

No. 3.

The WARDEN Kumara, to the UNDER-SECRETARY of JUSTICE.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Kumara, 15th August, 1881.

In reply to your letter No. 1,174, of the 5th instant, as far as regards my duties as a Warden, and the extracts from the *Kumara Times* of the 25th and 26th July the statements in that paper, I believe, are correct. I sometimes hold Courts and conduct business at night for the convenience of the miners and the solicitors who visit this town to conduct cases for their clients. It is entirely optional with the former whether their applications, &c., are set down for hearing at evening instead of morning; and, in cases on complaint, they are only heard at night with the consent of the parties concerned. The arrangement is a boon to the miners, who thus do not lose their working day. As far as I am personally concerned, I have no objection to working at night as long as it serves the public, as it often prevents the necessity of my remaining the part of a third day, which is a serious item in a Warden's time, and an extra expense to the Government. My letter to Mr. Barton, and his reply, I attach, as throwing more light on the matter.

I have, &c.,

H. A. STRATFORD,

Warden.

The Under-Secretary of Justice, Wellington.

Enclosure 1 in No. 3.

Mr. STRATFORD to Mr. W. A. BARTON.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Greymouth, 13th August, 1881.

Will you be good enough to state shortly what instructions you received from me as to the transaction of business at night.

1. Has there at any time been made a complaint by interested persons as to this arrangement?
2. Has it been found to be a boon or a burden to the mining community?
3. Is the arrangement generally favourably received?
4. Did not my predecessor, Warden Mackay, frequently hold his Courts at Kumara up to late hours at night (say what hour); and, if so, did his doing so ever to your knowledge draw forth any adverse criticism?

I have, &c.,

H. A. STRATFORD,

Warden.

W. A. Barton, Esq.,

Clerk to Warden's Court, Kumara.

Enclosure 2 in No. 3.

Mr. BARTON to Mr. STRATFORD.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Kumara, 15th August, 1881.

In reply to your letter of the 13th instant, asking me what instructions I received from you relative to the transaction of Court business at night, I have the honor to state that my instructions from you were only to set down business for hearing at night where I could satisfy myself that by so doing it would be a convenience to the persons interested.

With reference to paragraph No. 1 of your letter, I have never heard any complaint by interested persons against business being made for hearing at night.

Paragraph No. 2: I believe it has been a very great boon to miners generally

Paragraph No. 3: The arrangement is generally favourably received, and I believe that if the present arrangement is discontinued it will be a great loss to the mining community

Paragraph No. 4: Mr. Warden Mackay frequently held Courts up till 11 and 12 o'clock at night, and, on one occasion, as late as a quarter past 2 o'clock in the morning; and I am not aware that this his so doing ever drew forth adverse criticism.

I have, &c.,

W. A. BARTON,

Clerk, Warden's Court.

H. A. Stratford, Esq., Warden, Greymouth.

No. 4.

Mr. FINN, M.H.R., to the Hon. the MINISTER of JUSTICE.

SIR,—

House of Representatives, 16th August, 1881.

I have the honor of enclosing herewith, for your information, extracts from the *Grey River Argus* of the 10th instant, forwarded to me from Kumara, having reference to a question put by me to you in the House of Representatives on the 5th instant, and other matters.

I have, &c.,

HUGH J. FINN

The Hon. the Minister of Justice, Wellington.

(For enclosure see *Grey River Argus*, of 10th August, 1881.)

No. 5.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of JUSTICE to Mr. STRATFORD, R.M.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 22nd August, 1881.

Are Courts still being held at night at Kumara, commencing at 8 o'clock? Did Mr. Mackay begin his Courts at Kumara at that hour?

H. A. Stratford, Esq., R.M., Greymouth.

R. G. FOUNTAIN.