

225. *Mr. Weston.*] You took the risk of altering the thing?—Yes; as men of business, we were not confined absolutely within the four corners of the Act; and, if we had attempted to do so, there would have been a greater cost than there was.

226. *Mr. Pitt*] How do you mean the four corners of the Act?—The Act is so very stringent that in many cases you are compelled to infringe upon it to a slight extent, and must act upon your own judgment. We were convinced the change would be approved, and acted upon it.

227 You evaded the Act at the time, at all events?—Yes, in all good faith and honesty

228. Were Sir John Coode's amended estimates before the Government at the time that Order in Council was issued, in September, 1880?—They must have been.

229. *Mr. Fulton.*] It seems, from a reply you made to a question, you have not thoroughly read the later report by Sir John Coode, in March, 1880. Upon what lines, then, has this work been carried and is now carried on?—Upon Sir John Coode's lines.

230. But not upon this last report of Sir John Coode's?—The works are upon the lines of this plan and report. There may have been trivial modifications, but the main part is entirely on Sir John Coode's plans.

231. *Mr. Pitt.*] Can you say what are the modifications?—One very considerable modification is that the block ground has been altered from one side to the other. I have no hesitation in saying that is a source of very great saving. The block ground proposed by Sir John Coode was a very costly one, as it required the removal of a vast quantity of sandstone, which has been avoided now. By Sir John Coode's plan the stone would have to be brought down from the quarries, and go here [indicating on plan] to be made into blocks, and then go back again to the breakwater.

232. *The Chairman.*] Has that modification caused any additional outlay?—No, a very material decrease.

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WEDNESDAY, 27th JULY, 1881.

MR. THOMAS KING, Chairman, New Plymouth Harbour Works, re-examined.

233. *The Chairman.*] You are now, Mr. King, in possession of the papers belonging to the Board?—I am.

234. Will you put in the last balance-sheet that has been prepared?—I will. The last one is to the 31st December, last year. This other brings up the expenditure to the 15th July of the present year.

235. Can you furnish a schedule of the plant described by Sir John Coode as being requisite for the construction of the breakwater?—I put in the specification of Sir John Coode, which describes all the necessary machinery. There is one 30-ton portable steam overhanging setting machine or "Hercules," one 30-ton steam "Goliath," two steam portable concrete mixers, three Blake's patent stone-breakers, one tank locomotive engine, one semi-portable engine, ten wrought-iron skips, three single and one double diving apparatus, six wrought-iron tipping boxes, one Michael cement testing machine.

236. That is the lot?—That is the lot.

237. Can you now inform the Committee how much of the expenditure, up to the 30th June last, comprises work included in Sir John Coode's estimates?—There is the item, "Plant and materials, £39,000;" that comprises all the machinery.

238. Can you say, first of all, whether you have obtained all the items you just now enumerated?—I think so. I cannot say the machines are precisely those Sir John Coode recommended; but they are analogous machines, at all events.

239. Have you the diving apparatus?—Sir John Coode has not mentioned there anything about a vast number of other requirements at all, such as railways, that are absolutely necessary. That is not enumerated at all. He has only enumerated the special plant.

240. Have you provided all that special plant?—Yes, all that; and also a large quantity of rails and other things, and locomotives.

241. What I wish to arrive at is this: Sir John Coode has specified certain special plant in his report of the 30th March?—Yes.

242. Have you obtained all that?—Yes.

243. I want you to tell me the value of it, apart from anything else, if you are able to do so?—I have got the invoices, but they will take some time to go through.

244. But you can supply the information later?—Yes; I will do so.

245. That will be the net cost of the items specified by Sir John Coode, as shipped?—Yes.

246. Is Sir John Coode's estimate of what was requisite exclusive of all previous expenditure?—I think it would include plant Mr. Rees had purchased with his knowledge.

247. What amount have you to pay annually for interest and sinking-fund upon your loan?—£14,000 per annum.

248. What is the amount the Board can raise annually by virtue of its rating powers?—At the present moment, say, £5,000 per annum.

249. That is based on the assessed value of the district?—Yes; £4,000 to £5,000. Of course it is an increasing amount annually.

250. That is on the maximum rate of 1s. in the pound?—Yes; I think it was somewhat over £4,000 two years ago.

251. Then there will be a difference of between £9,000 and £10,000 to provide annually from the land revenue, or other sources?—Yes, taking it on the present basis; but the rating power will extend over a much larger area from year to year.

252. The difference is between £9,000 and £10,000?—Yes. That is to say, taking it on the basis of two years ago; but the area is much extended now, and values have much increased. The Waimate Plains will come within the rating power, and, therefore, within a very few years the rating power will prove double what it is at present. Considering the increase of population in the district, the rating power will extend over the amount—will probably be double the sum I stated, in a very few years.