

portion of the western breakwater which formed part of Sir John Coode's original design. The construction of this length of 2,320 feet is estimated by Sir John Coode to cost £285,800; but this, he states, is exclusive of moneys expended by the Harbour Board previous to March, 1880, and which we find was about £8,000; and also exclusive of certain essential works, the cost of which could not be estimated by him for want of the requisite data, but which, according to the evidence of Mr. Rees, represent a further sum of £19,700 (he having stated that the total expenditure upon works *not included* in Sir John Coode's estimate is about £27,700), thus making a total of £313,500; this is also exclusive of a solid jetty to shelter the inner face of the pier, which Sir John Coode remarks "would be of great service during north-east winds, and would also serve to cut off 'range,' which would otherwise be experienced along the quay when the sea is coming home directly on to the works." The cost of a similar jetty, in the original design, was given at £34,500.

As regards the financial position of the Harbour Board, your Committee find that, by "The New Plymouth Harbour Board Ordinance 1875 Amendment Act, 1877," the Board was authorized to raise a loan of £200,000 upon debentures, carrying 6 per cent. interest and 1 per cent. sinking fund. That such power was preserved by the Harbours Act of 1878, which repealed the said Act (except clauses 15 and 19); and, amongst other provisions, repealed clause 17 also, which declared "That no approval shall be given by the Governor in Council to any harbour work proposed by the Board, unless the estimate of the cost thereof shall not exceed the amount hereby authorized to be borrowed,"—the sum authorized being £200,000. As security for such loan, the Board was authorized, under clause 15 above referred to, "to levy a rate annually upon all lands situated within the rating district (specified in the Schedule), provided that the maximum rate levied by the Board shall not exceed one shilling in the pound on the rateable value of the property."

And clause 19 declares that "all land revenue which the Board may receive under the provisions of the fourth, tenth, and twelfth clauses of 'The Financial Arrangements Act, 1876,' shall be set aside by the Board for the payment of interest and sinking-fund on any loan obtained by the Board, and for no other purpose."

The Land Fund, so appropriated by "The Financial Arrangements Act, 1876," was 25 per cent. of all revenue accruing from the sale, lease, or other disposal of waste lands within the provincial district.

The Committee find that the loan of £200,000 realized, after the payment of the charges and commissions incidental to floating it, the net sum of £185,366 3s. 1d., for which the Board has to provide £14,000 annually by way of interest and sinking-fund. That, hitherto, the Board has not exercised its rating powers, but has paid interest and sinking-fund out of land revenue, having received from that source £42,338 up to the 15th July last, of which £5,000 was expended upon works before the loan was raised, and £28,500 is in the hands of the Sinking Fund Commissioners. In addition to the above, the Board should receive during the next ten years £26,000, being 25 per cent. of the amount to be received on account of land already sold upon the deferred-payment system. It is estimated by the Surveyor-General that the land available for disposal in the future will be as follows:—

10,000 acres of open land, at £2 10s.	..	£25,000
100,000 acres of bush land, at £2		200,000

The percentage of which, payable to the Board, would be £56,250; and this amount, added to the £28,500 in the hands of the Sinking Fund Commissioners, and the £26,000 receivable as one-fourth of the amount due from the deferred-payment settlers, will give a total of £110,750, exclusive of whatever sum may be derived from the sale of the more rugged bush lands, as yet unavailable.

This amount would suffice to pay interest and sinking-fund for a period of eight years; at the end of which time the Board must have recourse to their rating powers. The amount which they may levy (upon the basis of the property-tax assessment) would amount to about £3,520; and, admitting the correctness of Mr. King's assumption, that the amount of the assessment would be doubled in eight years, when they will be compelled to impose this rate, the total annual revenue from this source would be £7,040, and the accrued sinking-fund at this period would be £20,000, plus interest, as against the loan of £200,000.

The receipts from land revenue being exhausted, and recourse being had to the imposition of the maximum rate allowed by law, there will remain an annual deficiency of £6,960, to be made good out of the ordinary revenue of the Harbour Board.

From the figures furnished by the Chairman of the Board, it appears that up to the 15th of July last, out of the total sum received from the sale of the debentures, £185,366 3s. 1d., no less a sum than £72,514 11s. 7d. had been expended upon plant and works, other than the construction of the breakwater itself, upon which a sum of £1,112 17s. 4d. only had been expended; but there was in stock cement to the value of about £2,500, included in the expenditure of £72,514 11s. 7d. The Board has, therefore, expended at least £70,000 in plant, works, and expenses, apart from the cement in stock and the root of the breakwater. They have, therefore, £115,000 as the total sum available for the construction of a work, estimated by Sir John Coode to cost £285,800; from which latter sum we must deduct £20,000, as a reasonable allowance for plant and contingent works: there then remains a net estimate of £265,800 as the cost of the work, leaving a deficiency of £150,000. Taking the more favourable statements of the engineers in charge of the Timaru and Oamaru breakwaters, we find that Mr. Goodall gives £77,950, as the cost of constructing 854 feet of breakwater at Timaru to a depth of 20 feet at low-water spring tides, or £91 5s. per lineal foot; to which he adds £10 5s. per foot for the extra height of the breakwater at New Plymouth, or a total of £101 10s. per foot.

Mr. McGregor gives £80 11s. as the cost per running foot of the 1,475 feet completed at Oamaru, to which he adds £11, additional cost per running foot of the New Plymouth breakwater, on account of the extra height, or £91 11s. per foot; and, although Mr. McGregor puts the present cost at Oamaru at £68 per foot, that is based upon cement at £4 3s. 6d. per ton against £5 1s. at New Plymouth, and beach shingle at 2s. 6d. as against 4s. for broken stone.

Applying the ascertained cost of work done at Timaru and Oamaru to the projected work at New Plymouth, and allowing for the increased height, the 2,320 feet to *F Y* will cost, at £101 10s. per