

method of taking the opinion of the Court on the legal question in dispute between the Government and the City Council on the subject, which can be settled between the Crown Law Officers and the City Solicitor; and I am to suggest that the latter should be asked to arrange for a meeting with the Solicitor-General hereon at his earliest convenience.

I have, &c.

The Town Clerk, Wellington.

WILLIAM SEED,
Secretary.

No. 25.

The SECRETARY, Marine Department, to the CHAIRMAN, Wellington Harbour Board.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 12th April, 1882.

With reference to the correspondence which has passed between this department and the Wellington Harbour Board on the subject of the proposed reclamation in Wellington Harbour by the City Council, I have been directed to forward, for the information of your Board, the accompanying copies of the reports thereon made at the request of the Minister in charge of this department by the under-mentioned gentlemen:—

Mr. C. Napier Bell, M. Inst. C.E., and Engineer to the Lyttelton Harbour Board;

Mr. H. P. Higginson, M. Inst. C.E.; and

Mr. W. N. Blair, Engineer in Charge, Public Works, Middle Island.

Appended to these reports will be found copy of a further memorandum on the same subject by Mr. Blackett, Marine Engineer.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM SEED,
Secretary.

The Chairman, Wellington Harbour Board, Wellington.

Enclosure 1 in No. 25.

MR. C. NAPIER BELL, C.E., to the Hon. the MINISTER, Marine Department.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 23rd March, 1882.

Acting under instructions conveyed to me by letter from the Secretary, No. 176/32, dated 20th March, 1882, I have the honor to report as follows on the subject of the proposed Te Aro reclamation.

I will first explain that, as I am intimately acquainted with this part of Wellington Harbour, acquired during five years' residence in Wellington, you will probably consider that it is unnecessary that I should come to Wellington before making any report. If, however, you think otherwise, I must defer the report until I can get an opportunity of coming to Wellington, and at present I cannot tell exactly when I would be able to do so.

I consider that the subject under consideration is more a nautical question than one of engineering; and the opinion of Captain Holliday and the shipmasters, whose evidence was taken, seems to be very conclusive as to the inconvenience, and even danger, that would be caused to shipping by the breast-work as proposed to be erected by the Corporation. I would only add to this my opinion that the position of the T's of Queen's Wharf pointing towards the land render much more room necessary than if they pointed away from the land, and towards deep water, as they do at Lyttelton.

The available room on the south-west side of Queen's Wharf after the reclamation was made on the line proposed by the Corporation would be very much obstructed by small craft and boats anchored there for shelter, which would greatly hamper the movements of large ships taking or leaving the berths at the T's of the wharf. In this respect I am of opinion that the proposed works would injure a valuable portion of the harbour and its navigation.

Ample accommodation for small craft and boats in an accessible and sheltered position should form a part of the requirements in any seaport town, because they are not less necessary in their way than the large ships. The plans under consideration take no account of this want, and I do not consider that the City Council are justified in sacrificing the interests of the harbour in this manner; therefore, if the Corporation be allowed to make the reclamation as proposed, I am of opinion that it should be required to provide shelter and accommodation equivalent to that which will be taken away by the works.

I agree with Mr. Higginson that the only available position remaining for a sheltered and convenient boat harbour would be near the Te Aro Baths, as shown in pencil on the plan M. D. 606. An embankment of rough stone projected from the shore, about 200 feet east of Tory Street, and curving round towards the baths, would enclose about eight or ten acres of well-sheltered space, which might be fitted with stairs and boat-slips. If this were done previously to commencing the reclamation, so that small craft could be removed from the anchorage under the lee of the Queen's Wharf, I am of opinion that most of the objections to the line of reclamation as proposed by the Corporation would be satisfactorily met.

I do not think that very much would be gained by adopting the line last conceded by the Marine Engineer, and marked in brown on the plan (M.D. 606), over that required by the City Council, except that the quay wall would be placed in shallower water, and would therefore be less costly to build. The question at issue is of the room that is to be left under shelter of the wharf; and if the Council cannot provide room elsewhere, then it would be for the interests of the harbour that the original line, marked in green, as first proposed by Mr. Blackett, should be adhered to.

The proposed quay wall from the wharf, as far as 1,100 feet south-east from that point, and 200 feet farther if the wall were straight instead of curved, would afford good berthage for ships drawing 8 to 12 feet of water; the buttresses in the proposed wall would, however, be objectionable for this purpose. If dredging could deepen this length, ships of greater draught might use these berths, which