

into office, they thought he did not exercise proper discretion in dealing with the money of the Board, in the matter of purchasing plant, &c.; and they considered, also, that he should have consulted some engineer of eminence in England in making his purchases.

579. *Mr. Pitt.*] How do you account for the fact that the present Board is dissatisfied with Mr. Rees, who is an engineer himself, for not consulting with another engineer in England before making his purchases, while at the same time the Board is carrying on the works without an engineer at all?—The cases are not parallel. Mr. Rees had no special knowledge of the marine tools required; while it is quite natural that the Board should carry on the works when they have a good practical foreman, without an engineer, as the work is already designed for him, and it only requires a practical knowledge of construction. We have found that people who call themselves engineers are of little practical use, and are often not fit to carry out works. The Board has found it very difficult, so far, to get a good engineer, possessed of scientific and practical knowledge, even though a good salary was offered.

580. Is any member of the New Plymouth Harbour Board a qualified engineer?—No, not civil or marine engineers.

581. *Mr. Moss.*] Does the Board feel perfectly sure that the work, as they are doing it, will withstand the action of the sea, and that the mole will remain intact?—The Board are quite satisfied that the work, carried out on Sir J. Coode's design, will resist the action of the sea.

582. Do you not think that, if you had a competent engineer on the spot, he might be able to suggest some improvement on Sir John Coode's plan, which even that gentleman himself would approve?—My own opinion is that a skilful engineer ought to supervise the work; but, at the same time, I hold that any man who has been accustomed to the work in the capacity of a general foreman can carry it on in that capacity, satisfactorily, with the plans of the designer of the work before him.

583. *Mr. Weston.*] Then the natural inference is, that an engineer is only required to make designs?—Yes; I think the practical work is done by the practical foreman, or contractor, from the engineer's design.

584. Then the engineer need not be a practical man; but, if you have a practical man, an engineer is not required?—I can quite understand that both an engineer and a foreman are required. The two should work together, and each be separate and distinct from the other. I am of opinion that you require both a scientific and a practical man to mature and execute any large work.

585. *The Chairman.*] What, in your opinion, will be the benefit conferred on the residents of the Waimate Plains by the proposed harbour works?—The breakwater will enable steamers from all parts of the colony to discharge at all states of the tide, and goods consigned to residents there can easily be sent on by railway. It is only seven or eight miles from the Normanby Railway-station to the Plains.

586. Is the distance by rail from Hawera to New Plymouth greater or less than the distance from Hawera to Patea?—The distance is greater to New Plymouth; but the benefit which the settlers in the Hawera District and the Plains will receive would be direct communication with the best markets of the colony, and a direct outlet for their surplus produce.

587. Have the people at Hawera or Patea raised any objection to being rated by the New Plymouth Harbour Board, for the purpose of paying interest and sinking-fund on the loan?—I do not know whether they objected officially. They knew, when they bought the land on the Plains, that they were liable to be rated; but they have raised no official objection, so far as I know.

588. Do you think that the settlers there being liable to pay this rate has affected the price of land in the district?—No, not at all.

589. What benefit will the residents of New Plymouth derive from the reduction of the landing charges?—It is not so much the reduction of charges they will benefit by, as the certainty of shipping and landing goods and passengers. There would not be much difference in the landing charges; probably only a few shillings per ton.

590. What is the present landing charge?—Ten shillings a ton.

591. And, when you estimate your revenue at £3,000, at what rate are you calculating?—About 8s. a ton, delivered in New Plymouth.

592. Therefore the contemplated commercial advantage to the settlers is represented by the difference of 2s. per ton?—Two shillings would represent the lowering of the charges; but the great advantage would be in the greater certainty of landing goods and passengers.

593. You said that McEwan and Co. had a contract for supplying the cement?—Yes.

594. Through whom did the engineer invite tenders for the supply of the cement?—He informed the Board that he sent to all the manufacturers of cement and asked them to tender.

595. Did not McEwan and Co. receive the tenders?—I am not sure.

596. Are they cement manufacturers?—No. I think Mr. Rees received the tenders himself.

597. *Mr. Pitt.*] What, in your opinion, will be the effect of the settlement of the Waimate Plains on the imports and exports of New Plymouth?—Trade will be increased, now that there is communication by rail. The great bulk of the trade between outside places and the Hawera District will go through New Plymouth. The residents in Patea and Hawera will certainly be benefited, by a larger choice of markets, by direct steam communication from New Plymouth, both inwards and outwards, and greater certainty, and consequently lower charges for carriage.

Mr. GOODHALL, Engineer of Timaru Harbour Works, re-examined.

598. *The Chairman.*] Can you state, for the information of the Committee, the cost per foot run of the Timaru breakwater, so far as completed, taking all costs and charges into consideration?—No. 1 Contract, which extended a distance of 310 feet, cost £80 6s. 4d. per foot run; No. 2 Contract, which was 364 feet long, cost £86 9s. 3d. per lineal foot; No. 3 Contract, when completed, will be 180 feet long, and will cost £92 5s.

599. And the total height of the breakwater, under No. 2 Contract, is about 36 feet?—Yes.

600. And of No. 3?—About 2 feet more. About 38 feet.

601. There being a depth of 20 feet at low water?—Yes.