

If it is to inquire into the question of wages, we shall most decidedly object to the Government interfering between us and our employers on these matters; at the same time, we have not the slightest objection to the fullest inquiry that may be arranged between us and the Grey Valley Coal Company, such inquiry to be based on the rate of wages paid to coal-miners on the West Coast. An answer to the above inquiries at your earliest opportunity will greatly oblige

The Hon. the Premier.

Your obedient servants,
LOMAS and NEWTON.

No. 3.

Messrs. LOMAS and NEWTON to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 18th August, 1890.

We have no wish to bore you, but, as we have not received an answer to our communication of Saturday's date, our only reason for again troubling you is in consequence of us not being able to make any temporary arrangements for starting the mines again, pending the result of the Royal Commission.

Sir, could you not, by resolution of the House, concede the royalty until the Commission have done their work, so as to start the mines again? Trusting you may help us in this matter, apologizing for troubling you again,

The Hon. the Premier.

We remain, &c.,

LOMAS and NEWTON.

P.S.—We leave for home at noon to-morrow by the "Mawhera."

No. 4.

The SECRETARY to the PREMIER to M. KENNEDY, Esq.

SIR,—

Wellington, 17th July, 1890.

I have been directed by the Hon. the Premier to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th instant, relative to the proposed stoppage of the Brunner collieries.

The Government was previously aware of the dispute between the miners and your company—upon the merits of which, however, it cannot offer an opinion—and, while regretting exceedingly that any such dispute should have arisen, I am to inform you that it is quite out of the power of the Government to assist the company by suspending the payment of the royalty from the collieries. The Railway Commissioners also, to whom your letter was referred, do not see their way to abate or reduce the railway charges on the haulage of coal from Brunner to Greymouth.

I am to add that the only suggestion the Government can make is that the matter in dispute should be referred to arbitration.

M. Kennedy, Esq., Managing Director,
Grey Valley Coal-mining Company, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

ALEX. WILLIS.

No. 5.

The ACTING-SECRETARY to the CABINET to MESSRS. LOMAS and NEWTON.

GENTLEMEN,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 16th August, 1890.

With reference to the interview which you had with the Premier on the subject of suspending the royalty payable in respect of the Brunner and Coal-pit Heath coal-mines, in order to enable these mines to be reopened, I have the honour to inform you that after giving your application very careful consideration the Government find they are unable to deal with it without legislation.

You are aware that the royalty forms a portion of the endowment of the Greymouth Harbour Board, and also that this matter must necessarily raise the question of royalties payable in respect of other mines. The Government therefore think that before any definite action would be taken by Parliament it would require full information on the subject.

While, therefore, recognising the urgency of the matter, and in view of the fact that even a temporary stoppage of the mines would be a serious disaster, possibly involving their abandonment through flooding, the Government believe that the question of the remission by them of the royalty, or any part of it, can only be satisfactorily settled after the fullest information is obtained and time is given for its complete consideration.

The Government have therefore decided to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire and report as soon as practicable as to whether or not existing circumstances are such as to justify a remission of the whole or part of the royalty. In the meantime, it being evident that this is all the Government are justified in doing, it is earnestly hoped that, pending the report of the Royal Commission, which will be obtained as early as possible, the miners and the company will, in the interests of the colony as well as in their own interest, temporarily come to arrangements to continue working the mines, pending a permanent settlement of the matter.

Messrs. Lomas and Newton, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

AMELIUS M. SMITH,
Acting-Secretary to Cabinet.

No. 6.

Mr. J. LOMAS to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Brunnerton, 10th July, 1890.

We wish most respectfully to draw your attention to what we consider is altogether a serious departure (at least, from our point of view) from the meaning and spirit of your memorandum