

1889.
NEW ZEALAND.

MANAGEMENT OF WEST COAST COAL-HARBOURS

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives dated 26th June, 1889.

Ordered, "That all correspondence relative to the administration and management of the West Coast coal-harbours, from the time when Government resumed control to date, be laid before this House, together with returns of expenditure in detail, showing the cost of the works undertaken, the amount of work completed, and results obtained in each case; also the cost per ton of stone deposited upon the breakwaters, including all charges of management, interest, &c."—(Mr. O'CONNOR.)

No. 1.

The ASSISTANT ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF to the CHAIRMAN, Greymouth Harbour Board.

Greymouth Harbour Works.

SIR,—

Greymouth, 7th April, 1888.

Referring to the action that has been taken in connection with the Harbour Board, I have the honour to submit the following memoranda of what is required in carrying on the business of the Board until more permanent arrangements are made:—

As already intimated, the new Board will only be asked to attend to such matters as are by law required to be done by a Board; the general conduct of the works and other business will be undertaken by the various Government departments immediately concerned.

With reference to the funds in the hands of the Board, these you can apply as far as they will go in payment of current expenditure, and after they are exhausted payments will be made by Treasury cheques, or through your Imprest Account, as in the case of Government expenditure. As I find that the Board's contracts require payments to be made fortnightly, and as the practice has been to pay within a day or two of the certificate being given, I have telegraphed to Wellington for the funds necessary to meet this month's payments.

As the Government is curtailing expenditure in every direction, it is necessary to reduce the staff on the harbour-works to the lowest possible limit. Will the Board therefore kindly intimate to the Engineer and Secretary that their services will not be required after the expiration of the three months' notice required under their agreements; the notice to be given as from the 1st May. In dispensing with the Engineer and Secretary, their convenience should receive every possible consideration, and, if they wish it, they can be relieved from duty so soon as you complete the arrangements for taking over their work. You will also, in giving those officers notice, kindly say that the Government wishes to express its appreciation of their services, and regret at the necessity which has arisen for dispensing with them.

With reference to the other employés of the Board, some saving can, I have no doubt, be made by combining the offices of overseer and weigh-clerk; and the caretaker of dredge and barges, and mechanical engineer, are to be dispensed with altogether. The Harbourmaster and his subordinates can see to the custody of the dredges and barges, and the engineer of the tug will do any inspection of machinery that is required.

So soon as it can conveniently be arranged, the staging at the south breakwater is to be done by petty contract instead of day-labour. This will enable you to dispense with the services of most of the carpenters.

As you are aware, Government has lately reduced the wages of overseers, gangers, artisans, and labourers. The same rule will apply to the Harbour Board's employés whose services are retained. Any overseers and other employés who have been appointed formally by the late Board will, of course, require to be dealt with by resolution of the new Board, but the other changes can be effected by yourself as District Engineer.

The master of the tug is to take his instructions from the Harbourmaster, and the towage-fees will be collected by the Railway Department, along with the wharf-dues.

Correct inventories and lists are to be prepared of all plant, documents, and other property taken over from the Board and included in the store returns.

I have, &c.,

F. W. Martin, Esq.,

W. N. BLAIR.

Chairman, Greymouth Harbour Board, and Government District Engineer.