

In conclusion, I beg to impress on you the necessity for strict economy in administering the affairs of the Harbour Board; at the same time every effort is to be made to carry out the works expeditiously.

F. W. Martin, Esq., C.E., Chairman, Westport Harbour Board and Government District Engineer.

I have, &c.,
W. N. BLAIR.

No. 40.

LETTER C.—(Referred to in Mr. Blair's evidence.)

MEMORANDUM for F. W. MARTIN, Esq., C.E., *re* Works and Staff at Greymouth.

Westport, 21st April, 1888.

REFERRING to arrangements already made, and our conversation on the subject, will you kindly arrange further as follows:—

Mr. Allen, your clerk, is to be appointed Secretary to the Board at an addition to his present salary of £40, the arrangement being subject to a month's notice on either side, as in the case of temporary Government appointments. Mr. Shain is to remain on for the present at Greymouth nominally as draughtsman, but you can, of course, utilise him in surveying and otherwise as you may see fit. An assistant competent to do general outdoor and office work will be sent from some other district to Greymouth as soon as the matter can be arranged. The Public Works office is to be removed to the Harbour Board's office at your earliest convenience, and the old office utilised for such public purpose as you may consider best. Possibly the Railway Department may wish to get possession of it for a Stationmaster's house.

W. N. BLAIR.

No. 41.

LETTER addressed by the MANAGER, Westport Coal Company (Limited), to the CHIEF COMMISSIONER, New Zealand Railways, on subject of Haulage Rates.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 8th July, 1889.

Referring to the conversation which I had with you this morning, I now beg to bring under your notice the excessive haulage now charged by railway for the haulage of coal from Waimangaroa to Westport, and to ask you to make a reduction to this company.

Newcastle coal is now being brought into this market in such large quantities, and sold at such low rates, that we have had to reduce our price to prevent the loss of our trade altogether. This reduction which we had to make is equal to 1s. 6d. per ton on the whole output of the mine; and, although we have been able to maintain our trade at this heavy reduction, it has so reduced our profits that I have no hesitation in saying a continuance of present prices will inevitably ruin the company and close our mine.

I see no prospect of any cessation of the present influx of Newcastle coal, as the colliery proprietors are sending it down here on their own account; and, in order to keep our mines going, we must be prepared to sell at low rates.

I would remind you that the haulage-rates at Newcastle are considerably below those charged at Westport; and I cannot but think it will be for the interest of all concerned that this company should get some relief in the shape of a reduction in the haulage-rates.

It will be manifest to you that the whole revenue of the railway at Westport and of the Harbour Board depends on the continuance of this company in the field. I therefore beg to ask for a reduction of at least 3d. per ton on the haulage-rates, and I trust the Commissioners will see their way to meet us in this matter, and thereby prevent what seems at present inevitable—namely, the closing of our mines, and the loss of a most valuable industry to the country.

I am, &c.,

GEORGE JOACHIM, Manager.

James McKerrow, Esq., Chief Commissioner, New Zealand Railways.

The ACTING-SECRETARY, Railway Department, to the MANAGER, Westport Coal Company.
SIR,—

Railway Department, Head Office, Wellington, 11th July, 1889.

I have the honour, by direction of the Railway Commissioners, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 8th instant, relating to the rate of carriage on coal from the Waimangaroa line to Westport, and, in reply, to inform you that the Commissioners have very carefully considered your application for a lower rate, but regret that they are unable to entertain it.

I have, &c.,

E. G. PILCHER, Acting-Secretary.

G. Joachim, Esq., Manager, Westport Coal Company, Wellington.