

1890.
NEW ZEALAND.

THAMES HARBOUR BOARD BOUNDARIES

(REPORT ON, BY MR. A. E. G. RHODES, M.H.R., TOGETHER WITH THE EVIDENCE TAKEN THEREON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

REPORT.

SIR,—

Hereford Street, Christchurch, New Zealand, 12th May, 1890.

At the request of the Hon. Mr. Mitchelson I visited the Thames, accompanied by Mr. William Berry, jun., and on the 11th February, 1890, I held an inquiry at the Thames Harbour Board Office in regard to the proper boundaries of the Thames Harbour. I am sending herewith a copy of the evidence taken during the inquiry.

It is absolutely necessary, in the interests of the up-country settlers, that the Waihou River should be kept freed from snags, &c., and open to navigation; and as, I believe, the River Board only has control to its junction with the Hikutaia River, the portion between that junction and Opani Point should be put under the control of some local body.

After carefully considering the evidence (which dealt entirely with the Waihou River) and inspecting the harbour and river, I am of opinion that the Thames Harbour should extend up the Waihou River a distance of five nautical miles in a straight line from Opani Point.

One of the grievances complained of by the settlers on the banks of this portion of the river is that the Borough of Thames had an undue representation on the Harbour Board. I think these settlers might be allowed some direct representation apart from the county representative.

The fact of the wharves being private property—although a reason that the Harbour Board should buy them or make some reduction in dues—hardly warrants interference by Government.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Marine, Wellington.

ARTHUR E. G. RHODES.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

THAMES, 11TH FEBRUARY, 1890.

MR. A. E. G. RHODES, M.H.R., held an inquiry to-day, at the Harbour Board Office, in regard to the limits of the Thames Harbour. *Present*: Messrs. J. McAndrew (Chairman of the Harbour Board), A. Brodie, McGowan, and Wood (members of the Harbour Board), Cassrell, Dearle (Ohinemuri), Gillespie (manager of the Kauri Timber Company), L. J. Bagnall (proprietor of the timber mill at Turua), Bayldon (Harbourmaster), and W. Carpenter (Secretary of the Board).

Mr. Rhodes stated the object of the inquiry.

MR. W. CARPENTER, Secretary of the Board, examined.

Mr. Carpenter: I think in a few words, sir, I shall be able to place before you a tolerably clear outline of the position of this Board with reference to the limits of the harbour. In the first instance, we take our starting-point from the Proclamation issued in 1874. That Proclamation—you have it before you in the preamble to the Bill introduced into the House last session—states that the seaward limits of the port shall be a circle of five nautic miles radius from Opani Point. Opani Point you will see on the plan before you, and a circle of five miles radius, taking in this much of the river [describing on plan]. That was included within the circle, and for several years—in fact, until 1887, I think it was—the Harbour Board, and indeed all parties concerned, had agreed to an understanding that the circle was to be taken as comprehending the limits of the harbour, and not merely the arc of a circle. It was presumed by the members of the Board that the officers of the Government, in making this Proclamation, understood their duty. It was believed when they described the seaward boundary they also intended to include certain waters running into that area so described in the seaward boundary, as is the practice—so far as I and the members of the Board know—in all countries. It would be a simple absurdity to suppose that two points of land comprised a harbour. I would ask you when you are at leisure to read Mr. Hesketh's opinion upon the question. It was found in process