

James Greave, Reefton, three days' attendance	...	...	...	...	1	10	0
William Dunn, Reefton, three days' attendance	..	...	..	...	1	10	0
John Bates, Reefton, three days' attendance	..	...	...	...	1	10	0
Isaac Lewis, assayer, Reefton, three days' attendance	...	...	...	...	3	3	0
Edwin Butler, mining engineer, Reefton, three days' attendance	...	...	...	...	3	3	0
Patrick Brennan, Reefton.							
Henry Lucas.							
Sixteen subpoenas	...	...	...	...	1	12	0
Counsel's fee	...	...	...	...	35	0	0
					<hr/>		
					£66 18 0		
					<hr/>		

That, in consequence of the said adjournment, rendered necessary by the sudden and unforeseen retirement of the presiding Judge, your petitioner, without any fault on his part, sustained a direct pecuniary loss to the amount above mentioned.

That, in addition to this direct loss, your petitioner was unable, through the heavy expenses caused by the said adjournment, to procure the attendance of more than half of his witnesses at the adjourned hearing of the case; and that, owing to the absence of such witnesses, and the consequent failure in the proof of your petitioner's case, your petitioner succeeded in recovering £50 only, instead of the substantial damages to which he would have been entitled had he been able to insure the attendance of all his witnesses.

That this loss could not be averted, since the whole of the evidence would have to be repeated before the retiring Judge's successor.

That your petitioner at the adjourned hearing of the case was awarded £50 as damages, together with the costs of the adjourned hearing, but that nothing was allowed him for the costs of his first hearing, it having been ruled by the Judge that, as the adjournment was caused by his unexpected retirement, each party would have to bear his own costs.

That your petitioner, being a man of comparatively small means, sustained a great amount of hardship and inconvenience through the loss of the before-mentioned sum of £66 18s.

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your honorable House will be pleased to grant to your petitioner the above-mentioned sum of £66 18s. as compensation for the loss sustained by him as aforesaid.

And your petitioner as in duty bound will ever pray, &c.

JOHN B. BEECHE.

Witness—James Lynch, Solicitor, Reefton.

Report on Petition of John B. Beeche, of Reefton.

THE petitioner states that in October, 1880, he commenced an action against a mining company at Reefton; that his case had just been opened when the Judge, Mr. Weston, stated his commission would expire on the following day; in consequence his case was adjourned, by which he sustained a loss of £66 18s., having retained counsel and procured witnesses from a long distance. He prays the House to grant him the above sum as compensation.

I am directed to report the Committee are of opinion that, though the petitioner's case appears to be one of some hardship, he has no claim for compensation against the colony

17th August, 1881.

Minutes of Evidence taken before the Public Petitions Committee in reference to Mr. Beeche's Petition

Mr. T. S. WESTON, M.H.R., examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] I understand that you were District Judge when the case referred to in this petition was to have been heard?—I was.

2. You have heard the petition read. Are the facts as narrated by the petitioner in his petition substantially correct?—Yes.

3. And was it your opinion, as Judge of the Court, that the case could not be finished on the day referred to?—Yes.

4. Will you explain what your position was exactly at the time?—I received a notification, as the papers in the House will show, of my dismissal from the office of District Judge; the Government stating that they proposed to relieve me on the 31st October, 1880. Of course I had to perform my duties up to the termination of my notice, that is to say, up to the end of October, and to travel my circuit up to that date. I started as usual from Hokitika in the early part of the month, taking Grey-mouth before Reefton. There were several cases for trial at Reefton, some of them being of considerable magnitude—one case involved a claim of £2,000. The case of the petitioner's involved a claim of, I think, £900; and there was another in which the plaintiff claimed, I believe, £1,000. There were also two or three bankruptcy cases, and sundry other matters of less importance. Of course the process in all these cases was issued in the usual way, and when I went up to Reefton about the 23rd of the month I found all these on the cause-list ready for me to try. In addition to these cases, at the last moment a criminal case arose, and with that I was occupied the whole of the first day of the session. The first civil case called on was the largest, in which, as I have said, £2,000 was claimed by the plaintiff. Upon the case being launched, I thought it would occupy me for the remainder of my term of office, but I suggested terms for a settlement, and which were eventually accepted. In due course Mr. Beeche's case was called on. He is the petitioner in this case. The case was opened on the 29th of the month. That was on a Friday, after counsel had fully stated the case. On Friday I saw that in all probability I should be unable to complete it by Saturday evening, no matter how late I sat, and I may say that I sat early and late at all times. I at once telegraphed to the Minister of Justice, point-