

204. That these suggestions comprise storage for 2,000 tons, or four days' output.

- (a.) By supplying bins at the port and near to the wharf to hold the coal and redeliver it into trucks.
- (b.) By staiths to store and redeliver by shoots into vessels when required.
- (c.) By increasing the number of wagons, so that the present system might be extended.
- (d.) By furnishing a larger number of wagon hopper-bodies, which, like those now in use, could be lifted from their wagon-frame and piled on a stage by the travelling-cranes till they could be again replaced on their frames and taken alongside the vessel as at present.

205. That the estimates for these various systems differ very greatly, being for—

(a.)	....	....	....	....	....	....	£ 6,000
(b.)	....	....	....	....	....	....	30,000
(c.)	....	....	....	....	....	....	40,000
(d.)	....	....	....	....	....	....	12,000

206. That the coal of this district, or, at all events, of those mines at present in operation, is regarded as "tender," and easily injured by falling or sliding down shoots, although when shipped in an unscreened state the loss is not so great as when screened.

207. That screening at port of delivery or sale is not practicable with consumers who contract for supply of screened, and that this would in any case involve considerable loss in freight on the unmarketable portion of the cargo.

208. That, unlike Westport coal, the slack from this district is regarded and treated as waste, except so far as it can be utilised for coke or fireclay at the mines or sold as unscreened coal to steamers for steam purposes.

209. That, apart from the expense of providing storage, this is a serious element in deciding as to the methods to be employed; for the system which will involve the least handling, and subject the coal to the fewest operations, is evidently to be preferred as causing the least breakage.

210. That storage in either staiths or bins would certainly involve dropping or shooting the coal into them, and, again, dropping it out of them into the trucks or into the vessels, and so increase the proportion of slack.

211. That the supply of 300 wagons of the present form would do little more than double the present system of storage, and would involve a much greater proportionate cost, and probably an extension of siding-accommodation for the extra number of trucks to be managed.

212. That the supply of an equal number of hopper-truck "bodies" without wheel-carriages would admit of their being lifted with their contents and piled on staging, there to remain for vessels on arrival, whilst the present number of wheel-frames would be sufficient to carry on the running-traffic with the "bodies" now in use.

213. That, notwithstanding the opinions received that the damage complained of by the consumers is due to rough treatment in delivering out of the wagons, it seems to the Commissioners highly probable that it is in much greater measure caused by the necessary trimming of the coal after it is in the hold by shovelling it away from under the hatches, and, again, on its being delivered out of the hold to the drays, and by the drays at the point of consumption.

214. That it has further to be considered in respect of storage that, whilst at present there are only the mines of the Grey Valley Coal Company to provide for, there is an early prospect of those at Stillwater and Blackball being opened up, and, later on, those of the Cobden Coal Company and the Point Elizabeth Coal Company, all of which may send their output wholly or partially to the port, whilst the above extent of storage, with its cost and estimates, only takes into account the present output from the Grey Valley Company's mines.

215. That there is yet a further consideration—namely, the question of who or what body is to find the funds for the construction of those works.

216. That the position of the Greymouth Harbour Board and its finances have already been given, showing that there are at present no funds available out of which such expensive works could be constructed.