

which it may be observed that with the depth given above the bar was unworkable—

During the last half of 1887, for 33 days.

"	first	"	1888,	"	30	"
"	last	"	1888,	"	31	"
"	first	"	1889,	"	16	"
"	last	"	1889,	"	17	"
"	10 months,		1890,	"	21	"

The last three figures being probably due to finer seasons.

(7.) That by another table given in the appendix, and which, although not showing the delays which may have kept vessels outside, shows the detention from all causes in port after arrival, waiting cargo, loading, and waiting opportunity of leaving, it may be observed that from the 1st April, 1888, to the 31st October, 1890, both inclusive, 1,515 vessels entered the port; and, of these, 497 left the same day, 630 left the following day,—many of which may have only been a tide in port,—188 sailed on the second day, and 89 on the fourth day, and 111 suffered detention from four to ten days or more. As the bar, however, was only closed for four days and over on seven occasions since June, 1887, it is to be presumed that only a few of the vessels included in the latter number were detained from that cause.

STORAGE.

193. The Commissioners have the honour to report on the subject of storage of coal—

194. That interruption to the working of the mines, or in the shipment of coal, takes place to some extent for short periods, from the absence of storage facilities, either at the port or at the mines themselves.

195. That the only storage at present available is the railway-trucks, of which there are 257, carrying 6 tons each, and these when necessity arises are availed of for this purpose without charge for demurrage.

196. That the railway authorities thus accept delivery of the coal at the mines, convey it to port, a distance of over seven miles, and then either discharge it at once by the use of stationary hydraulic cranes, which lift the truck-hoppers into the holds of the vessels, or keep the coal-trucks till vessels are available.

197. That delays only take place when several vessels come in to load at once, and chiefly after the port has been closed for a few days from the state of the river or bar, when vessels waiting entry come in together.

198. That formerly such delays or interruptions were greater than they are now, when the trucks were not so numerous, and the delays in entering the port were longer and more numerous, and when the different interests representing the mines were each competitors for a supply of trucks.

199. That since the amalgamation under the Grey Valley Coal Company this competition for trucks has ceased; since the port has been improved the entry of vessels day by day has been facilitated; and with the additions to the truck-accommodation increased facilities for storage have been provided.

200. That when delay does occur now it arises from the same causes—tonnage waiting at wharf, the trucks full, and none available at the mines to be filled till those at port have been discharged and are returned to Brunnerton.

201. The storage available in trucks, if pressed to its utmost limit, would accommodate 1,500 tons, or three days' average output; and it will be seen from another part of this report that the delays in shipping do not often exceed such requirements of storage.

202. That, whatever delays of this character take place, they give rise to more or less interruption at the mines, more or less loss of time there, and consequently an increase of broken time to the men, the loss from which falls ultimately on the mine-owners.

203. That the subject of increased storage has been inquired into at considerable length, and suggestions as to the methods of attaining this have been proffered, at Greymouth by Mr. Martin and Mr. Stone, and at Wellington by Mr. O'Connor, and, as their suggestions are too long to incorporate in this report, the Commissioners are compelled to refer for full particulars to their evidence.