

that the latter were merely given as a matter of precaution. In the opinion of the Commissioners the use of naked lights had nothing to do with the cause of the explosion.

4. That a Coroner's inquest was commenced, and adjourned until the 15th June, and that the tribunal was not properly constituted.

5. (a) That the storage and use of explosives in the mine was in accordance with the requirements of the Act; (b) that the lighting and ventilation of the mine were carried out in accordance with the law, the quantity of air passing through the workings being more than double that required by the Act; and (c) that the means of escape were sufficient in the case of slight explosions and ordinary falls in the roof, but, in regard to the present disaster, your Commissioners fear that no provision could have been made by which the lives of the men in the dip-workings could have been saved.

6. That the management of the mine was under the skilled control of competent officers, who discharged their duties with care and reliability. The mine-manager, Mr. Bishop, is a duly-certificated mine-manager.

7. That the inspection of the mine was efficient; but, in the opinion of your Commissioners, it is desirable that the duties of Inspectors under the Mining Act and the Coal-mines Act should be performed by separate officers, as the inspection of the coal-mines on the West Coast is sufficient to occupy the whole time of one officer alone.

8. The Commissioners have satisfied themselves that there was no laxity of management or discipline in connection with the mine, excepting that in some cases the report-books appear not to have been kept with perfect regularity, as required by the Act.

9. That the system of crib-log stoppings, which is most generally employed in the mine, is thoroughly satisfactory on account of the nature of the floor and roof. It is the opinion of your Commissioners that no stopping that could have been devised would have been capable of resisting the enormous force which was exerted in this explosion.

10. That the machinery was sufficient, and in good working order.

11 and 12. The report contains a list of the suggestions your Commissioners have the honour to submit in connection with the working of coal-mines generally.

Given under our hands and seals at Wellington, this 15th day of June, 1896.

(L.S.)	C. D. R. WARD.
(L.S.)	JAMES HECTOR.
(L.S.)	JOSEPH PROUD.
(L.S.)	THOMAS SKELLON

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

THURSDAY, 7TH MAY, 1896.

THE first meeting of the Commission was held in the Courthouse, Greymouth, at 2 p.m.

Present: The Commissioners, his Honour District Judge Ward, Sir James Hector, Messrs. Joseph Proud and Thomas Skellon.

Mr. W. H. Russell, secretary and shorthand-writer to the Commission, was also present.

The Secretary read the Commission.

Judge Ward was elected Chairman of the Commission.

The question of making the inquiry an open or private one was discussed, and it was decided that it should be an open one, but to request the Press not to report the evidence given before the Commission. The Secretary was authorised to supply the Press with a brief summary of the evidence given from day to day.

Mr. Beare, of the firm of Guinness and Kitchingham, appeared as counsel for the Greymouth-Point Elizabeth Coal Company (Limited), and Mr. Joyce for relatives of the miners killed in the accident.

The question of the course of procedure was considered, and it was decided to call as first witness Mr. N. D. Cochrane, Government Inspector of Mines for the Westland District, and then Mr. A. B. Lindop, mining manager of the Westport Colliery Company.

The Secretary was ordered to call on the manager of the Brunner Mine to send into the Commission the following morning the reports of the underviewers of the mine for the twelve months prior to the 26th March, 1896.

The Chairman announced that on account of the absence of Mr. Hannan, Crown Solicitor, Greymouth, and Mr. Park, Crown Solicitor, Hokitika, one of whom would represent the Crown before the Commission, and in order to enable the necessary maps, plans, and papers to be procured, the Commission would adjourn until the following morning.

The Commission adjourned at a quarter to 4 p.m. to 10 a.m. next day.

FRIDAY, 8TH MAY, 1896.

The Commission met at 10 a.m.

Present: All the Commissioners.

Mr. Park, Crown Solicitor, Hokitika, appeared on behalf of the Crown.

The Chairman read a telegram received from the Premier with reference to the proposal to hold the sittings of the Commission at Greymouth instead of Brunner, and a suitable reply was approved. It was decided to inform counsel that the Commission would visit Brunner and take evidence there.