

the real guarantee for the harbour loan was the land revenue ; and that when the land was all sold we might have to pay a small rate. We did not complain about this ; but one reason why we objected to pay the rate at all was because we scarcely ever use the New Plymouth Harbour. It is about sixty miles away, and in order to get there we have to pass through about twenty miles of land which is exempt from the rate. There is a great deal of land around Hawera that is not liable for the rate at all, and it is very unjust for us, who live at a greater distance away, to have to pay the rate.

193. Then, there is an unrateable district between you and the harbour?—Yes ; a long strip lying close to the beach ; and to get to New Plymouth we have to go along the coast-road and get to Hawera, and then by railway to New Plymouth ; and we pass through twenty miles of settled country, that was settled long before we bought our land, and yet has not to pay any rate. The farming community in our district scarcely ever use the harbour, and the few who have used it have been very unfortunate.

194. How do you export your produce?—Our stock is shipped from Waitara. My son has been shipping cattle and sheep from Waitara, and has never shipped any from New Plymouth until quite recently. He shipped some for the first time the other day from there to Greymouth, and the only reason he did so was because the steamer came alongside the breakwater. He says he would sooner go ten or twenty miles beyond New Plymouth than ship at the New Plymouth Harbour. Another shipper could not get shipping at Waitara, and he shipped them to Auckland by way of New Plymouth, and they sold for only 5s. 6d. per head ; whereas I know if they had been shipped straight from Waitara they would have realised at least 8s. Another man I know of who shipped sheep at New Plymouth lost a number of them, which were drowned through mismanagement ; and another farmer I know of in our district lost a great deal by shipping cattle and sheep at New Plymouth.

195. Your contention is, then, that the facilities for shipping at New Plymouth Harbour are not complete?—Yes.

196. *The Chairman.* Then, those who need to use the harbour do not find sufficient facilities there, and the large number of those who do not use the harbour are called upon to pay a rate for it?—Yes ; and have no means to pay.

[Mr. Samuel asked leave to explain that the wharves now being erected would soon remove all cause of complaint, and make such losses impossible for the future.]

197. *Mr. Jones.* I understand you to say that you would not complain of a small rate : what do you call a small rate?—Three pence in the pound on the annual value. The annual value was computed at 5 per cent. on the capital value. Now it is taken at 6 per cent. on the capital value.

198. *Mr. Tanner.* When you purchased this land from the Crown, was that after the New Plymouth loan was floated or before?—After it was floated in 1879. The first sale of the lands was in 1880.

199. Then, when you purchased the lands, you were all aware that they were liable to a rate?—No ; a great number were not aware. The people living there knew it.

200. Was any reference officially made at the time when the Government threw the lands open for sale to the fact that it was liable to rates?—No ; it was not notified at all. But at the first sale, when Captain Wray, the Land Commissioner was there, the question was put to him by more than one, whether the land was liable to this rate, and he said that it was, but that it would be more than twenty-six years before it would be required ; and he explained about the 25 per cent. of the land revenue.

201. Did you look upon his answer as official?—Well, we thought it would be correct as coming from him. And after that, in 1881, there was a Commissioner appointed to examine the New Plymouth Harbour Works, and they were condemned, and we memorialised the House to adopt the report of the commission, and relieve us of the liability for the rate, for fear it should come sooner than we thought ; not that we cared anything about the harbour. However, the report was thrown out, and not adopted. Major Atkinson came round addressing his constituents, and he was aware of the sending of this memorial ; and he made this statement, and gave us figures : “ That the area of land for sale in Taranaki District would be sufficient to realise a certain amount of money, and that the quarter of it would be falling to the Board, and so there would not be required a rate.” And he said then that a small rate might be needed when all the land was disposed of. I believe that his statement was pretty well correct, if the method of dealing with the land had not been altered.

202. In other cases lands are made subject to a loan by consent of the majority of ratepayers. How was this land, the property of the Crown, handed over as part security for the loan : was it by Act of Parliament?—Yes, the Act of 1877, which provided that all the lands in the rating district were liable.

203. Then, land, both sold and unsold, was made liable whether the ratepayers were willing or not?—Yes.

EDWARD GODSAL examined.

204. *Mr. Samuel.* You are a settler at Otakeho, on the Waimate Plains?—Yes.

205. You have been deputed to come before this Committee and give evidence?—Yes. I think the settlers in my district consider that they are entitled to consideration in this matter owing to the fact that they had no knowledge of the rate at the time that they bought their lands, for if they had they would have given a less price than they did. At the first sale, in 1880, I may say that nothing was said in the Government plans or maps about the land being liable to a harbour rate. I never saw land, either at Home or anywhere else, more extensively advertised, or even to the same extent, as this land, and yet nothing was said in the advertisements about its being subject to a rate ; and nothing was said by the auctioneer at the October sales in 1880, until