

Hoppers.

					Carrying-capacity. Tons.
232 Class O, 6 ton (movable) ...	...	...	...	...	1,392
11 " O, 6 " (fixed) ...	...	...	...	...	66
Total	...	...	...	...	1,458

* NOTE.—One of the F Class engines was provided for Grey-Hokitika Railway=tractive power of 4,893 lbs. If this were deducted from tractive power of Greymouth Section, the net total tractive power for Grey-Brunner Section would be 23,578 lbs.

EXTRACT from RESULTS of COAL TRIALS made between CHRISTCHURCH-WAIKARI in 1889.

Description of Coal.	Pound per Mile.	Pound to evaporate One Gallon Water.	Ashes per Ton of Coal.	Relative Value.
			Lb.	
Coalpit Heath ...	26.32	1.22	207	116.50
Coalbrookdale ...	26.14	1.22	146	116.46
Wallsend ...	26.68	1.26	157	115.81
Brunner ...	27.0	1.22	150	115.31
Newcastle ...	29.42	1.34	210	102.73

W. ROTHERAM, Locomotive Superintendent.

Locomotive Superintendent's Office,
Wellington, 16th September, 1899.

EXHIBIT B.

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 14th September, 1899.

I regret that, owing to your not having been able to obtain a quorum of the Committee during my presence in Wellington, I have not had an opportunity of giving evidence.

I know nothing of the conditions regulating the retail price of coal. I, however, take the opportunity of writing you for the purpose of placing on record our relations with the Westport Coal Company, and our rates of freight, &c., as there is an impression in many quarters that we charge prohibitive rates, and that these are responsible for the apparently high price of coal to consumers.

The rates of freight which we charge to the Westport Coal Company are as follows:—Wellington, 5s. 3d. per ton; Lyttelton, 6s. 3d. per ton; Dunedin, 7s. 3d. per ton; Timaru and Oamaru, 8s. per ton; Bluff and New Plymouth, 8s. 6d. per ton; Napier, 10s. per ton; Auckland, 7s. and 10s. per ton (according to size of cargo). These rates were fixed three years ago on a contract for one year, and have remained in existence without any formal renewal of the contract. They are recognised by the Westport Coal Company to be exceedingly moderate, and it has not been thought necessary to disturb them. We carry for the Westport-Cardiff Company and the Grey-mouth-Point Elizabeth Company on the same terms.

During the year ended 31st July we carried on freight from the three companies at Grey-mouth and Westport 239,000 tons. In addition to this we purchased for our own use from the various local mines 85,000 tons, and for the use of Shaw-Savill and Albion Company, and for sale outside the colony, 49,000 tons, together 134,000 tons, making in all 373,000 tons of coal which we handled during the year. It will be seen that we are the largest individual consumers of New Zealand coal, and that our trade is of considerable value to the mining companies as we use entirely small and face coal, and an outlet for this class is of great importance to them.

It may be interesting to you to have some particulars of our trade in New South Wales coal. We used in our fleet at various points no less than 122,000 tons of New South Wales coal during the year, making our total consumption exceed 200,000 tons. In addition to this, we carried coal on freight from New South Wales to New Zealand 47,600 tons, and to other colonies 52,000 tons, together close upon 100,000 tons.

I may say that our rates for the carriage of coal on this coast compare favourably with those ruling in any other part of the world, especially when the cost of labour both ashore and afloat is considered. The cost of labour on coal ranges from 1s. to 1s. 3d. per ton, so that our rate to Wellington and Lyttelton may be said to be 4s. and 5s. per ton respectively. To the latter port we cannot average more than one trip per week, whereas between Newcastle and Sydney the rate is 3s. to 3s. 6d. per ton; and, the distance being only sixty miles and despatch being very rapid, the colliers can make three trips per week, thus earning a gross freight of 10s. per ton, or, less labour, say 7s. per ton net in a week against our 5s. per week net to Lyttelton.

I am, &c.,

P. J. O'Regan, Esq., Chairman, Coal Committee,
House of Representatives, Wellington.

JAMES MILLS.