exceed 1s. in the pound, and there has been a good deal of argument about it. They were told positively that it could not exceed 1s., whereas it has now been increased to 1s. 3d.

214. *The Chairman.*] You are speaking only of the harbour rate?—Yes; it is equal to 1s. 3d., being ¾d. in the pound on the capital value. The people of Waitara, who are only twelve miles from New Plymouth, have a harbour of their own sufficient for all their purposes; and they are well satisfied with their harbour, and there is no rate for it. Notwithstanding this, they are called upon to pay a rate for the New Plymouth Harbour, where they do little or no trade. I may mention that the lands belonging to the Waitara Harbour Board are liable to pay the New Plymouth Harbour Board rate. I am pointing out the inconsistency and the hardship of this matter.

215. Do you mean to say that the land which is the property of the Waitara Harbour Board pays rates to the New Plymouth Harbour Board?—Yes; and is still vying with them for trade; and it is handicapped in this way, and so is the land lying right round the harbour, whether private or Board's land. I have been understood to be one of the great opponents of the New Plymouth Harbour rate from the beginning. I have had an account rendered to me by the Board, with a threat that if I did not pay my rates within a certain time proceedings would be taken against me. Judgment has been given against me, and I have not paid the amount, but probably I shall be compelled to, and I take it as next to confiscation. These are the complaints that we have been labouring under for a long time; and, taking the great number of settlers, I feel sure that they will be unable to pay the rate. They are mostly dairying people in a small way, and they get a very small price for their produce; and I think they are really unable to pay the rate in many cases; and it is taken generally to be a very great hardship.

216. *Mr. Tanner.*] How do you propose to be relieved from this hardship?—The Government might take the thing over.

217. That is the only proposal you have; the only way you can think of of getting relief?—Yes; for the Government to take over the Board's assets and liabilities.

218. Have you a rate or are you liable to a rate for the Waitara Harbour?—No.

219. You have a loan, have you not?—Yes; but no rate: the interest is found by the harbour dues and the endowments.

220. The dues and the value of the endowments are sufficient to pay the interest?—Pretty well.

221. But supposing they are not, are you then liable for a rate?—No.

222. *Mr. Jones.*] Have you a loan?—Yes.

223. What security is there for the payment of the interest?—The dues arising from the harbour and the amount of the money arising from the endowments.

224. And if they fail, would the lenders have to go short?—Yes; they lent the money on this security.

225. *Mr. Tanner.*] What is the amount of the Waitara Harbour loan?—£21,000.

226. Was it floated locally?—Yes.

227. At what per cent.?—At various rates. It was borrowed in different sums from different people. The rates were 5, 6, and 7 per cent., I think, with a sinking fund in each case, and there has been a great deal of sinking fund accumulating against it.

228. *Mr. Jones.*] Do you keep up your sinking fund?—Not fully; it is somewhat behindhand.

229. What have you got in hand?—About £5,000 or £6,000, not more.

230. *Mr. Tanner.*] What is the port the people in your district mostly use?—The Waitara Harbour; and the harbour receipts are some £2,500 per year.

231. Has your loan been expended on improvements on the Waitara Harbour?—Yes; it has all been so expended.

232. Do you propose to borrow any further for improvements?—No; we do not see our way to do so at present.

233. Are the improvements permanent so far as they have been made?—Yes.

234. You stated that the settlers were told that the rate for the New Plymouth Harbour would never exceed 1s.: who told you that?—Major Atkinson, for one, and Captain Wray.

[Mr. Samuel was here allowed to state: We have had a Supreme Court case about this matter. In 1882 the Rating Act of 1876, which had to do with the annual value, was repealed, and an Act was passed to enable local bodies to have their valuation done for nothing by the Property-tax Department. It then became necessary to take the capital value, and it became therefore necessary to fix some rate on capital value equivalent to a rate on the previous annual value; and it was decided by the Legislature that ¾d. should be equal to 1s. Therefore, wherever there had been a limit of 1s. annual it became ¾d. capital. This has had an effect which was not contemplated at the time, as it actually now makes a rate of 1s. equal to one of 1s. 3d.]

235. *The Chairman* (to witness).] Are you a member of the Waitara Harbour Board?—Yes; I am Chairman of the Board.

236. We have had some evidence previously as to the amount of rates in the Borough of New Plymouth, and you stated that the Board rate was 1s. 3d. on the annual value: are there any other local rates at Waitara, such as county or Road Board rates?—Yes; there are the Town Board rates and the county rates.

237. What would they amount to on the annual value—that is, all the other rates besides the harbour rate?—To about 3s. in the Waitara Township. The rate for the Taranaki County is ¾d., which would be equal to 1s. 3d. Then, the town rate of ¾d., equal to 1s. 3d., and a charitable-aid rate of about ¼d., equal to about 5d.

238. That is, within the township?—Yes.

239. What are the rates in the country districts outside the township?—The Taranaki County rate of ¾d.; the harbour rate of ¾d.; Road Board rates, some ¾d. and some ½d, as a rule ¾d.—that would be 3s. 9d,; and the charitable-aid rate of ¼d., or 5d. in the pound—making in all 4s. 2d.; and in one or two cases there is a special rate.