

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 20TH JULY, 1881.

Mr. LEONARD STOWE examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You, Mr. Stowe, are Clerk of the Legislative Council?—Yes.
2. There was an inquiry before the Legislative Council last session upon a petition from the residents of Patea?—There was a petition presented on the 14th July.
3. Will you produce the petition?—I think it is there. The 12th August was the date on which the petition was reported upon.
4. Would you put in the documents?—Yes. They comprise the reports of Sir John Coode, Mr. Carruthers, and Mr. Blackett; and the evidence of Mr. Sherwood; Captain Johnston, of the Marine Department; Mr. Rees, the Engineer to the Board; Mr. Bauchope, the secretary; Mr. Blackett, Major Atkinson, and Mr. Kelly; and also a letter from Mr. Rees.
5. Was not a report presented by this Committee?—Yes; on the 12th August, 1880, and it is printed in full in pages 107 and 108 of the Journals of the Legislative Council, 1880. On the same date Mr. Waterhouse moved, "That there be laid upon the table of the Council any report made by the Audit Department with regard to illegal expenditure." That motion was, with leave of the Council, withdrawn. On the 17th August Mr. Waterhouse moved, and it was resolved, "That, in the opinion of this Council, the New Plymouth Harbour Board should be called upon forthwith to repay to a special fund that portion of the land revenue which has been received by them and spent in a manner other than that provided by law; and that, upon their failing to do so, proceedings should be taken against the members of the Board, in their individual capacity, for the recovery of all moneys illegally expended by them."
6. What action was taken upon that resolution?—I do not know.
7. Can you say of your own knowledge whether the evidence upon which this resolution was founded is in the minutes of the inquiry before the Legislative Council?—I have not read the whole of the evidence, and I am not able to say.

THURSDAY, 21ST JULY, 1881.

Mr. J. R. REES examined.

8. *The Chairman.*] You were until lately the engineer of the New Plymouth Harbour Board?—Yes.
9. Will you identify the plans which are now on the table?—The plan marked M.D. 253 is the original one of Sir John Coode.
10. According to Sir John Coode's original scheme, what was the total estimate of the cost of the work completed?—I cannot give you that from memory.
11. You can refer to the figures in Sir John Coode's report in print?—The amount would be £928,730, and the area included within those works would be 130 acres.
12. On the 28th August, 1879, you sent in a confidential report to the New Plymouth Harbour Board?—Yes.
13. Will you explain to the Committee why you felt it incumbent upon you to make that report a confidential one?—I cannot exactly say now why it was; I believe it was to give the Harbour Board the option of doing what they pleased with it. I believe a suggestion was made that the matter should be confidential. It did not arise from myself; it was suggested by the members of the Board. Major Atkinson was Chairman at that time.
14. What was your own impression as to the necessity of making a confidential report?—I do not think I had any particular conviction about it. I was simply falling in with the views of my employers at the time.
15. Was there no conviction on your mind that the cost of the work would be likely to exceed the amount which the Board was authorized to expend?—I believe the rubble-mound scheme would have exceeded that amount. The Board had to expend £200,000. I was not well up in matters connected with the Board at that time.
16. Have you read the report of Sir John Coode of the 17th March, 1880?—Yes: that refers to the revised plans.
17. Will you please turn to that report and read from the place commencing "I estimate"?—"I estimate the cost of the breakwater, pier, and root, if executed to the extent coloured red in drawing No. 1, which corresponds with the length out to *Y Y* referred to in my report of February, 1879, at £285,800. If the expenditure is confined to £200,000, then the pier can, for this amount, be carried only to a point 1,420 feet from low-water mark of spring tides, or 568 feet short of *Y Y*. The above amounts include the cost of all plant, and provide a sufficient allowance for all contingencies, sea-risk, and supervision. They are, however, exclusive of the outlay already incurred in the colony on works executed to this date, and do not cover the cost of the excavation necessary for the formation of the work-yard, as shown on Drawing No. 5, sufficient particulars in the way of levels not being available here to enable the quantities to be ascertained. Neither is the preparation of the surface of the work-yard included, nor the erection of the shed, workshops, nor the railway in the yard. The permanent line on the pier and root have, however, been provided for in the amounts named."