

66. I do not mean the competitive plans; I mean the survey and general plans. I suppose you have laid down some principle to go upon?—Yes.

67. Has that been approved of?—Yes.

68. By whom?—The District Engineer, Mr. O'Connor.

69. Has he had much experience?—Yes.

70. *The Chairman.*] Is the general plan shown on any of the maps here?—The whole survey is there. That map is on a scale of four chains to the inch.

71. *Mr. Woolcock.*] Then you estimate the entire amount that would be required at £40,000?—I think so; but, of course, that is simply my opinion.

72. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Would a railway to Greymouth add to the trade of Hokitika, in your opinion?—That I cannot say. Of course it would be an advantage in many ways to have a railway in the event of the bars closing.

73. I understand there are a good many vessels lying in the roadstead. Would they not go to the Grey rather than wait two or three months, and the goods be transported across. If you had a railway, would it not increase the trade rather than by the present system of getting goods by sea?—No, it would increase the price so much that it would paralyze us.

74. I mean if a railway were completed between Greymouth and Hokitika, would it not naturally increase the trade of both places, because there would be such facility of transport?—I should think so. I may mention that some of these boats that have been lying so long in the roadstead of Hokitika have gone to Nelson to be discharged. Two vessels have gone and been discharged there to my knowledge.

75. Would these designs deepen the harbour?—Yes.

76. To what depth?—I think 12 feet.

77. At high water?—Yes.

78. *The Chairman.*] When do you expect to have these competitive designs in?—On the 15th. I may mention that I believe there is some mistake made with regard to the strength of the works that have usually been placed on these rivers. It is not strength so much as the mode of constructing the works that is of the greater importance. I think the cost would be much less if a lighter class of works were used. If the timber was of the right kind, and the works were about half the strength that is usually considered necessary, the same result would be secured. In fact, I am in favour of piling altogether in preference to stone. There is no foundation for stone, and the scouring of the water is so bad that the whole fabric is continually being upset.

79. I presume you can get the very best timber at Hokitika at very reasonable prices?—Yes.

80. *Mr. Sheehan.*] Is there totara?—Yes, we have plenty of that and rata.

81. *The Chairman.*] And silver pine?—Yes, we have that also.

82. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Is not the whole population south of Hokitika, down to Jackson's Bay, dependent upon Hokitika for supplies?—Yes. The recent discoveries we have had there—silver and copper mines—I cannot say definitely the value of these mines, but they promise very well, and I think the discoveries are very likely to cause an increase of population.

83. *Mr. Sheehan.*] What is the outlet of the Kumara country?—It lies about half-way between Greymouth and Hokitika. The Hokitika people have a good deal of advantage in the character of the country; but the Grey people have a train to it now, and that counterbalances a good many of the disadvantages they had with the road.

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THURSDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 1877.

HON. J. A. BONAR examined.

84. *The Chairman.*] You have been requested to give evidence to this Committee in reference to the state of the Hokitika Harbour, and to offer any remarks that may occur to you in connection with such measures as you think necessary for the improvement of the harbour. Mr. Virtue, Chairman of the Harbour Board, has already given his evidence, and the Committee desires to hear yourself, as being one of the oldest residents in Hokitika, and having had considerable experience with reference to the harbour works?—With reference to the harbour, the principal requirement is to have it improved so as to remove the difficulty which occurs annually—that is, its partial or almost complete closing for two or three months in the year. That is the great difficulty we have to contend against, because it involves very heavy expense, not only to those who are proprietors of ships, but also to all persons engaged in business, inasmuch as it has been no uncommon occurrence for goods to have been purchased and shipped for Hokitika, and the ships to have to remain outside the bar after they had arrived there sometimes for sixty, seventy, eighty, or even ninety days. In the ordinary course of trade these goods are drawn against at dates varying from thirty to sixty and ninety days, the result being that bills for payment absolutely mature before the goods have entered the port. That means, of course, a very great loss and embarrassment to those who are engaged in trade, and, as a natural consequence, it adds considerably to the cost of the goods, and thereby the consumer suffers greatly. Besides this, great difficulties are thereby placed in the way of trade. The principal cause of this stoppage on the bar is that during the winter months the water or rain which would otherwise come down to clear out the bar is turned into snow and ice upon the hills, so that the volume of water which would otherwise come down the river is greatly lessened, and the force of the current is insufficient to keep back the force of the sea, which rushes in and throws up sandbanks in the middle of the entrance. The bar is thus practically closed, because it is unsafe for vessels to enter in—that is, vessels drawing more than five or six feet. The bar at Hokitika is kept open partly by river water and partly by a large lagoon just inside the entrance, which adds very considerably to the volume, and if these two waters are separated, as was the case last year, and each find a different outlet, the result is that neither bar is practicable for vessels to work in. Neither channel was practicable for vessels to work in, whereas had those two waters been united into one stream, the channel would have been sufficient, or almost sufficient. It is