

If, as we believe, the public interest requires that these private lines should sooner or later be acquired for the colony, your Excellency's Government will do well to bear this in mind in settling the rates of haulage over such lines while they continue private property.

We also object to the imposition by the Commissioners of conditions as to our output (see letter, 4th June, 1894), as entirely at variance with the traffic conditions now in force on the New Zealand Railways.

With regard to the rates fixed by the Commissioners to be charged over the said Mokihinui Company's line for ordinary goods and passengers, this is to us a matter of minor importance as compared with coal-haulage. But we submit that these also have been fixed on a wrong basis, are excessive in amount, and calculated to discourage any increase of traffic in that direction. These charges should be fixed at a through mileage rate, with one initial charge in favour of the Government as the haulage authority.

Our Company's mine is now in thorough working order, and equal to a large output ; the bins are full, and we are only waiting to have a fair and reasonable haulage-rate fixed in order to send coal to market. In the face of the prohibitive rate fixed by the Commissioners for haulage and wayleave over the Mokihinui Company's section, we have had no alternative but to discharge our men, and discontinue operations, as such a rate leaves us no margin or chance of profit under existing conditions of the coal trade. The present delay and stoppage will result in our losing the winter market, and limit our operations for some time to come. In the meantime we are under penal output clauses, a rental of £450 per annum, and heavy permanent charges.

In conclusion, we submit that if no other reasonable solution of this difficulty can be found, the interests not only of our company, but also of the coal trade and of the colony, imperatively require that the Mokihinui Company's railway-line, or so much as lies between the Mokihinui Railway Station and our branch line, should be acquired by the country and become part of the public railway system; and we respectfully urge your Excellency's Government to take such steps as may be necessary to bring this about immediately, during the present session of Parliament. By doing so your Excellency's Government will remove a serious obstacle to the development of the coal industry, increase the number of coal tenants of the Crown at Mokihinui, and enable present tenants to fulfil the onerous conditions of their leases.

For the reasons stated, the appellants pray your Excellency to alter and amend the agreement entered into between the said Commissioners and the Mokihinui Company with regard to haulage rates to be charged to and from our coal-bins and the Government railway line, and to alter and amend the said agreement in respect of the rates to be charged for carriage of ordinary goods and passengers, and to fix the charges to be paid for such haulage of coal at a through-rate per ton per mile, calculated both as to our railway and the said Mokihinui Company's railway at the same rate as that now charged per ton per mile over the Government line from the Mokihinui Railway-station to the ship's side at Westport, which we submit should be 2d. per ton, and to fix the through-rate to be charged for coal from our bins to Westport at 3s. 2d. per ton, and to fix the charges for the carriage of goods and passengers on the same basis.

We have, &c.,  
For the Westport-Cardiff Coal Company (Limited),  
W. H. HARGREAVES, Chairman.  
H. E. HARGREAVES, Secretary.

P.S.—We find on reference to Westport, and since the foregoing was written, that the following coal was sent over the Westport Coal Company's line from the Wellington Mine, namely:—

1890 ... ..	4,187 tons.
1891 ... ..	9,000 „
1892 ... ..	3,376 „
	<hr/>
	16,563 tons.