

624. And a certain portion of the tramway is included in this 2s. 6d.?—Yes; I think it is fair to say that.

625. If the Board provided that, the cost of gravel would be somewhat less?—Yes. It would be also somewhat less if the Board or the contractors had the hauling in their own hands, because, as it is, they cannot get at it when wanted.

[Document put in.]

SIR,—

Oamaru Harbour Board, Oamaru, 15th July, 1881.

In reply to your telegrams of the 12th and 14th instant, I have the honor to forward to you printed statement of total expenditure to date of last balance; and, for your further information, I append the following details abstracted from our accounts, as made up to the 31st December, 1880.

Total length of breakwater completed at that date, 1,350 feet; in addition to which there is 1,230 feet of concrete wharfrage.

|                                                                         | £               | s.        | d.       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------|
| Cost of 1,350 feet of breakwater, including cement .. .. .              | 111,068         | 10        | 5        |
| „ Wharfrage and reclamation .. .. .                                     | 34,655          | 4         | 6        |
| „ Railway .. .. .                                                       | 4,316           | 12        | 6        |
| „ Blocks at lagoon .. .. .                                              | 1,132           | 0         | 0        |
| „ Plant and sheds .. .. .                                               | 5,622           | 9         | 11       |
| Advanced on Contractor's plant and materials, present contracts .. .. . | 1,672           | 3         | 6        |
| North wall, present contract .. .. .                                    | 364             | 9         | 5        |
|                                                                         | <u>£158,831</u> | <u>10</u> | <u>3</u> |

The present contract price for cement delivered at the works is £4 5s. 3d. per ton. The material for concrete (exclusive of cement) is provided by the contractor, together with all labour in the construction of the breakwater, at the price of 14s. 6d. per cubic yard. The shingle and sand is estimated to cost them 2s. 6d. per yard, and the broken stone about 4s. 6d.

Should you require any additional information to the foregoing, please wire.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS FORRESTER, Secretary.

E. G. Wright, Esq., M.H.R.,  
Chairman, New Plymouth Harbour Committee, Wellington.

Colonel TRIMBLE, M.H.R. for Grey and Bell, examined.

626. *The Chairman.*] Will you state what you consider the advantages to be derived by the general public, by the construction of the harbour works at New Plymouth?—I have always been of opinion that they will be of no material advantage to the general public.

627 On what grounds?—First of all, I think the works that are possible, with the money at the disposal of the Board, will not afford protection in anything but the fairest weather to shipping. I believe with a swell in the sea that ships could not lie alongside of the breakwater; and I doubt if they could lie inside the breakwater, even under the protection of the proposed wharves.

628. Are you aware that in Sir John Coode's amended plan the wharves are omitted from his estimate?—No; I was not aware of it.

629. This drawing, "M.D. 404," is Sir John Coode's amended plan for a concrete breakwater, at an estimate of £285,800, and is exclusive altogether of these jetties?—Yes.

629A. I will read a part of Sir John Coode's report [Extract from report read] So you see the jetties are excluded?—Yes. What he calls "range" is owing to the swell of the ocean. I well remember, nearly thirty years ago, I saw in the Mersey a vessel beaten to pieces in St. George's Basin. The River Mersey has no such swell as the Pacific Ocean; and the docks at Liverpool are all protected by basins: that is to say, there is an entrance basin outside the dock itself, with the mouth only to the river. I think it was in 1852 that there was a very high tide, with a strong North wind blowing up the river. I saw a vessel knocked to pieces against the wall to which she was attached. In ordinary times, of course, such a thing would not occur; but as soon as there is a heavy swell such a thing is always liable to happen. When coming to an open sea like this I consider you have no chance at all except by running to sea, in the event of a heavy swell or gale. And I take that view of the matter from the case I tell you of.

630. You ascertain, by this report, that there is no protection, in the shape of a pier at right angles to the main breakwater, such as you thought was provided?—Such as I thought was provided. I think, in fair weather, the work would enable passing steamers to land their cargoes without the jetty.

631. Have the settlers within the rating area of Taranaki, that is the area subject to rating for the purposes of this harbour, expressed disapproval of the work at any time?—A portion of them, in 1877, I think, sent petitions to the House, signed by about 300 *bona fide* farmers, against proceeding with the Bill then before the House.

632. On the ground of the rating clause?—On the ground that the expenditure could not be afforded, and that the expenditure they were about to make would not produce a harbour that would be of material value to the province. But some farmers, men residing south of New Plymouth and immediately round the town, and a few scattered over other parts of the country, went with the town people in favour of the harbour. There were two parties, in fact, on the subject, which was the cause of very considerable agitation at the time.

633. The project was mainly supported by the town people of New Plymouth?—Yes; and the farmers immediately round the town, and farmers south of New Plymouth—that is, towards Stoney River.

634. Have they seen any reason to change their opinions since?—When Parliament passed the Bill we agitated no more. We gave up agitation. We thought we had fought and lost, and that it was a hopeless matter to fight any longer. So I am not prepared to say at this moment what the opinion of the people may be.

635. Can you say whether the Board have expended money on works outside their legitimate work of harbour construction?—That I cannot say.

636. Are you aware that they have expended money in reclamation works?—Yes; I do not know how much. I think something like £2,400 or £2,600, in reclaiming a piece of land north-east of the Huatoki River. I think originally it was intended to spend a great deal more than that. I am