

4. There has been a large number of vessels lying in the roadstead unable to come in?—At last advices the number was twenty-one.

5. Could you make an estimate as to the amount of cargo and goods in the roadstead—a rough estimate?—I should say 4,000 tons, as nearly as possible.

6. I presume that not only causes inconvenience, but has raised the price of provisions?—Yes.

7. To a very appreciable extent?—Yes.

8. The harbour authorities have made a survey of the proposed works, have they not? They have had an engineer's plan, which is on the table here?—Yes.

9. What is the revenue of the Harbour Board at the present time?—It is a little over £2,000 a year.

10. That includes everything?—Yes.

11. What charges have you upon that in the way of salaries, or anything of that kind?—The estimated disbursements are £1,350.

12. That is annual charges?—Yes. Shall I state them in detail? Wharfinger, £250—he also acts as Secretary; accounts, charges, rent, &c., £100; Engineer, £400; annual maintenance and repairs of the various works on the river, £600; that is £1,350. I may mention that all the works in connection with the Hokitika Harbour are of wood, and they have been some time in existence, and they are getting very much decayed. We find that considerable sums have to be expended annually upon these works.

13. I suppose the repairs are almost continuously going on?—Yes; from the peculiar character of the river we are obliged to make continual embankments of sand bags, and other works, in order to conserve it.

14. With all the charges you have mentioned, there would not be much of a margin for those contingencies that would arise continually or repeatedly?—Of course these would leave a surplus of £650.

15. Do you consider that insufficient for the purpose?—Totally so for the purpose of effecting improvements. There is nothing left. Suppose by the Act we were allowed to raise £10,000 on debentures at 7 per cent., and the annual charge on that would be £700, and supposing we raised these debentures, it would leave a deficit.

16. The Board has a reserve of 30,000 acres?—Yes; 30,000 acres of land.

17. In the event of any assistance being given by the Government for harbour improvements, would the Board be willing to raise any sum of money on the security of that land?—Yes. But the difficulty we find at present in regard to these works is that the Government ask us to pay the harbour staff salaries, and take over the entire cost of that department.

18. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] How much is that?—About £900, the entire affair.

19. Nine hundred pounds a year?—Yes.

20. *The Chairman.*] That would be £900 a year out of the £2,000?—Yes; of course that would leave a deficit.

21. To about what extent do you think you can raise money on the securities the Board can offer either from its revenue or reserves of 30,000 acres?—We are at liberty to raise £10,000; we can raise no more.

22. Are you under the impression that the Board can raise £10,000 upon that security?—Yes. If we were relieved from the charge of the harbour staff we should have no difficulty in doing that, and raising a loan of £10,000 upon our revenue.

23. In the event of your being relieved of the charge of the harbour staff, would the Board hand over to the General Government the control of the harbour works?—I hardly understand your question.

24. In the event of the Government taking charge of the harbour staff by paying their salaries, do the Board propose to give up the management of the harbour to the Government in the event of large works being undertaken?—The Government, I may mention, have already relieved us of the harbour staff.

25. I wish to be understood as to what course the Board propose to adopt in the event of the Government taking over the concern?—The course we propose to take is very simple. As I have already stated, we have had an engineering survey of the river taken from the Kanieri to the ocean, and also taken deep sea soundings outside the bar.

26. Who was the surveyor?—Mr. Campbell, recommended by Dr. Hector. This has been done at a cost of £400 or £500. We have called for competitive designs for conserving and channelling also, and we offer a bonus of £250 for the best designs. These designs will be all in on the 15th of this month, and will be submitted to Mr. Carruthers for his approval. We thought, if the Government approved of these plans, and assist us with a money grant of £15,000, we should be able to raise a sufficient sum to complete the works ourselves. We expect to expend £40,000 or £50,000.

27. What sum of money do you propose to raise, £10,000?—We propose to raise £30,000.

28. Did Mr. Carruthers make any estimate of the cost of the proposed works?—No. It is merely a question of the engineer survey.

29. Could you not say within £5,000 or £6,000?—We think the works can be done for £40,000 altogether.

30. But that would extend over some time, I suppose?—It would extend over some two or three years. The difficulty we feel at the present moment is that all these charges would be upon a slight revenue—to meet interest on the loan, and also to carry on these works approved by the Government.

31. *Sir R. Douglas.*] You say there is 4 feet of water on the bar in the Hokitika River at the present time?—At the present moment the bar is open.

32. What depth of water is there when the channel is good?—Well, it runs from 7 to 14 feet.

33. What kind of anchorage have you inside the bar?—A very excellent harbour inside.

34. Can you say about what population you have to supply from Hokitika?—About 15,000.

35. And the nearest port other than Hokitika is what?—Greymouth.