

(No. 19.)

*The Chairman:* We have a letter from Nightcaps residents, which I think the clerk ought to read. [Letter read, as follows:]

*Objection from the Residents of Nightcaps to the Wairio-Ohai Proposed Railway.*

We, the undersigned, in support of Mr. Donald Sinclair's letter of objection to the proposed railway, do hereby send the following further objections supported by this petition:—

1. There is no bituminous coal in the district, and no expert evidence of the quality of the Birchwood coal. The market for brown coal is oversupplied: the open mines at Kaitangata and Nightcaps and Green Island are only working four days per week.

2. The Wairio-Nightcaps Railway, although built and owned by a private company, is leased and worked by the Government, and is recognized as the terminus of the main railway. Five to six hundred people have made their homes here, built on freehold sections, and the prosperity of the township has been increasing until this agitation for a Government railway by speculators has even held up a grant for a post-office in the township.

3. There was only one survey of the route, and the Government Engineer only inspected Mr. Rodger's route. The people of Nightcaps were never given any consideration when the route was fixed.

4. The granting of this railway would be a serious injustice to the Nightcaps Coal Company (Limited) and the Wairio Railway and Coal Company, who have built private railways in the district. The Government railway would run between these railways, about half a mile from each.

5. If the Petitions Committee seriously consider granting this railway to a few people who have huge tracts of lands to sell, and benefit by the increased value it would put on their lands, we pray that we be given an opportunity to send a witness from Nightcaps to safeguard our interests, and show the Committee how our homes and sections in Nightcaps Township would be almost unsaleable.

WILLIAM BARCLAY, Mining-manager.

THOMAS TODDS, Mine-manager.

1st August, 1914.

(Enclosure.—Extract from *Western Star*, 31st July, 1914.)

NIGHTCAPS WANTS.

On various occasions the member has urged the Postmaster-General to make provision for the better postal, telegraph, and money-order facilities at Nightcaps, but replies have not been satisfactory so far. Residents have a real grievance against the Postal Department over this matter, and if they have not a Board to voice their wants, they at least have prominent townspeople who have done their best to supply facts in favour of the applications which have been made from time to time. In his last reply the Postmaster-General said, in view of railway developments at Wairio, it would not be wise to make any change. It may be said that any developments at Wairio will not prejudice Nightcaps, which is now thoroughly established with a population of seven hundred, and has numerous indications that it has not yet by any means reached its limits of expansion. The utmost dissatisfaction exists at Nightcaps with the present unsatisfactory arrangements. For instance, there is no officer to register births, deaths, and marriages, and money business is not transacted after 4 p.m., which is certainly very inconvenient to the mine-workers, who make up the bulk of the population. One distinct grievance is that in withdrawing money there is no privacy. Lumsden and Edendale, both smaller populations, have post-offices with their postal staffs, and as it is the general wish of the residents that some improvement is necessary, it is sincerely to be hoped that further representations to the Postmaster-General will result in the favourable reconsideration of the application.

*Mr. Rodger:* I wish to put in several letters from Nightcaps gentlemen, and should like them to be read. [Letters put in, and read, as follow:]

At a public meeting of the residents of Nightcaps, held in the Coronation Hall, Nightcaps, on Wednesday evening, the 29th July, 1914, at 8 o'clock, at which 103 ladies and gentlemen were present, and at which Mr. A. W. Rodger, jun., of Birchwood, spoke at length on railway matters, the following resolution, moved by Mr. Peter Grant and seconded by Mr. Donald Sinclair, jun., was passed almost unanimously: "That in the event of the Government finding it inexpedient to extend the railway from Nightcaps Township it is the opinion of this meeting that the scheme of the Wairio-Ohai Railway Extension Syndicate, for the extension of the Government railway from Wairio to Ohai through the Morley Village, should be adopted."

An amendment moved by Mr. Barclay, Manager of the Nightcaps Coal Company (Limited), and seconded by Mr. Hunter, "That the railway should be extended only from the Nightcaps Township," was supported by six of those present, including the mover and seconder.

A further amendment, moved by Mr. Buchanan and seconded by Mr. J. Brazier, "That the railway should be extended to Ohai only in the event of Mr. Rodger finding bituminous coal in that district," found only one supporter in addition to the mover and seconder.

ROBERT DUNN, Chairman.

SIR,—

Nightcaps, July, 1914.

We, the undersigned property-owners and householders in the Township of Nightcaps, Wallace County, beg to state as follows:—

1. We are not signatories to the petition to Parliament praying the Government to adopt the scheme of the Wairio-Ohai Railway Extension Syndicate for the extension of the Government railway from Wairio to Ohai.