

indispensable portion of the harbour, which should not be invaded by reclamation on any pretext; and that the gain of many acres of reclaimed land would be no compensation for the loss of water-area, which a departure from the above conditions would involve. He stated also that he had several opportunities of expressing this opinion [before Committees of the House], and that he still held the opinion most strongly. You will observe that this confirms to the fullest extent the position taken up in my memorandum of the 24th January, and would, if carried out to the letter, give a less area for reclamation than allowed by that memorandum. In reference, however, to the starting-point at the Queen's Wharf, the Harbourmaster would not insist that my restrictions should be adhered to, and gave it as his opinion that the reclamation might begin at the point shown on the City Council's plans, viz., 86 feet landward of the inner face of the inner T, also that this line of reclamation should be prolonged backward to meet the breastwork of Custom-house Quay as already proposed. On the other point, however, viz., as to retaining the largest possible area of water to the south-east of the Queen's Wharf over soundings of 8 feet to 9 feet, he was firm, and, as this was in accordance with my recommendation, it was evident to Mr. Baird and myself that he and I should not agree on any line." The memorandum concludes by recommending that a plan, with this modification of his (Mr. Blackett's) line shown upon it, should be sent to the Board, inviting their opinion on it, and on the receipt of their reply that a plan showing the face-line of the reclamation as may be determined on after the reply of the Harbour Board be sent to the City Council, explaining that this is the extreme limit to which reclamation should be carried.

Mr. BAIRD, being called upon to make any explanation he might think fit, said that it would be found that the Marine Engineer took them back to 5 feet 3 inches of water, and did not give them the 8 feet; and he did not see how the Council could undertake the reclamation at all under the circumstances.

Mr. LEVIN.—I understand that by Mr. Blackett's plan so much land goes to waste, and that that is one of the material objections to it.

Mr. BAIRD.—That is the sole objection; it would give us no saleable land.—Mr. Baird explained where it wiped out certain blocks and cut through others. With regard to the question of the quay that was disposed of, as Mr. Blackett admitted that he had no right to deal with that subject.

Mr. FISHER said that, if Mr. Blackett's plan were adopted, what the Council would have would be 100 feet inside, which they would have to present to the foreshore-owners, and 100 feet outside, which they would have to present to the Government. He would ask Mr. Baird two questions: (1) Whether the first report of Mr. Blackett did completely destroy the value of the reclamation to the Corporation? and (2) Does the second report of Mr. Blackett lessen the effect of the first?

Mr. BAIRD replied to the first question in the affirmative, and to the second question he said the second report very slightly lessened the effect of the first—that was for cutting up and selling.

Mr. LEVIN.—Your main answer to the Marine Engineer, then, is that the depth varies from 5 feet 3 inches to 8 feet, and down to 5 feet 3 inches again, and at no point does it go to 9 feet?

Mr. BAIRD.—Yes, that is the effect of my evidence. I may also add that the Council's line runs parallel with the Ts of the Queen's Wharf, so that vessels would lie head to the wind—more so than by Mr. Blackett's line.

In answer to Mr. Lancaster, Mr. BAIRD said he did not think the Corporation's proposed plan would have the effect of injuring the harbour.

Captain HOLLIDAY was next asked to give his opinion. He said: After twenty-one years' experience of the harbour, I should say this line (the Corporation line) proposed here will injure the harbour very much indeed. This is the most sheltered part of the harbour, and ought not to be interfered with in any way. It is silting up fast here, and if you build a wall it will silt up faster. Every one who knows the harbour is well aware that this is the most valuable part of it, and small ships come here where they can get shelter. In answer to questions, he said he would deepen the shoal water by dredging the stuff outside and throwing it inside, and thus reclaim and deepen at the same time. In the proposed reclamation there was no provision for watermen's boats, and there was no other shelter except round Evans Bay.

Mr. FISHER.—Your objection would have applied with greater force to Tonk's reclamation.

Captain HOLLIDAY.—Not at all. That would be dry at low water, and there is no use of shelter where there is no water.

To Mr. Jackson.] The proposed line of reclamation would interfere with the navigation of sailing vessels though not of steamers. Vessels in coming up required to anchor there.

Mr. FISHER asked if it would not get over the difficulty to prevent vessels by regulation from anchoring in the fairway; but Captain Holliday replied in the negative, stating that, if a master found his vessel drifting, no regulation would prevent his anchoring there. Taking in deep water would, he added, interfere with navigation in any harbour.

Captain ROSE explained that vessels coming to the wharf sometimes had to anchor, and if they dragged they would not have room enough.

To Mr. Fisher.] If you went into 13 feet of water, and ran out wharves, as you would eventually have to do, it would interfere with the navigation of steamers.

Several questions were asked as to the silting up of the harbour if the reclamation was carried out, but, as Mr. Baird explained that silt-pits were constructed to catch the shingle, and Mr. Jones, the Board's Engineer, stated that the silting could be prevented, it was generally agreed that this was a minor question.

To Mr. Jackson.] The vessels which took advantage of the bight were principally lighters, yachts, and boats, but that was simply because there was no accommodation for the discharge of cargo. If accommodation existed, they would go there rather than any other place.

To Mr. Baird.] A vessel would not go to the breastwork if there were only 5 feet 3 inches water. Seven feet would be better for vessels of the class I speak of, but it would not do to go out to the line proposed by the Corporation.

Mr. JONES, the Board's Engineer, next gave his opinion, which was to the following effect: He agreed with Mr. Baird's plan, except the curve near Old Customhouse Street, which he would form into an angle to give better berthage and greater facilities for laying off the streets. It would be possible to prevent silting up by means of silt-pits. He did not think a foot or two in depth would effect the harbour, especially as it was so large. He did not think the depth proposed by the Corporation would be a serious detriment to the harbour. Their plan was what he should have proposed, but he would not have gone beyond 12 feet or 13 feet. He was not experienced in navigation, but it was his opinion that the harbour would not be injured.

Mr. NATHAN suggested that further evidence should be obtained before the Board replied.

Mr. FISHER pointed out that the Marine Department or the Governor himself could not interfere except it was clearly shown that the reclamation would be injurious to the harbour, and he did not find in Mr. Blackett's reports a single word about injury to the harbour; he merely stated that it would "decrease the area," and that "the water-area would be lessened"—facts so evident that they could not be disputed. It was clear to him from the evidence already taken—even from Captain Holliday himself—that the navigation would not be injuriously affected, and there was nothing to prevent a decision being arrived at that night, nor to prevent that decision being in favour of carrying on the reclamation. As, however, it was apparent there would be an adjournment for further evidence, he would propose at another time, what otherwise he would have proposed that night, viz., "That, while the Board has the fullest confidence in the report of the Marine Engineer, it is of opinion that the proposed Te Aro reclamation will not encroach upon the waters of the harbour in such a manner as to injure the navigation of the harbour. The Board therefore recommends that no further objection be offered to the reclamation, as proposed by the Corporation, being at once proceeded with."

Captain HOLLIDAY repeated that, in his opinion, the reclamation would interfere with the navigation of the harbour.

Captain ROSE said the tenor of Mr. Fisher's remarks was that the Harbour Board tried to get evidence opposed to the Council. He utterly disclaimed this on his part, and felt pained that such an impression should have originated.

Mr. KRULL and the CHAIRMAN also disclaimed any such idea.

After further discussion it was resolved to adjourn till 3 p.m. next day, and to call Captains Campbell, Bowton, Doyle, and Phillips (of the "Euterpe").