

## PETITION.

To the Hon. the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled.

THE humble petition of Arthur D'Oyly Bayfeild, of Westport, Agent, on behalf of himself and other shareholders of the Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, now in liquidation, sheweth—

1. That the Government of New Zealand in the month of May, 1900, pursuant to the power contained in "The Westport-Ngakawau Railway Extension Act, 1890," seized and took possession of the whole of the works, plant, and materials of the said Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, of the estimated value of £24,329, to satisfy a debt claimed by the Government to be due by the said Westport-Cardiff Coal Company amounting to £4,470, of which amount £2,363 was for royalty on coal and £2,107 for deficiency on the working-expenses on the cost of construction of the extension of the Westport-Ngakawau Railway to Mokihinui.

2. That your petitioner claims that the sum of £2,107 should not have been charged against the said Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, but should have been extinguished at the time of the passing of "The Westport-Ngakawau Railway Extension Act Amendment Act, 1897," as such deficiency was created through no fault of the said Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, but by the default of another company in the fulfilment of the conditions under which such other company was liable.

3. That in a report presented to Parliament in the session of 1901 in connection with the then proposed State colliery, the plant, works, and material so seized by the Government was valued by Messrs. Gordon, McKay, Hayes, and Jamieson at the sum of £7,516 3s. 11d., exclusive of £1,000 set down as the value of prospecting-works.

4. That in addition thereto the wire of the telephone-line was not included in the Government list of materials and plant by Messrs. Gordon, McKay, Hayes, and Jamieson, but is now in the possession of the State Mines Coal Department, which said wire cost the Westport-Cardiff Coal Company by payment to the Telegraph Department of the sum of £278 3s. 9d.

5. That the whole of the property is now in the possession of and is being used and worked by the Government in and about the State coal-mine at Seddonville, whereby the colony has been saved the cost thereof, but no consideration has been paid to the shareholders of the Westport-Cardiff Coal Company for the value of such plant, &c., in excess of the sum claimed by the Government.

6. That the shareholders of the said Westport-Cardiff Coal Company received no return for the capital expended by them in developing the coal measures at Mokihinui.

Your petitioner therefore, on behalf of himself and the other shareholders in the said Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, prays that your honourable House will inquire into the allegations contained in this petition, and grant to them such relief as to your honourable House shall seem meet.

A. D. BAYFEILD,  
Westport.

Wellington, 22nd October, 1903.