

and the Westland-Grey coal reserves, amounting to £114,439 1s. and £27,200 respectively, and subsequently provided for by a special rate of 3d. per ton on coal, have been complied with, except in respect of the payment of a sinking fund of 1 per cent. on the loan.

246. That the expenditure of public money at Greymouth is shown to have been very large, and, whilst the Act of 1877 creates an obligation confirmed by and provided for by the Act of 1884 to recoup the expenditure on railway up to December, 1876, the further expenditure between those dates and subsequently to the later date has not been made the basis of an extension of that obligation, but is in the same category as the sums mentioned.

247. That it does not seem to be certain that the work on the harbour is regarded as finished; so that the expenditure has apparently not yet ceased. In the evidence of Mr. Martin, Chairman and Engineer of the Board, mention is made of further works which are contemplated—viz., an extension of both breakwaters seawards, at a cost dependent upon the extent to which they may be carried, but at a probable cost of £40,000
A continuation of Tainui Street training-wall 5,000
And for dredging opposite the wharves 8,000

£53,000

248. That the non-collection of the special rate of 3d. has operated since 1884 as a remission to that extent of the rates leviable upon the coal-owners or the carriers by sea.

249. That it is unusual to expect the capital cost of a railway to be recouped by any impost chargeable against those who use it, and in the present case 3d. per ton on the export of coal, assuming it at 160,000 tons annually, would amount to only £2,000, or 16s. 5½d. per cent. upon the £243,000 to which the cost of the railway has swelled. On the other hand, it is to be remembered that the railway revenue in the Grey Valley, unlike other districts, is in no sense colonial revenue, but is paid over to the Harbour Board to meet as a first charge the interest on loan, and thereafter with other revenues to be spent locally.

INSPECTION.

250. That, as regards this subject, the Commissioners are impressed with the belief that the inspection of mines should be attended to in a direction beyond that which appears from the published reports to be generally undertaken.

251. That in respect of the inspection provided for the purpose of preventing accident and, so far as practicable, protecting the men working in the mines from injury, it is alleged by some of the witnesses that more frequent visits are required, and that the hazardous features of a mine may arise and result injuriously in the intervals between such visits as are at present made.

252. That, besides the above necessity for inspection, the Government in this colony has interests equivalent to those of any landlord who in leasing coal-areas appoints in his own interests a check viewer to control the lessees' operations, and prevent the mine being worked in any way to the loss or disadvantage of the lessor.

253. That it is probable that as lessors the Government would find public interests conserved, mines kept in better condition, and revenues therefrom better maintained, if Inspectors were charged with this aspect of the matter as well as the first as a special duty, and their authority extended so far as necessary to attain this object.

Given at Wellington under our hands and seals this
twenty-sixth day of November, 1890.

JAMES HECTOR,
Chairman.
R. W. MOODY.
WILLIAM BROWN.