promises.*—The company saw they could never develop the mine without providing better carriage, so they wrote to and interviewed Ministers on several occasions. The Kamo-Whangarei line being built, the company wanted a branch line to their mine, and Ministers, recognizing the justice of the petition, promised to construct the line, but the company was to borrow the money for the making of the line. It was to be constructed under Government supervision, and on its completion was to be taken over by the Government. The money was borrowed and handed to Government in sundry bonds, and now stands as borrowed money by the company, to be repaid when the company shall have the money returned by the Government. Mr. Mitchelson can give you evidence on these points.

*Present and Future Revenue.*—The output at the present time exceeds 1,000 tons a month, in spite of the bad times, which affect us very much. This means a yearly revenue to the Government of £1,200 per annum. We pointed out in previous correspondence (see letter to Sir R. Stout, 21st June) that this can be augmented very much by an expenditure of a few pounds in a flag-station for the use of settlers. And we notice that a second petition has been presented to the House by these settlers, praying that they may use this line. We believe fifty families signed it, who would willingly make use of this line, and that the revenue would be thus increased. The distance from the mine to river wharf is four miles (more or less); for this we pay railage 2s. per ton. Of this distance 1 mile 3 chains is over our own line, for which we pay in interest and maintenance £600 (about). So that, if we send down 1,000 tons in a month, it costs us—railway freight at 2s.—£100; one-twelfth of yearly interest, &c., £50: equal to £150, or 50 per cent. more than other mines on the same line!

*Balance-sheet and List of Shareholders forwarded.*—From these you will see that the company is in every way a legitimate one, the shares being in the hands of a good number of people. We would refer you to our letter to Sir R. Stout, dated the 21st June, in which we mention other reasons.

The GENERAL MANAGER, New Zealand Railways, to the CHAIRMAN, Public Accounts Committee.

SIR,—

Railway Department, Head Office, Wellington, 10th July, 1886.

I have the honour to inform you that I have an account of the working of the Riverton-Nightcaps branches for 1883-84, which will fairly represent the results of working the branch as a whole. It would take some time to make out a statement for the past year, and I therefore beg to submit that for 1883-84, which will probably not differ materially: Length, 49 miles; revenue, £12,251; expenses, £10,204; net revenue, £2,047. The length includes the coal company's line, 2 miles 24 chains. It cannot be readily estimated what precise value the coal company's extension would be to the Government line; but there clearly is an advantage, as all the trains make the coal-mine the terminus. The attached return shows the particulars of goods received at and forwarded from the coal-mine station.

I have, &c.,  
J. P. MAXWELL,  
General Manager.

The Chairman, Public Accounts Committee, Wellington.

P.S.—I also enclose a return of the coal traffic on the Whauwhau, Shag-point, Fernhill, and Nightcaps Branches for the past six years.

#### *Inwards and Outwards Traffic, Nightcaps Station, Year ending the 2nd January, 1886.*

	Outwards.	Inwards.
Drays, wagons, &c. .. .. .	2	4
Trucks, chaff .. .. .	..	3
Cattle .. .. .	12	3
Sheep .. .. .	32	119
Pigs .. .. .	1	..
Wool (bales) .. .. .	462	1
Timber (trucks) .. .. .	..	14
Timber (superficial feet) .. .. .	..	160,200
Grain .. .. .	355t. 9cwt. 2qr.	49t. 2cwt. 2qr.
Merchandise .. .. .	15t. 5cwt. 0qr.	158t. 15cwt. 3qr.
Minerals .. .. .	2,046t. 14cwt. 0qr.	43t. 10cwt. 1qr.

NOTE.—This statement of traffic is not for the ordinary financial year; but, having been recently got out for purposes of consideration of the traffic on the line, it is now submitted as giving an approximate statement of the traffic on the line other than coal. The statement of coal-traffic for each financial year will be found in another return.—J. P. MAXWELL.