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NEW ZEALAND.

# PROPOSED STATE COLLIERY:

REPORTS BY MESSRS. GORDON, McKAY, HAYES, AND JAMIESON ON COAL AREAS IN THE  
WESTPORT CARDIFF COLLIERY.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

SIR,—

Seddonville, 28th August, 1901.

*Re Proposed State colliery:* In accordance with instructions (dated 13th instant) to visit and report on several coal areas comprised within the West Coast Coalfields with the object of selecting a site for a colliery for Government purposes, we have now the honour to submit the following report on the property recently held by the Westport Cardiff Coal Company (Limited):—

## WESTPORT CARDIFF COLLIERY.

This mine has been idle for nearly two years. The two working sections comprised what were known as (a) the North and Hector blocks and (b) the Bridge section. The latter is situated on the west side of and separated from the former by the deep gorge of Chasm Creek. For haulage purposes, Chasm Creek was spanned by a bridge.

The coal in the North and Hector blocks is practically exhausted, the coal unworked being little more than was necessary for the support of the haulage-road which had to be maintained through this section of the property as an outlet for the coal mined in the Bridge section. It was from this latter section that the late company obtained its supply at the time when operations ceased. So far as opened out, the Bridge section proved to be very much disturbed, and the greater bulk of the coal was very soft and friable.

At the end of January, 1900—some months after the Company ceased work—it was discovered that the Hector block workings were on fire. This fire has cut off the means of haulage from the Bridge section. Had this misfortune not occurred, it would have been practicable and desirable to have extracted the pillar coal now standing on the Bridge section for the requirements of the Government service, but, under existing conditions, we do not consider the coal in this part of the property worth the heavy expense which the construction of a new haulage-road to it would entail.

Between the North block and the Hector block there is a small unworked area of coal described by the former management and shown on the colliery plan as “soft and faulted.” Considering the accessibility of this area to the main haulage-road, the very fact of the late company leaving it unworked speaks for itself as to the non-commercial character of the coal; and, as this area is now blocked off by the dam, which had to be erected in order to flood the mine in consequence of the fire, it is unavailable at present, and may be dismissed from practical considerations. The position of this faulted area, and of the previously-worked portions of the mine, may be summed up as not possessing potentialities of any importance, nor to warrant any expenditure in reopening them.

Before finally leaving the consideration of previous workings, we wish to draw attention to the fact that there are a few falls of roof-coal in the Bridge section. These are being carefully watched by the caretaker, but so far no signs of heating have shown. So long as the conditions are as they now exist, little or no danger is to be apprehended, but if the place were abandoned entirely, there is a possibility of fire breaking out. To minimise this risk, we are of opinion that it is desirable that the several openings should be sealed up by good stoppings, so as to prevent the circulation of air through these workings, which would then be likely to fill with carbon di-oxide or black damp. This gas will not support combustion.