

1893.

NEW ZEALAND.

WESTPORT COLLIERY RESERVE

(REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION ON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable DAVID, EARL OF GLASGOW, G.C.M.G., Governor of the Colony of New Zealand, &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

In compliance with the terms of Your Excellency's Commission addressed to us, and dated the 14th day of March, 1893, by which we were appointed to inquire into and report on the several matters therein mentioned, that is to say:—

1. To define such further portions of the Westport Colliery Reserve as are likely to be required for railway purposes and other public purposes.
2. To inquire into the rights of lessees holding portions of such reserve.
3. To assess and report as to the letting-value of the lands now held under lease, and as to the selling-value of such lands.
4. To report whether the lessees are entitled to, or should be granted, renewals for further periods, and if so, for what periods, and on what terms.
5. To report upon the rights of lessees, if any, to compensation for any lands taken for railway purposes or other public purposes.
6. To report generally upon the manner of dealing with any portions of the reserve not yet leased and not required for railway or other public purposes.

After duly advertising, as required by the Commission, we opened the inquiry on the 26th of May, 1893, at the Courthouse, Westport.

Prior to the opening of the inquiry, the lessees of the Colliery Reserve held several meetings and agreed to certain statements setting forth their present grievances and requirements for relief, which were embodied in a memorial signed by the lessees, and laid before the Commission for consideration, with a view to dispensing with a considerable amount of evidence which would otherwise have been offered. The presentation of this memorial, which is attached hereto, undoubtedly tended to shorten the inquiry.

The Commission also communicated with the Railway Commissioners to ascertain their views on the question of the probable future requirements of portions of the reserve for railway purposes. (Correspondence attached.)

The lessees were represented by counsel—viz.: Messrs. Moynihan and Harden, who called in support of the statements set forth in the memorial of the lessees the undermentioned witnesses, namely:—

Thomas Bailie, J.P.; S. J. Riley; J. S. Suisted, Mayor of Westport; C. E. Harden, solicitor; John Hughes, County Chairman; R. A. Young, Engineer for Westport Coal Company; J. L. Munson; Thomas A. Peterkin, Railway Manager; Hans Larsen; Jules Simon; Arthur D. Bayfeld, and William Nahr.

The Commissioners called the following witnesses—viz.: J. J. Moynihan, Chairman of the Westport Harbour Board; C. N. Greenland, Secretary of the Harbour Board; A. Jamieson, agent for the Westport Coal Company; Michael Organ, and John Marshall, builder. The evidence was taken on oath, and is attached hereto.

Upon consideration of the above-mentioned documents and evidence, and after personal inspection of the reserve and the leaseholds thereon, the Commissioners have arrived at the following conclusions, which are respectfully submitted for your Excellency's sanction and approval—viz.:—

1. We are of opinion that the sections from Nelson Street to Kennedy Street, as recommended by the Railway Commissioners, should not be re-let until the expiration of the existing leases, which