

1st June, 1876.—*Resolved*, “That Messrs. Tewsley, Reeves, and Ritchie be appointed a Committee to inquire and report as to sums expended in reclaiming and improving the land adjoining Rattray and Jetty Streets, with a view to the Board acquiring the interests in the said land, which is now held by the province, and to confer with the Provincial Executive in reference thereto.”

The Committee reported as follows on the 1st July, 1876:—“The Sub-Committee of the Otago Harbour Board, appointed to inquire into the question of the reclamation of the block lying between Rattray Street and the old jetty, and Crawford Street and cross-jetty, have to report that they had seen the Secretary of Land and Works of the Provincial Government, and got from him a statement of the cost of reclamation, which is attached hereto. They have also seen the Board’s solicitor with reference to the title, and his opinion is also attached. The Sub-Committee beg respectfully to recommend to the Board that the outlay incurred on the 8th ultimo by the Provincial Government, of £9,769 16s., be paid to them by the Board, and the balance of the cost of completing the works be agreed to be paid as incurred, in return for which that the Board receive from his Honor the Superintendent every facility for a full conveyance of the Board’s land, and an undertaking from the Provincial Executive to refund to the Board the cost of any part of such reclamation which might be found impossible to recover from the General Government. This last proviso appears to the Sub-Committee to be necessary, in consequence of their failing to get from the Board’s solicitor positive opinion that the Board’s power of recovering the whole cost of reclamation is undoubted. At the same time, the Sub-Committee have satisfied themselves that it is almost certain that the whole amount can be recovered.”

It was resolved that the report of the Sub-Committee on cost of reclamation be adopted, with the addition, “That the money be not paid until the Board’s solicitor reports that the whole of the Board’s endowment is conveyed and assigned to the Board by his Honor the Superintendent.”

*Note*.—Reclamation was proceeded with, the conveyance executed, and the Board paid the Provincial Government a total sum on this account of £12,395 2s.

On 20th October, 1876, the following letter was sent to the Hon. the Commissioner of Customs: “I have the honor, by direction of the Otago Harbour Board, to inform you that, having received a conveyance from his Honor the Superintendent, under the provisions of clause 4 of ‘The Otago Harbour Board Empowering Act, 1875,’ the Board is anxious that any of the endowment not required for railway or other public purposes may be as soon as possible put into profitable use and occupation. The Board respectfully request that the Government may, at as early a date as possible, determine how much of the Board’s endowment is required by it, so that the quantity may be marked off, and the Board be at liberty to proceed with issuing leases for the surplus. The Board expresses the hope that the Hon. the Commissioner of Customs will use all his influence to have this matter brought to a speedy arrangement.—I have, &c.,”

The following reply was received: “Public Works Office, Wellington, 3rd November, 1876.—Sir,—In reply to your letter of 20th instant, addressed to the Hon. the Commissioner of Customs, in reference to marking out on the harbour endowment the portions required for railway purposes, I am directed by the Hon. the Minister for Public Works to inform you that the Engineer-in-Chief will be shortly visiting Dunedin, when he will give his attention to the matter.—I have, &c., JOHN KNOWLES, Under Secretary for Public Works.”

The Engineer-in-Chief having arrived in Dunedin, and not having any communication from him in reference to the land required for railway purposes, the following letter was addressed to the Hon. George McLean, then also in Dunedin: “1st December, 1876.—Sir,—I had the honor of addressing you, on the 20th October, on the subject of the Government making its selection of land for railway purposes out of the Harbour Board’s endowment, so that the Board might be placed in a position to proceed with the leasing of the balance; and was favoured with the reply (3rd November) from the Under Secretary of Public Works to the effect that the Engineer-in-Chief will be shortly in Dunedin, when he will give his attention to the matter. As I understand that the Engineer-in-Chief is now in Dunedin, may I be permitted to request the favour of early attention to this matter? I have also to inform you that the Board’s Finance Committee will be glad to meet with the Engineer-in-Chief to consult upon it, if it is so desired.—I have, &c., JOHN L. GILLIES, Secretary.”

The following reply was received: “Minister’s Office, Custom House, Dunedin, 2nd December, 1876.—Sir,—I have the honor, by direction of the Hon. Mr. McLean, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday’s date with reference to the selection by the Government from the Board’s endowment of land for railway purposes; and to inform you, in reply, that the matter has been referred to the Engineer-in-Chief.—I have, &c., WM. E. SESSIONS.”

The Engineer-in-Chief having left Dunedin without communicating any decision to the Board, on inquiry it was found that the duty had been deputed to Mr. Blair, the District Engineer.

On 13th February, 1877, the following was received: “Public Works Office, Dunedin, 13th February, 1877.—Sir,—Referring to previous communications on the subject, and with the immediate view of determining the quantity of land to be reserved for railway purposes at Dunedin, I am authorized to confer with your Board as to the relative position of the railway and harbour works. This department is anxious to make provision for having the permanent station, particularly the goods sheds, in such a position as will best accord with the harbour arrangements, and would like to get an expression of opinion on the subject from the Board. I shall be very glad to meet a Committee or the Board’s officers any time you may arrange.—I have, &c., W. N. BLAIR, District Engineer.—J. L. Gillies, Secretary, Otago Harbour Board.”

This letter was submitted to the Board on the 15th February, and remitted to the Works Committee.

“Dunedin, 21st February, 1877. Sir,—I am directed to inform you, in reply to your favour of 13th instant, that, the Board having remitted the subject-matter of that letter to the Works Committee to deal with, the following resolution has been arrived at—namely, ‘That Mr. Blair be requested to meet with the Board’s Engineer to consider and discuss preliminaries, with the view thereafter of submitting some well-defined and comprehensive plan, so that something like finality be attained in