

127. Is it not a fact that stock which would otherwise go to the Auckland or Napier markets has now to be sold to the people resident in the district at a very low price?—It is a fact that stock is practically unsaleable, because they cannot get them away.

128. *The Chairman.*] You estimated the annual revenue at £2,000. At what rate per ton would you levy dues so as to get that sum?—I would take it that the tonnage-dues would not exceed half the statutory rates as set forth in the Act of 1878. I think it is 6d.

129. You thought you could get this £2,000 by charging how much?—Something like 2d. per ton on the tonnage.

130. You think there would be so many dues chargeable as to raise £2,000 at 2d. per ton?—Well, I hardly think that would do it. It would have to be more than that.

131. *Mr. Graham.*] Do you not include in that estimate of £2,000 an increased charge in wharfage?—Yes; I include the revenue from increased wharfage.

132. *The Chairman.*] What is the charge per ton for goods that the traders and mercantile community of Gisborne have to pay now in consequence of vessels having to lie away from the pier?—They have got wharfage-dues of 2s. 6d. to pay; and they pay a lighterage of from 4s. 6d. to 6s. per ton.

133. To what extent will they save by carrying out this work?—They would save the whole of the lighterage-fees, because unless we increase our wharfage-dues there would be nothing else to charge them for.

134. Have the merchants to pay at present 6s. per ton outside the wharfage-dues of 2s. 6d.?—Yes.

135. Can you give the Committee any information as to the number of tons of goods landed per annum?—I confess I cannot do that. I fancy the only way to obtain that information would be through the Customhouse.

136. Supposing this extension is made, to what extent will it benefit the objectors to this work—those people living in the north part of Cook County?—Well, it seems to me it will benefit them in this way: that it will, I think, be a considerable means of inducing the settlement of the country, and every acre of land taken up there necessarily enhances the value of the more distant portions of it.

137. Do you not think that the imposition of the maximum rate will retard settlement?—I believe not. The settlers, I believe, are almost universally in favour of the work, and would be quite willing to pay; but they do not think, in the present circumstances of the county, they should be asked to pay more than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. If the times had not been so very depressed, they would not have thought much about it. That is the way they put it.

138. What is your interpretation of the Act as to the maximum rate?—I have always held it to be 2d. for the town and 1d. for the country.

139. Have you taken any legal opinion on that question?—I believe a legal opinion has been taken.

140. *Mr. Allen.*] If the people knew that a rate of 1d. and 2d. were likely to be imposed, would they object to the work going on?—I believe the people would object to pay more than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d.; but they say they are perfectly willing to allow the work to go on as far as the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. rate will allow.

141. Have you made any estimate as to the expenditure and receipts?—We have had the matter repeatedly before the Board.

Mr. Allen: I suppose the secretary will give us that.

142. *Mr. Tanner.*] Is the rate now being raised paid as interest on the whole of the loan?—The rate raised just now cannot pay interest on the whole of the loan, but we have considerable revenue from the money invested and otherwise.

143. *Mr. Allen.*] Supposing this £40,000 were expended, would you then expect your income to be such that you would not have to increase the rate?—Yes.

144. How?—Well, we have a valuable endowment to begin with, for which we get nothing at present, but which ought to yield considerable revenue.

145. How much do you expect to get from it?—For a moderate expenditure in opening up the block by roads, it should be worth £30,000. We ought at least to get 6d. per acre—that is, £1,100 a year—for it.

146. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] I understand that no one would take up similar blocks of land in the district when offered?—The blocks recently let under the small grazing-run system were all taken up; but they are very rough blocks, and not at all to be compared with the endowment block we have got. We had two of the best men in the place sent out to examine this block, and they brought up a report which surprised most of us.

147. How have you not let it?—Because there is no road to connect with it.

148. How are you going to get a road?—We hope this Parliament is going to be liberal enough to give us a road.

149. *The Chairman.*] You expect to get £2,000 extra revenue from the extension. I see by your general account you received £2,000 only from wharfage-dues. If you only received £2,000 for wharfage-dues, how do you expect £2,000 extra from the tonnage-dues for vessels lying at the wharf?—I do not quite understand that. I am going, I may say, upon such information as merchants—experts in the matter—have stated. You can see quite well that if the merchants are to save a lighterage of 6s. per ton they can very well afford to pay a much higher wharfage-rate.

150. *Mr. Ross.*] You are charging the maximum rate now?—I do not think so.

Mr. Ross: Oh, yes! you are. You cannot charge more than 2s. 6d.

152. *The Chairman.*] You forget this: The merchants may gain to the extent you have mentioned; but when it becomes a question of raising a rate over the whole district it is not the merchants