

REPORT.

In the matter of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1908; and in the matter of a Commission to inquire into the mining disaster which occurred at the Dobson Colliery on the 3rd December, 1926.

To His Excellency the Governor-General of New Zealand, Wellington.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

Pursuant to the Commission, dated the 3rd day of June, 1927, entrusted to us by Your Excellency, we have the honour to report as follows:—

1. We duly assembled and commenced the inquiry at the Courthouse, Greymouth, on the 10th day of June, 1927.

2. *Parties.*—The following parties appeared:—

- (a) The Grey Valley Miners' Union (represented by its president, Mr. J. Smeaton).
- (b) The West Coast District Council of Miners' Unions (represented by Mr. R. J. Wearne).
- (c) The Deputies and Underviewers' Industrial Union (represented by Mr. W. J. Joyce, of Greymouth, barrister).
- (d) The Grey Valley Collieries, Ltd. (owners of the mine), (represented by Mr. J. W. Hannan, of Greymouth, barrister).
- (e) Mr. W. A. Leitch (general manager of the mine at the time of the disaster).
- (f) Mr. Charles Hunter (formerly the mine-manager).
- (g) The Department of Mines (represented by Mr. A. H. Kimbell, Under-Secretary for Mines).
- (h) Mr. J. A. C. Bayne, Chief Inspector of Mines for New Zealand.
- (i) Mr. O. J. Davis, Inspector of Mines for the District.
- (j) Mr. C. J. Strongman, formerly Inspector of Mines for the district.

3. *Proceedings.*—After the inquiry had been formally opened and the question of procedure settled, the proceedings were adjourned until the afternoon, and the Commissioners visited and made a thorough inspection of the mine. The sittings were resumed on the afternoon of the 10th, and were continued on the 11th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th June. The Commissioners, on the 17th June, made a further lengthy inspection of the mine.

During the course of its investigations the Commission examined thirty witnesses. The proceedings throughout were open to the public, and full reports were published in the newspapers.

4. *Description of Mine.*—The Dobson Mine, in which the accident the subject of this inquiry occurred, is situate in the Township of Dobson, on the left bank of the Grey River, some six miles inland from Greymouth.

5. *Tenure.*—The company holds under lease from the Crown an area of 950 acres. The lease was granted on the 6th December, 1920, to the predecessors in title of the present company, and was assigned to the present company on the 24th September, 1924. At that date development work only had been carried out. The present company has continued development work, and has for the past two years been winning coal.

6. The seam is a bituminous coal of good quality. It averages from 10 ft. to 21 ft. in thickness, and dips generally from north-east to south-east at a gradient of 1 in 3.5.

7. *Firedamp.*—The Dobson seam, like many seams in this district gives off a substantial quantity of firedamp.