

1896.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# BRUNNER COAL-MINE DISASTER

(REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO, ON 26TH MARCH, 1896).

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

## COMMISSION APPOINTING COMMISSIONERS TO INQUIRE INTO THE COAL-MINING DISASTER AT BRUNNERTON.

To all to whom these presents shall come, and to CHARLES DUDLEY ROBERT WARD, Esquire, of Christchurch, District Court Judge; Sir JAMES HECTOR, of Wellington, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; JOSEPH PROUD, Esquire, of Wanganui, a certificated Colliery-manager under the provisions of "The Coal-mines Act, 1886"; and THOMAS SKELLON, of Huntly, Coal-miner—Greeting:

WHEREAS a disaster occurred at the coal-mine at Brunnerton, known as the Brunner Mine, on the twenty-sixth day of March last, which caused the deaths of sixty-five persons working therein: And whereas it is expedient that a Commission should be issued for the purpose of inquiring into the cause of the said disaster, and for the other purposes hereinafter mentioned:

Now, therefore, know ye that I, David, Earl of Glasgow, the Governor of the Colony of New Zealand, reposing trust and confidence in your knowledge, integrity, and ability, and by the advice and with the consent of the Executive Council of the said colony, do hereby constitute and appoint you, the said

CHARLES DUDLEY ROBERT WARD,  
Sir JAMES HECTOR,  
JOSEPH PROUD, and  
THOMAS SKELLON,

to be Commissioners for the purpose of making inquiry into the matters hereinbefore referred to, and into the several other matters mentioned in these presents, that is to say:—

1. To ascertain in what parts of the mine the disaster occurred, and the nature of the same.
2. To ascertain whether it was caused by an explosion; and, if so, whether by an explosion of firedamp, or of firedamp mixed with coal-dust, or coal-dust alone.
3. To ascertain what lights were used in the different parts of the mine at the time of the disaster or explosion.
4. To ascertain whether any inquiry into the cause of the disaster has taken place. If so, what was the nature of such inquiry? How was the tribunal constituted?
5. To ascertain to what extent the provisions of "The Coal-mines Act, 1891," and the general rules, the special rules, and additional rules made in accordance with the provisions of that Act were complied with in the mine; but more especially as regards (a) the storage and use of explosives, and the nature of the explosives; (b) the lighting and ventilation of the mine; and (c) the means of escape in case of accident.
6. To ascertain the nature and character of the working and general management of the mine, and whether the mine was well managed or not.
7. To determine the competency of the Inspector, and the efficiency of the inspection of the mine.
8. To determine the competency of the manager, mine officials, and servants, and the management and working of the mine.
9. To ascertain the number and efficiency of the stoppings, the materials of which they were composed, and the condition they were in immediately prior to the disaster.
10. To ascertain the nature and sufficiency of the machinery and appliances used in the working of the mine, and the condition the same were in at the time of the disaster.
11. To make suggestions for the prevention as far as possible of similar disasters, and for the safe working of this and other mines in the future.
12. And generally to make inquiry into any matter or thing arising out of or connected with the several subjects of inquiry hereinbefore mentioned, or which, in your opinion, may be of assistance in fully ascertaining, explaining, or assisting in arriving at a fair and just conclusion in respect to the subjects of inquiry or any of them, or any part thereof or in relation thereto.