

253. Naturally; but for the present the difference has to be made up out of land revenue?—Land revenue and the Harbour Fund.

244. What is the amount of the Harbour Fund?—It consists of rent from certain endowments, which is not a very large amount, and also the interest on the unused loan.

255. Can you state what the rents amount to?—Say, £200.

256. And the amount at present receivable from moneys on deposit?—Well, at present, the interest is about £3,500 a year; but that of course diminishes, as the expenditure continues.

257. Can you now state how much you have received in the shape of land revenue?—£42,338, in round numbers.

258. How has that been disposed of?—£5,000 was used on works in the first instance, before the loan was raised, and £37,338 0s. 10d. has been paid over to a body called Sinking Fund Commissioners.

259. How came this sum of £5,000 to be expended on works?—Well, at that time it was a question whether the loan would be raised or not. We did not know what land revenue was coming in, and we might have been able to carry out the work without raising a loan at all.

260. But this sum of £5,000 was received subsequent to the passing of "The New Plymouth Harbour Board Ordinance 1875 Amendment, 1877"?—That I cannot say. Part might have been; but part was before. It was prior to June, 1877, this expenditure of £5,000 took place.

261. Then this £37,338 0s. 10d., I take it, represents 25 per cent. of the gross land revenue?—Yes.

262. Have the Commissioners of Audit made any protest against the payment of that?—I have never heard of their having done so.

263. You are not aware of it?—I am not at all aware of their having done so. I never heard anything of the kind.

264. Are you aware of the terms of "The Financial Arrangements Act, 1876"?—No; I am not.

265. You say you have seen no communication from the Audit?—No communication or indication of any kind.

266. Will you now inform the Committee where is the seat of the chief settlement in Taranaki?—New Plymouth.

267. That is the chief centre of town population?—Of the town population.

268. Where is the rural population chiefly located—the farming population?—Well, it is all round on the seaboard, and inland.

269. Will you indicate on that map?—It is scattered along the coast. All this country [indicating] is occupied, except these uncoloured portions. All this, for instance, alongside the railway is occupied.

270. The tendency of settlement is alongside the railway?—Certainly, at present. But it will extend on both sides as time goes on.

271. Considerable settlement has taken place on the Waimate Plains?—Yes.

272. That being the case, will Waitara or New Plymouth be the nearest point of communication between these settlers and the seaboard?—At present, with the railway, it is farther from New Plymouth than from Waitara; but with the harbour at New Plymouth, the position will be reversed, practically. The distance between the rail and the road is very trivial. The road now is used almost as much as the railway.

273. If the settlers at Waimate have to make use of the railway as a means of communication with the seaboard, will Waitara or New Plymouth be nearer, dealing with the railway as it stands now?—As at present, of course Waitara; nearer by four miles.

274. I would ask you now whether the work carried out by the Harbour Board has been under contract, in accordance with clause 67 of the Harbours Act?—Everything that could be done by contract has been done by contract—roads, tramways, supplies of firewood, and everything of that kind.

275. All the labour has been day labour?—Yes; day labour. A good deal could not be done except by day labour—the quarry-work, for instance.

276. Will you now tell us what endowments are vested in the Board?—There is the Mount Elliott Reserve, valued at £3,500—that was on the 31st December, 1879—I think you will find it the same in 1880. There is the Kawau Pa, valued at £3,000; Mount McCormick and Woolcombe Terrace, 2 acres, £100; 18½ acres of Native land at Moturoa, £750.

277. Have any of these endowments been acquired by expenditure from the Harbour Fund?—At the Kawau Pa Reserve, £2,000 has been expended in levelling the land and protecting it from the ravages of the sea.

278. Nothing on the Mount Elliott Reserve?—Nothing.

279. What amount of land have you reclaimed from the sea at Kawau Pa?—I suppose, an acre—something like an acre—but the other part was hilly, and had to be levelled. It was useless in its former state; so the reclamation really covers the whole area.

280. Did you obtain special authority for that reclamation under clause 148 of the Harbours Act?—I believe so. I was not on the Board at the time.

281. Have the returns been furnished by the Commissioners of Audit, as required by clauses 204 and 205 of the Harbours Act?—The accounts have been audited throughout. I think I find here that Mr. McAlister, the Provincial District Auditor, certified to the accounts of 1879, and I think Mr. Rennell certified to the accounts of 1880.

282. Has a list of all the securities been furnished?—It has not been; but the matter is exceedingly simple. It can be furnished at any moment. Only one purchase has been made.

283. Can you say what amount you expect to receive annually from the sale of land on the Waimate Plains?—I have not the faintest idea. I can tell what we have received.

284. Be good enough to do so?—From June, 1877, to the 1st July, 1879, £10,881 6s. 8d.; July to December, 1879, £1,214 6s. 9d.; for the year 1880, £1,660 8s. 7d.—that is all during the year;