

35. *Mr. Brodie.*] What a state of confusion there would be if every one were allowed to erect private wharves. Do you not think somebody should have control?—Yes; but not the Thames Harbour Board. All that the people there ask is that there should be the same control as there is elsewhere.

36. *Mr. Carpenter.*] How many people are there on the banks of the river within the five-mile radius saving the owners and employés of the mills?—On that side of the river there are Messrs. Earl and McCowatt, besides about twenty Natives. There is a considerable area of Native land, which will some day be taken up and occupied. It would place all the land at a great disadvantage. On the other side of the river there are a good number of people living besides the employés at the mills.

37. *Mr. Wood.*] Without the assistance of the buoys and beacons would vessels be able to go into the river?—There are natural marks which would lead vessels into the river without the assistance of buoys and beacons. The river can be used, and has been used, without the buoys and beacons.

*Mr. Brodie:* There is one point that has been omitted. The Government went to considerable expense in bringing Sir John Coode here to inquire into the best place for a harbour, and Sir John Coode, in his report, says that Kopu is the best place for a harbour, and that is inside the river; so that it is important to the Thames people that the river should be kept free from snags, &c.

*Mr. Cassrells* (of Ohinemuri) said the settlers up the river sent their produce to market by the river. They did not want any hindrances put in their way by a Harbour Board. The settlers traded direct with Auckland. All that they wanted was to have free-trade. The machinery which had gone up could never have been taken there unless they had had free-trade.

*Mr. Rhodes:* Did the Thames Harbour Board charge you?

*Mr. Cassrells:* They did charge us, but not since we have become a River Board. It would be an injustice to tax us. We are taxed quite enough without such extra charges. Each side of the river might govern itself.

*Mr. Rhodes:* As far as I understand, the Harbour Board have no intention of charging you as long as you have a Board there.

*Mr. Bagnall:* They have the power to charge, and they do make a light charge. The Board even tried to compel the up-country settlers to take their powder from the magazine at the Thames instead of from Auckland, as some of the settlers desired to do.

*Mr. Rhodes:* You cannot go into the river without going through the harbour, no matter where the Government fixes the boundaries.

*Mr. McGowan:* Did you make any objection to the payment of these dues until Mr. Larnach's Proclamation appeared?

*Mr. Bagnall:* We always contended that the payment of these dues was an injustice, but we did not refuse to pay, believing the Board had power to compel us to pay.

Mr. BAYLDON, Harbourmaster, examined.

38. *Mr. Rhodes.*] Can you state when the dues were paid?—The by-law came into force, as near as I can recollect, in 1883, and from that date to 1886 the dues were regularly paid.

*Mr. Bagnall:* And the loan was raised in 1881.

*Mr. Bayldon:* As far as I can recollect, Messrs. Reid and Bagnall were members of the Board, and agreed to that impost being put upon them.

*Mr. Bagnall:* We admit that.

*Mr. Bayldon:* The following is a description of the boundaries at various ports throughout the colony: “‘Marine Act, 1867.’—*New Zealand Gazette* of the 23rd November, 1868, No. 66.—Sir George Bowen, Governor.—Shortland: A circle of four nautic miles radius from Opani Point. Auckland: A straight line from the east head of the Tamaki River to the south-east point of Motutapu Island, and a straight line west (true) from Rangitoto Reef to the opposite shore. Wellington: A circle of three nautic miles radius from the outer rock of Barrett's Reef. Lyttelton: A circle of five nautic miles radius from Baleine Point. Dunedin: A circle of five nautic miles radius from Taiaroa Heads Lighthouse. Bluff Harbour: A circle of three nautic miles radius from the flagstaff on Starling Point. Invercargill or New River: A circle of three nautic miles radius from the outer leading beacon.”

*Mr. Gillespie* (Kauri Timber Company) said the company had been promised a considerable allowance for rebate in connection with their wharf, but instead of getting a rebate they had been charged a great deal more.

39. *Mr. Brodie to Mr. Bayldon.*] It is the case that Sir John Coode came here to report on the harbour on behalf of the Government?—Yes.

40. His report was to the effect that the most suitable place for a harbour was at the mouth of the Thames River, somewhere in the vicinity of Te Kopu. That was about 1883 or 1884. You are aware that large drains have been cut down to the river to drain settlers' property there?—Yes.

41. And due precaution was not taken by the people to prevent an unnecessary quantity of stuff getting into the river?—A large quantity got in at the time.

42. At Roche's place, near Te Aroha, have you any idea of the quantity of sand and land which came into the river? Wherever drainage operations are undertaken, and proper precautions are not taken, large quantities of stuff come down into the harbour?—Yes.

43. Where timber-driving is carried on some people take steps to prevent stumps coming down?—Yes, some precautions.

44. But, notwithstanding that, logs have found their way into the river, and some of them have come down to the harbour?—They certainly come down the river.

45. In your capacity as Harbourmaster you have had to call the attention of some mill-owners to the fact of their placing sawdust in the river?—Yes, in days gone by.