

135. Can you state what money the Board have?—I think £112,000 to £119,000. I am fully convinced that, with proper management and inspection, the work can be finished for the money the Board have got.

136. What is the total length?—2,320 feet, I think.

137. Do you know anything of the cost of the works at Timaru and Oamaru, and the length to which they have been carried out?—I do not. I am quite convinced that with concrete *in situ* and block work, the work can be done in Taranaki, with the plant as purchased, for under 22s. per cubic yard. I have carefully estimated every item.

138. When you state so positively that you have carefully estimated every item, you should be able to state how much would be represented by labour and how much by cement?—It does not follow that I should retain in my memory all the details of this estimate. The report was laid before the last Committee.

139. You have stated that the cement costs £5 5s. per ton, and that a ton will go to 7 yards. How much is that for cement per yard, taking the figures you have given?—Fifteen shillings.

140. Then 7s. will represent every other charge.—Yes.

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SATURDAY, 23RD JULY, 1881.

Mr. THOMAS KING examined.

141. *The Chairman.*] You are the Chairman of the New Plymouth Harbour Board?—I am.

142. How long have you held that position?—I was first elected Chairman on the 20th July, 1878, and continued so until the 15th February, 1879. I was again elected on the 20th December, 1879. Between the two last dates I was not Chairman.

143. Were you a member of the Board during that time?—No.

144. Have you read this report by Mr. Rees, dated the 28th August, 1879, marked "Confidential"?—I have not seen it before to my knowledge.

145. It is not addressed to any one in particular, but it must have been sent to the Chairman, because it commences, "I feel I should fail in my duty to your Board"?—I was not Chairman at that time, nor a member.

146. You remember the Board decided to send the engineer to England to consult with Sir John Coode?—I know it was so, but I was not a member at the time.

147. Can you state the reasons for sending him?—I really cannot, except upon common report. It was found the quantity of rock in the Sugarloaves was not sufficient to carry out the rubble breakwater. I know that is the reason why he was sent to endeavour to induce Sir John Coode to alter the rubble-mound to a concrete section.

148. Did the fact that they were not able to obtain the necessary stone at Paretutu lead the Board to suppose it could not carry out the original design?—I have no doubt it was so. I am only speaking now from hearsay.

149. *Mr. Fulton.*] Who was Chairman at that time?—Major Atkinson. I think he was made Chairman on the 15th February; at a subsequent period he came down to the session, and was succeeded as Chairman by Mr. Benjamin Wells, who is now dead. Major Atkinson was Chairman from the 15th February, 1879, until probably June of the same year.

150. *The Chairman.*] Who were the other members of the Board in August, 1879?—Speaking from memory, there were Mr. Standish, Mr. Caverhill, Mr. F. A. Carrington, Mr. Thompson (Collector of Customs), Mr. Banks. I forget who the other two were now, but I can ascertain, and tell you later.

151. Was Mr. Kelly a member at that time?—No. Of course Major Atkinson and Mr. Wells were members, because they were Chairmen successively.

152. At what date do you say you resumed the position of Chairman?—The 20th December, 1879.

153. Then, you were Chairman at the time Mr. Rees was instructed to purchase certain plant in England?—I was.

154. Was he instructed to consult with Sir John Coode as to the designing of that plant?—These instructions were given before I was Chairman. When I became Chairman, it was after Mr. Rees had gone to England. I presume it was with the knowledge of the Board. I merely carried out the wishes of the Board. When it was proposed Mr. Rees should bring out the plant, I presume it was to bring it out in accordance with the previous arrangement. I know nothing of my own knowledge as to the history of the transaction.

155. You had access to all documents relating to the Board?—Certainly.

156. And to this document, where Mr. Rees was instructed to consult Sir John Coode as to designing the plant?—I believe he was.

157. That he was instructed to consult Sir John Coode as to the designs for the plant?—Yes. A letter had been previously written to Sir John Coode, saying he was not to consider himself the consulting engineer to the Board, because the Board could not afford to pay him a constant salary.

158. It was understood he was specially instructed to design the plant?—Quite so.

159. You know that from the correspondence?—Yes.

160. Can you say whether Mr. Rees acted upon those instructions—whether in point of fact the plant which he purchased is the plant that was planned by Sir John Coode?—It was not.

161. *Mr. Pitt.*] Was Sir John Coode consulted?—Most assuredly he was consulted; but I understand Mr. Rees found great difficulties in getting designs from him. The time was passing away.

162. Then he did not have Sir John Coode's designs?—No.

163. Then, in purchasing the plant without Sir John Coode's designs, did he depart from his instructions?—A telegram was sent to him to purchase the plant and hasten back.

164. Do I understand the Board relieved him from his former instructions?—No; certainly not.

165. As I understand your answer, he was distinctly instructed to consult with Sir John Coode as to the designs for the plant?—Yes.