

1888.  
NEW ZEALAND.

## WESTPORT HARBOUR BOARD AND HARBOUR WORKS

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE).

*Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 22nd May, 1888.*

*Ordered, "That there be laid before this House copies of all correspondence between the Government and the Westport Harbour Board as to the removal of the members of the Board, and the appointment of new members in their stead; also copies of all reports received by the Government from the Engineer-in-Chief and any other Government officer as to the manner in which the harbour works were being carried out by the Westport Harbour Board."—(Mr. O'CONNOR.)*

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 6th March, 1888.

I have the honour to inform you that the Government having carefully considered the question brought forward in Parliament last session as to the desirability of taking over the construction of the harbour works at Westport and Greymouth from the Boards, and carrying same on under direct Government supervision, the Cabinet has come to the conclusion that, all things considered, it would be preferable that the works should be carried on by Government.

It has therefore been decided to take over the works at once, and as a Board is necessary under the existing Act, and also desirable as a Board of Trust in order to conserve the funds for the work as distinct from any other funds over which the Government has got control, it has been decided to appoint a Board of Government officers, who will, however, act merely formally under the instructions of the Public Works Department.

Feeling sure that the members of the present Board will be willing to assist the Government in carrying out what they believe to be for the best interests of the colony and the colony at large. I have therefore now the honour to request that the present Board will aid the Government in carrying out their proposals by placing their resignations in the hands of the Minister of Marine.

While making this request that the members of the Board should send in their resignations, I would wish at the same time to convey to the Board my thanks for the services which they have rendered to the colony while acting on its behalf.

I have, &c.,

EDWIN MITCHELSON,

The Chairman, Westport Harbour Board, Westport.

Minister for Public Works.

The CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

(Telegram.)

Westport, 10th March, 1888.

BOARD meeting last night passed following resolution: "That the Board give all facilities to the Government in their proposed change of administration of Westport Harbour works, with the sincere hope that the works may be vigorously proceeded with, and the Trust administered in a manner conducive to the interest of the colony and the development of the coal trade." Copies of specifications for letting quarrying of stone by contract posted. Tenders close thirty-first instant. If Government decide not to let contract, notice should be given, and otherwise tenders should be under different address. Please wire if you think it advisable to notify any change. Would recommend that tenders be forwarded to Minister instead of Chairman, and notice to that effect published. Will forward resignations of members in due course.

Minister Public Works, Wellington.

JAS. COLVIN,

Chairman, Harbour Board.

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 12th March, 1888.

YOUR telegram of tenth instant just to hand, and I have to thank you and the other members of the Board for your promptitude and courtesy in thus facilitating the object which the Government has in view. As regards tenders for quarrying, I think they had better come here, and would be obliged if you will advertise and arrange accordingly. Since writing you on the sixth instant I have been advised that the more regular way for members of Board to resign would be in terms of section thirty-eight of the Harbour Acts, seventy-eight—that is to say, that the members of the Board should send in their resignations, addressed to the Chairman, and that then the Chairman,

as a member of the Board, should then send in his resignation, also addressed to the Chairman ; and if it can be done in this way I will be obliged ; but if resignations have already been written out and signed it is not of much consequence.

James Colvin, Esq., Chairman, Harbour Board, Westport.

E. MITCHELSON.

The CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

(Telegram.)

Westport, 13th March, 1888.

MEMBERS of Board desire to know, previous to resigning, whether the Government have any fault to find with their actions, individually or collectively.

Hon. Minister Public Works, Wellington.

JAS. COLVIN,  
Chairman, Harbour Board.

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 15th March, 1888.

It is no question of finding fault with Board, but Government consider it in the interests of the Trust to take direct responsibility. It will facilitate matters if Board send in their resignations without delay, and advise by telegram of their so doing.

G. F. RICHARDSON,  
For Minister Public Works.

James Colvin, Esq., Chairman, Harbour Board, Westport.

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 20th March, 1888.

Will you please send definite reply by wire to-day as to whether or not Board will resign ; or, if not possible to reply finally to-day, please say when final reply will be sent.

Chairman, Harbour Board, Westport.

G. F. RICHARDSON,  
For Minister for Public Works.

The CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

(Telegram.)

Westport, 20th March, 1888.

REPLY to your telegram of fifteenth instant has been posted.

Hon. the Minister Public Works, Wellington.

JAS. COLVIN,  
Chairman, Harbour Board.

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 21st March, 1888.

Re your telegram of yesterday. Does the letter you refer to contain the resignations of the members the Harbour Board? Reply urgent.

The Chairman, Westport Harbour Board, Westport.

G. F. RICHARDSON,  
For Minister for Public Works.

The CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

(Telegram.)

Westport, 21st March, 1888.

No, it does not ; but submits statement for Government consideration. You should receive it to-morrow morning.

The Hon. the Minister Public Works, Wellington.

JAS. COLVIN,  
Chairman, Harbour Board.

The CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Westport, 20th March, 1888.

I have the honour, by direction of this Board, to acknowledge receipt of your telegram dated the 15th instant, and, in reply, to inform you that the Board, having resolved to "give all facilities to the Government in the proposed change of administration of Westport Harbour works, with the sincere hope that the works may be vigorously proceeded with, and the Trust administered in a manner conducive to the interest of the colony and the development of the coal trade," have concluded that it cannot, without bringing odium upon itself, and doing an act fraught with evil consequences to the Trust, abandon the right to local supervision of the Westport Harbour works which has been conferred by the Legislature, and supported by an endowment, as set forth in "The Westport Harbour Act, 1884."

The Board desires respectfully to draw the attention of the Premier to the statement made by him to the House of Representatives at the close of last session, see *Hansard*, page 1,018, as follows : "We were inclined to introduce a Bill, according to the recommendation of the Committee which sat on the Westport Harbour, to take over that harbour at once, and we should have proposed in the same Bill that the Government should take power to inquire into the working of the Greymouth Harbour with a view, if necessary, of taking that over also ; but, as the honourable gentleman is aware, from the information I have given him, the Government does not think there is time to consider those measures this session, but the Government will make inquiry and take such action as may be necessary. With reference to money for carrying out the work, the Government are of opinion that the work should be pushed on with vigour, for it is a most important work. The Government do not purpose to pass any resolution of the sort mentioned in the Acts, but it is their intention to find the necessary moneys on the security of debentures they hold, pending the decision of Parliament upon the whole question next session ;" and to state that, in their opinion, unless the Government have found something flagrantly wrong in the action of this Board, the Premier's declaration should be adhered to, and the sanction of Parliament should be obtained before any

change is made in regard to the administration under the Westport Harbour Act, more especially in view of the early date fixed for the meeting of Parliament.

The Board have constantly expressed their willingness to consult with the Hon. the Minister upon all matters connected with the Trust, and are anxious to obtain and meet the views of Government, but up to the present have not received any intimation, consequently the Board has assumed that all the operations have been conducted to the approval of the Minister. The Hon. the Minister for Public Works has also been good enough upon his visit to Westport to express his approval and satisfaction.

In the discharge of their onerous duties members have constantly found themselves individually and collectively attacked as wrong-doers, and they regret to find that, although the Government does recognise the faithful services they have rendered, yet it appears that calling upon them to resign would convey some confirmation of, and imply credence in, the unwarrantable statements which have been made against this Board, and the Board feel assured that such is not the wish of the Government.

The Board are anxious and willing to receive any suggestion which the Minister may make in regard to the administration of their Trust, and submit that unless some serious cause has arisen, of which they are unaware, no disturbance of the present constitution should take place until the necessary parliamentary sanction is obtained; and that if any grounds of complaint exist against the present Board, or any member of it, they should be made aware of it.

Under all circumstances, the Board regrets it cannot take upon itself the responsibility of consenting to assist in nullifying the provisions of "The Westport Harbour Act, 1884," by resigning at the present juncture; and hope that this refusal will not be taken as offensive to the Government, as the decision has been arrived at solely in the public interest, and against the personal inclinations of members.

I have the honour to ask that you will give the question at issue your kind consideration.

I have, &c.,

JAMES COLVIN,  
Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 22nd March, 1888.

IN reply to your letter of 20th instant, now to hand, I very much regret the decision arrived at by your Board, which, if adhered to, will thrust upon the Government the taking of a step which may possibly seem discourteous, and which we would consequently have much preferred to avoid. In view of your reply, however, and also in view of decision of Government on matter, as communicated to you in my letter of sixth instant, we have no alternative other than to issue a *Gazette* removing present members, and appointing new ones in their places. It is hoped that Greymouth Board will resign, and thus save Government taking similar action in their case, but, any how, the new Boards for both places will be gazetted on Saturday next.

Chairman, Harbour Board, Westport.

EDWIN MITCHELSON.

The CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board, to the MINISTER having charge of the Marine Department.

SIR,— Westport Harbour Board, Westport, 23rd March, 1888.

I have the honour to send you herewith, in pursuance of my telegram to you this day, the resignation of Mr. John Hughes as member of this Board.

I have, &c.,

JAMES COLVIN,  
Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister of Marine, Wellington.

Mr. JOHN HUGHES to the CHAIRMAN, Westport Harbour Board.

DEAR SIR,—

Westport, 22nd March, 1888.

Hereby please accept my resignation as a member of the Board. In tendering my resignation I wish to point out that I am no consenting party to the Government's proposal to take all control of our works and endowments out of our hands. I entirely disagree with it, and believe that a far better result could be attained—namely, by a reconstruction of the Board by local representatives; and indignantly repudiate the assertion that has been made that a local Board of disinterested and competent men cannot be obtained. I am decidedly not in favour of abolition of the Harbour Board, believing as I do that it is a grave loss to the district that is not yet fully realised. I must express my sincere regret that the Board's affairs have been allowed to drift into their present state. Trusting that our harbour works may be pushed on with vigour and despatch,

I have, &c.,

Mr. James Colvin, Chairman, Westport Harbour Board.

J. HUGHES.

J. HUGHES, Esq., Westport to the UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS.

(Telegram.)

Westport, 25th March, 1888.

HAVE resigned seat on Harbour Board. Wish to acquaint Hon. Minister am no party to Board's decision.

C. Y. O'Connor, Esq., Under-Secretary, Public Works, Wellington.

J. HUGHES.

The UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS to J. HUGHES, Esq.

(Telegram.) Wellington, 25th March, 1888.  
HAVE shown your telegram to Acting Minister, and am directed to thank you, in his name, for your action in the matter.

J. Hughes, Esq., Westport.

C. Y. O'CONNOR.

The UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS to the COLLECTOR of CUSTOMS, Westport.

(Telegram.) Wellington, 27th March, 1888.  
*Re* Westport Harbour Board. On resignation or alteration of present members, Government propose to appoint Board consisting of District Engineer, Resident Magistrate, Collector of Customs, Chief Postmaster, Assistant Engineer, District Railway Manager, and Clerk of Court. Am directed by Minister to ask if you will kindly act accordingly. Proceedings of Board will be merely formal.

C. Y. O'CONNOR,

Collector of Customs, Westport.

Under-Secretary, Public Works.

[Similar telegram sent to Chief Postmaster, Westport.]

The UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS to F. BIRD, Esq., R.M., Westport.

(Telegram.) Wellington, 27th March, 1888.  
*Re* Westport Harbour Board. On resignation or alteration of present members, Government propose to appoint Board consisting of District Engineer, Resident Magistrate, Collector of Customs, Chief Postmaster, Assistant Engineer, District Railway Manager, and Clerk of Court. Am directed by Minister to ask if you and Clerk of Court will kindly act accordingly. Proceedings of Board will be merely formal. Please reply to-day.

C. Y. O'CONNOR,

F. Bird, Esq., R.M., Westport.

Under-Secretary, Public Works.

The RESIDENT MAGISTRATE, Westport, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS.

(Telegram.) Nelson, 27th March, 1888.  
TELEGRAM *re* Harbour Board received. Mr. Kelling and I will act, if required.

C. Y. O'CONNOR, Esq., Under-Secretary, Public Works,  
Wellington

FRANK BIRD, R.M.,  
Westport.

The CHIEF POSTMASTER, Westport, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS.

(Telegram.) Westport, 27th March, 1878.  
I AGREE to act as member of Harbour Board.

Under-Secretary, Public Works, Wellington.

ROBERT KAYE,  
Chief Postmaster.

The COLLECTOR of CUSTOMS, Westport, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS.

(Telegram.) Westport, 27th March, 1888.  
*Re* Harbour Board. I agree to act, providing it does not interfere with my present duties.

C. Y. O'Connor, Esq., Wellington.

W. J. RODGERSON,  
Collector of Customs.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to the SECRETARY, Westport Harbour Board.

(Telegram.) Wellington, 27th March, 1888.  
MINISTER directs me to inform you that Governor in Council has removed all the members of Westport Harbour Board from their seats, except Mr. Hughes, who has resigned. New members have been appointed, and I will advise you of their names later.

The Secretary, Westport Harbour Board, Westport.

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,  
Assistant Secretary, Marine.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to Mr. JAMES COLVIN, Westport.

(Telegram.) Wellington, 27th March, 1888.  
ADVERTING to previous correspondence, I am directed by the Minister having charge of Marine Department to inform you that he regrets that he has felt compelled to advise His Excellency the Governor in Council to remove you from your position as member of the Westport Harbour Board, and that His Excellency has been pleased to do so this day.

James Colvin, Esq., Westport.

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,  
Assistant Secretary, Marine.

[Similar telegrams sent same date to Jules Simon, Esq., Westport; Eugene Joseph O'Connor, Esq., M.H.R., Westport; William Mailer, Esq., Westport; John Fennell, Esq., Lyell; Timothy Gallagher, Esq., Westport.]

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to JAMES COLVIN, Esq., Westport.

SIR,— Marine Department, Wellington, 27th March, 1888.  
Adverting to previous correspondence, I have the honour, by direction of the Minister having charge of this department, to inform you that he regrets that he has felt compelled to advise His Excellency the Governor in Council to remove you from your position as a member of the Westport Harbour Board, and that His Excellency has been pleased to do so this day.

I have, &c.,

James Colvin, Esq., Westport.

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,  
Assistant Secretary.

[Similar letters sent same date to John Fennell, Esq., Lyell; Timothy Gallagher, Esq., Westport; William Mailer, Esq., Westport; Eugene Joseph O'Connor, Esq., M.H.R., Westport; Jules Simon, Esq., Westport.]

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to the SECRETARY, Westport Harbour Board.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 28th March, 1888.

Re my telegram of yesterday. Minister directs me to inform you that Governor in Council has appointed Francis William Martin, District Engineer, Greymouth; John Alexander Wilson, Assistant-Engineer; Henry St. John Christophers, Railway Manager; Frank Bird, Resident Magistrate; William James Rodgerson, Collector of Customs; Robert Kaye, Postmaster; and Ernest Charles Kelling, Clerk to Court, all of Westport, to be members of Westport Harbour Board, in place of James Colvin, John Fennell, Timothy Gallagher, William Mailer, Eugene Joseph O'Connor, Jules Simon, and John Hughes respectively.

Secretary, Westport Harbour Board, Westport.

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,

Assistant Secretary, Marine.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to F. W. MARTIN, Esq., District Engineer, Greymouth.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 28th March, 1888.

MINISTER directs me to inform you that Governor in Council has appointed you a member of the Westport and Greymouth Harbour Boards.

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,

Assistant Secretary, Marine.

Francis W. Martin, Esq., District Engineer, Greymouth.

[Similar telegram sent same date to John Alexander Wilson, Esq., Assistant Engineer, Westport.]

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to HENRY ST. JOHN CHRISTOPHERS, Esq., District Manager of Railways, Westport.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 28th March, 1888.

MINISTER directs me to inform you that Governor in Council has appointed you a member of Westport Harbour Board.

Henry St. John Christophers, Esq.,  
District Manager Railways, Westport.

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,

Assistant Secretary, Marine.

[Similar telegrams sent same date to William James Rodgerson, Esq., Collector of Customs, Westport; Robert Kaye, Esq., Postmaster, Westport; Frank Bird, Esq., Resident Magistrate, Westport; Ernest Charles Kelling, Esq., Clerk to Court, Westport.]

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to the SECRETARY, Westport Harbour Board.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 28th March, 1888.

Adverting to my telegram of yesterday's date, I have the honour, by direction of the Minister having charge of this department, to inform you that His Excellency the Governor in Council has been pleased to appoint Francis William Martin, District Engineer, of Greymouth, and John Alexander Wilson, Assistant Engineer; Henry St. John Christophers, District Manager of Railways; Frank Bird, Resident Magistrate; William James Rodgerson, Collector of Customs; Robert Kaye, Postmaster; and Ernest Charles Kelling, Clerk to Court, all of Westport, to be members of the Westport Harbour Board, in place of James Colvin, John Fennell, Timothy Gallagher, William Mailer, Eugene Joseph O'Connor, and Jules Simon, who have been removed from their position as members of the Board, and John Hughes, resigned; and that notifications of these appointments and removals will appear in the next number of the *New Zealand Gazette*.

I have, &c.,

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,

Assistant Secretary.

The Secretary, Westport Harbour Board, Westport.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to F. W. MARTIN, Esq., District Engineer, Greymouth.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 28th March, 1888.

I have the honour, by direction of the Minister having charge of this department, to inform you that His Excellency the Governor in Council has been pleased to appoint you to be a member of the Westport and Greymouth Harbour Boards, in place of James Colvin and Richard Nancarrow, who have been removed from their positions as members of those Boards respectively; and that notifications of these appointments will appear in the next number of the *New Zealand Gazette*.

I have, &c.,

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,

Assistant Secretary.

Francis William Martin, Esq.,  
District Engineer, Public Works Office, Greymouth.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to J. A. WILSON, Esq., Assistant Engineer, Westport.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 28th March, 1888.

I have the honour, by direction of the Minister having charge of this department, to inform you that His Excellency the Governor in Council has been pleased to appoint you to be a member of the Greymouth Harbour Board, in place of Arthur Robert Guinness, who has been removed from his position as a member of the Board, and also to be a member of the Westport Harbour Board, in place of John Fennell, who has been removed from his position as a member of the Board; and that notifications of these appointments will appear in the next number of the *New Zealand Gazette*.

I have, &c.,

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,

Assistant Secretary.

John Alexander Wilson, Esq.,  
Assistant Engineer, Public Works Office, Westport.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to HENRY ST. JOHN CHRISTOPHERS, Esq.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 28th March, 1888.

I have the honour, by direction of the Minister having charge of this department, to inform you that His Excellency the Governor in Council has been pleased to appoint you to be a member of the Westport Harbour Board, in place of Timothy Gallagher, who has been removed from his position as a member of the Board; and that a notification of your appointment will appear in the next number of the *New Zealand Gazette*.

I have, &c.,

Henry St. John Christophers, Esq.,

District Manager of Railways, Westport.

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,

Assistant Secretary.

[Similar letters sent same date to Frank Bird, Esq., Resident Magistrate Westport, appointed in place of William Mailer, removed; William James Rodgeron, Esq., Collector of Customs, Westport, appointed in place of Eugene Joseph O'Connor, removed; Robert Kaye, Esq., Postmaster, Westport, appointed in place of Jules Simon, removed; Ernest Charles Kelling, Esq., Clerk to the Court, Westport, appointed in place of John Hughes, resigned.]

The UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS to the SECRETARY, Westport Harbour Board.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 27th March, 1888.

AM directed by Premier to inform you, and to request you to inform all other officers of Board, that, pending meeting of new Board, they are to carry out their duties as hitherto.

C. Y. O'CONNOR,

Secretary, Harbour Board, Westport.

Under-Secretary, Public Works.

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the SECRETARY, Westport Harbour Board.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 28th March, 1888.

IF you or any other officer of Board in doubt as to what should be done in any case, pending meeting of new Board, please wire to Minister for Public Works, and you will be instructed in due course. The communications to come through you as Secretary.

G. F. RICHARDSON,

Secretary, Harbour Board, Westport.

For Minister for Public Works.

COPY of LETTER from the UNDER-SECRETARY for PUBLIC WORKS to E. C. KELLING, Esq.,  
*re* New Harbour Board for Westport.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 28th March, 1888.

Referring to my telegram of the 27th instant, in which I had the honour, by direction of the Minister for Public Works, to inquire if you would be willing to act as a member of the Harbour Board at Westport, as about to be reconstituted, and to your reply of same date consenting to act as requested, I am now directed to inform you that the Board is merely necessary in order to comply with the existing Act, and because it is desirable that there should be a Board of Trust, in order to hold and issue the funds for this work as distinct from any other funds over which the Government has control. The proceedings of the Board will therefore be of a purely formal nature, to pass such resolutions, &c., as may be laid before it by the Chairman, who will act directly under the instructions of the Government.

Lest there should still be any doubt in the minds of the members of the Board, however, as to the exact nature of the duties which the Government wishes them to perform, it has been arranged for Mr. Blair, the Assistant-Engineer-in-Chief, to proceed to the West Coast at once, and explain to the members before their first meeting, more fully than can be done by letter, the wishes of the Government on the subject, and Mr. Blair will leave Wellington to-day accordingly, *via* Christchurch for Greymouth, and will thence go on to Westport.

I have, &c.,

E. C. Kelling, Esq., Clerk of Court, Westport.

C. Y. O'CONNOR,

Under-Secretary, Public Works.

[Similar letters sent to Robert Kaye, Esq., Chief-Postmaster, Westport; W. J. Rodgeron, Esq., Collector of Customs, Westport; Frank Bird, Esq., Resident Magistrate, Westport.]

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