

Greymouth Harbour Boards, and suggesting that the Government should consider the subject with a view to eliminate any control or interference by the Board with the railways and shipping arrangements; and also that the Railway Commissioners should be empowered to do whatever they might consider necessary to provide berthage, wharfage, loading, and station accommodation for the shipping traffic in connection with the railway, and, in reply, to state that the representations of the Commissioners on the matter will receive due consideration.

12th February, 1891.

H. J. H. BLOW,
Assistant Under-Secretary for Public Works.

The Railway Commissioners.

RE alterations in the constitution of the Westport and Greymouth Harbour Board: Referring to my memorandum of the 12th ultimo on the above-mentioned subject, I have now the honour, by direction of the Minister for Public Works, to state that the representations of the Commissioners with regard to the elimination of any control or interference by the local Harbour Boards at Westport and Greymouth with the railways and shipping arrangements at those places have been carefully considered, with the result, however, that the Government has decided that the law must be allowed to operate in its entirety, and notice of this decision has been sent to each of the Boards accordingly.

I am further to state, that it appears to the Government that to have continued the Boards as previously constituted would have been to maintain what were really dummy Boards, and to countenance dummyism in any shape or form is both contrary to law and the policy of the Government.

In conclusion, I am to state that the contention of the Commissioners in this matter would apparently apply in greater or less degree to every harbour in the colony.

16th March, 1891.

H. J. H. BLOW,
Assistant Under-Secretary, Public Works.

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS in reply to the ACTING UNDER-SECRETARY'S Letter of the 16th March last.

Railway Department, Head Office, Wellington, 9th May, 1891.

NOTWITHSTANDING the decision of the Government regarding the constitution of the Westport and Greymouth Harbour Boards, the Railway Commissioners desire respectfully to add some few further remarks thereon.

The Government recently undertook an extension of the staiths at Westport according to designs supplied by the Railway Commissioners. This work, it is understood, has been handed over to the new Harbour Board to execute. The Board, the Commissioners learn, has applied to the Government to allow the work to be supplemented by sheet-piling, at a cost of £3,000. The sheet-piling is useless and unnecessary. The Commissioners respectfully protest against such an outlay, and against any departure from the railway designs without their concurrence. The staith is a railway work, and this episode illustrates the inconvenience and undesirability of having a local body concerned in its execution.

Since the new Board was set up, the Commissioners have been apprised by a deputation that the Board considers new railway works and appliances desirable, and the Board has submitted plans accordingly, the execution of which would cost several thousand pounds. The Board has really no jurisdiction over the railway wharves or staiths, and is not concerned in their working. The Railway Commissioners do not propose to sanction any works being carried out by the Board upon railway land. In future they will, by their own officers, do what is found to be needful for the traffic. The Commissioners, in the meantime, wish to direct your attention to the subject as evidencing the fact that the Board is unduly desirous to expend large sums of money provided by the colony on works which are not necessary, and which the Commissioners do not at present require.

In the conclusion of the letter of the 16th March, it is remarked the contentions of the Commissioners apply in a greater or lesser degree to every Harbour Board in the colony. There is this essential difference in the Harbour Boards under discussion from others in the colony: the colony finds the whole of the money for payment of interest, and pays largely for the extension of works properly chargeable against capital out of the current revenues of the colony. The Commissioners would also respectfully point out that there is no case in which the railways occupy wharves in any part of the colony which are, while essentially parts of and necessary for the railways, in the hands of local bodies, where more or less inconvenience and trouble has not arisen therefrom, and in every such case it would have been better and simpler to have entirely excluded all interference by local bodies.

JAMES MCKERROW, Chief Commissioner.

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS, Wellington.

New Zealand Government Railways,

Head Office, Wellington, 15th May, 1891.

REFERRING to your suggestion as to the District Managers of Railways at Greymouth and Westport acting as members of the respective Harbour Boards at those parts, the Railway Commissioners do not see that they can consent to their officers occupying positions in the directorate of public bodies, likely as these are to be in frequent correspondence with them on works, expenditure, and other business in which there may be differences of opinion. This would prove embarrassing both to the Commissioners and the officers; they therefore respectfully decline permission for the District Railway Managers to become or continue to be members of Harbour Boards.

JAMES MCKERROW, Chief Commissioner.