

76. That being so, the standard fixed for the cement for the New Plymouth Harbour works—350 lb.—is much below what you have stated to be, in your opinion, the standard test?—Yes; it would appear so.

77. Of course you may be wrong, but assuming you are right?—I tell you why I may be wrong in that assumption of 1,000 lb.: the cement manufacturers complained of the excessive strength I required in the specification. I believe the test in the Liverpool docks is 320 lb.

78. That briquet [sample produced, stated to have stood the test of 1,665 lb.] having stood the test of 1,665 lb., how much is that per sectional inch—it is a briquet of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch square?—740 lb. precisely to the sectional inch. I do not think there is such another test on record. I can assure you in tests of thousands of tons there was never such a test attained yet.

79. *Mr. Pitt.*] What is the highest test you have known?—The same sized briquet would be about 1,250 lb. This briquet might have been made of exceptional merit.

80. *The Chairman.*] How far has the New Plymouth Breakwater advanced from the root?—It has advanced 270 feet including the root.

81. It has not yet reached low-water mark?—No; not yet.

82. *Mr. Pitt.*] What has been the expenditure upon the work as far as it has proceeded up to the present?—I cannot give you beyond the 22nd March—£23,218.

83. Has this expenditure you have mentioned been incurred in work independent of preliminary expenses in floating the loan, &c.?—Actual work and wages.

84. What is the expenditure for plant and machinery?—£33,224.

85. How much for plant alone?—That includes all the plant, timber, and about £2,300 worth of cement. I have taken my figures from the printed report that I have given you.

86. *Mr. Fulton.*] What has been the cost of the preliminary works?—The whole of the preliminary works up to the 22nd March have cost about £23,000.

87. And these are not included in Sir John Coode's estimate?—No; fully seven-eighths are completed. Of course, in speaking of the state of the works I am speaking of the present day; in speaking of the cost, I refer only to the 22nd March. At that date the Board thought proper to take away my timekeeper and storekeeper, and of course I had no means of ascertaining the cost of the work.

88. *The Chairman.*] As these works excluded from Sir John Coode's estimate are now about seven-eighths finished, and as £23,000 has been expended on account of them up to the 22nd March last, can you state approximately what has been expended since?—£1,000 or £1,600.

89. Then, £24,600 having been expended in doing seven-eighths of the extra work, the total cost of those extra works not included in Sir John Coode's report would be about £27,700?—Yes; that would be about it.

90. You have read "The New Plymouth Harbour Board Amendment Act, 1877," I presume?—I do not know much about it.

91. I should like you to read the latter portion of clause 17 [Clause read—restricting borrowing to £200,000.] Sir John Coode having reported in March, 1880, that his estimate was £285,800, that was in excess of the amount sanctioned by this Act?—It appears so.

92. And that clause distinctly provides that no work shall be approved unless the estimate is within the £200,000?—Yes.

93. The point I wish to arrive at is on what ground the Board proceeded to purchase the plant. I ask whether you were aware of the fact that a difficulty existed as to the purchase of the plant prior to obtaining the sanction of the Governor in Council?—No.

94. That being so, would you explain what this paragraph in Sir John Coode's letter just read means? He says, "I have taken it for granted that (as Mr. Rees himself suggested to me) the Board will not incur the expenditure requisite for securing the special plant until the modified designs have been submitted to and approved by the Governor in Council."—That arose in this way: Sir John Coode raised the difficulty. I said, "There is a difficulty in the matter, and the Board will not take action until they are satisfied."

95. When Sir John Coode states that this question was suggested by yourself, you wish the Committee to understand that is not exactly the fact?—No. Sir John Coode said nothing could be done in this matter until the Order in Council was obtained.

96. When you were made aware of that difficulty did you communicate with the Board?—I telegraphed to the Board, and they instructed me to purchase the plant: that was in March.

97. *Mr. Pitt.*] Did you purchase it then?—Yes.

98. Has the whole of the plant necessary for the work been purchased?—Yes, substantially.

99. *Mr. Ormond.*] How much of this £35,000 worth of plant was bought in March or April?—The greater portion. Contracts were entered into for the bulk of it.

100. *Mr. Weston.*] What work has been already done by the Harbour Board?—A jetty has been built to the northward of Barrett's Road, distant about 60 chains from the works. This jetty is connected by a line of railway with the works; a cement store and workshops have been erected; block-yard prepared; machine shop for concrete-mixing built; quarry ground excavated, and quarry otherwise prepared; and 270 feet of permanent work done.

101. The permanent work has not yet reached the sea?—It is beyond high water, but has not yet reached low water by about 70 feet.

102. Is this 270 feet actually completed?—Yes; practically it is completed.

103. *Mr. Fulton.*] You just now gave us the estimate of the actual cost of cement per ton at £5 5s. I see in your report of the 28th August, 1879, you estimate the cost, landed at New Plymouth, to be £4 2s. 6d. Can you give any reason for the advance?—At that time I had not had communication with the English manufacturers, and I based my calculations upon the cost of the cement supplied to the Kurachee Harbour Board.

104. To what extent would this affect the estimate?—This would increase the estimated cost by £4,500.

105. *The Chairman.*] How many yards of concrete are there in that mole?—95,000 cubic yards.

106. How many yards of concrete are made by a ton of cement?—Roughly, about 7 yards.