

1885.

NEW ZEALAND.

CONNECTION OF COLLINGWOOD COAL-FIELDS WITH DEEP WATER

(REPORTS RELATIVE TO).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 6th November, 1884.

Ordered, "That, with the object of developing the coal-industry of Collingwood, the Government be requested, during the recess, to cause inquiry to be made, by some competent officer, as to the desirability of connecting the coalfields in that district with deep water, and that his report be presented to this House early next session."—
(MR. HURSTHOUSE.)

No. 1.

Dr. HECTOR to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

Colonial Museum of New Zealand, Wellington, 18th February, 1885.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works.

I HAVE carefully inquired into all the recent developments of the coal-seams in this district made since the date of my last visit and find they are not of much importance.

The seams are everywhere thin and variable in roof and floor, and expensive to work. The strata are subject to false bedding, so that the seams are very liable to thin out. On the other hand, the superior quality of the coal, both for fuel and gas-making, is beyond doubt, being the best in New Zealand. The extent of the coalfield is very large, covering a tract of about twenty-five miles long and five miles wide. In this area some of the surface-features are very favourable for working the coal-level free, and with a moderate expenditure for access the coal can be delivered by gravitation.

The Collingwood District is very promising for many other minerals and ores, and especially as a centre for iron and cement works, and for the export of marble steatite and other bulky minerals. The only port at present is the mouth of the Aorere River, which has a shallow entrance and liable to damage by floods. The best site for a deep-water wharf is at the point marked on my plan of July, 1872, sent herewith. On a wharf at that point I think an expenditure of about £5,000 would be warranted.

JAMES HECTOR.

No. 2.

The RESIDENT ENGINEER, Nelson, to the ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF.

(Memorandum.)

Public Works Office, Nelson, 27th February, 1885.

IN accordance with instructions received in your letter of the 23rd January, 1885, I have the honour to make the following report :—

On application to the Collingwood Coal Company I received from them their plans and report made on this wharf by Mr. Rees, copies of which I now attach; these show generally the character of the works proposed. I also, in company with Mr. Rees, visited the site of the proposed works, as, although generally well acquainted with the district and coast, I had never been actually on the spot.

I found, in conversation with the pilot, that the depths of water given in Mr. Rees's report are obtained—in the Deepwater Hole, from 9ft. to 10ft. at dead low-water, and on the bar, which never materially alters, 14ft. at high-water springs and 9ft. at low neaps. The spot is virtually protected from all sea either by the land or by sandbanks, and in the worst weather that could be experienced a vessel could safely lie alongside the wharf without either endangering it or herself. From inquiries made of those who have known the locality ever since the district has been opened I find that there is no appreciable change, and in corroboration of this I find that the shell-fish on the beach give indication of being left undisturbed for a great length of time. The Deepwater Hole is situated at the entrance of the Ruataniwha Creek into the sea; this creek is short and sluggish, and does not bring down much, if any, deposit. Although intimately acquainted with Golden Bay I do not know of any place which offers greater facilities at anything like the same cost.

Mr. Rees's estimate of £3,454 is, however, in my opinion, rather a low one, and, although I do not say that a structure cannot be put up for the sum mentioned, I think that it would be advisable