

made more than that. I should put down £3,000 for dredging, but it is a thing hard to estimate with any exactness.

2728. That is absolutely necessary in order to keep the harbour in sufficient order?—It is not an absolute necessity; it might possibly be done without.

2729. I suppose the shingle is all cutting off from the bank below the Cobden Bridge, and tending to fill up this pool [indicating on tracing]?—Yes, to some extent.

2730. I understand that between the bridge and the bar there is a shoal opposite the lagoon. Is that shoal permanent?—Yes.

2731. And does the action of the river, beyond filling up the pool, carry the shingle over this inner bar? Have you any observations bearing on that?—It must do so, or the pool would fill up altogether in a little time, which we know it does not.

2732. I ask, because otherwise the dredging of this pool will be a matter of continual necessity?—It will be necessary to dredge from time to time, but not very frequently. It is probable that if it were once done thoroughly it might last eight or nine years before anything more would be required to be done. This is the result of experience here and at Westport. But it is only against the wharves it would so maintain itself, not all across the river; but against the wharves is all that is wanted.

2733. Have you a section of the bend of the river through the pool and out to the bar?—No.

2734. Have you the material for making one? Can you supply one?—Yes.

2735. Is there any other work you have in contemplation?—That is all the harbour-works.

2736. How could the harbour-works you have mentioned be provided for?—They would, I suppose, be provided for by borrowing money on the security of the Board's revenue.

2737. Is the security not exhausted?—The sum of money authorised to be borrowed by the special Act has been exhausted.

2738. A fresh Act would be necessary?—I think a fresh Act would be necessary. But there is a revenue over and above what is required for interest—there is in normal times—which ought to be available to pay interest on further borrowing. I will refer to that afterwards when you come to consider the accounts.

2739. In the letter from Mr. Blair of the 7th April it states that the general conduct of the works will be undertaken by the various Government departments immediately concerned. Does that mean that all works are undertaken at the suggestion and under the authority of the Government?—Yes.

2740. By the Public Works Department?—Yes. Practically the Public Works Department, and recently the Marine Department, has had charge of the whole business except the land-endowments.

2741. That is since the 7th April, 1888?—Since this Board was gazetted. I think, perhaps, it was a few days before that.

2742. Then, are these works included in the public works estimates passed by the House?—No. So long as the £150,000 which the Board was authorised to borrow was unexhausted it was provided for out of that. Since that they have been provided for by funds advanced by the Government, who hold the Board's revenue as against them.

2743. Then they differ from other public works in the colony?—In that respect.

2744. In that they are not voted by the House?—Yes; that they are not voted by the House.

2745. Have you the estimates for last year or the year before?—Yes.

2746. We had better see them, and refer to the public works estimates?—[Estimates for several years produced.] I think [after reference to estimates] they are in the Treasury accounts. They do not come before the House, I think. There is nothing in these estimates.

2747. Then out of what vote are they paid for?—I cannot say. The Government advance the money, but I could not say what funds they come out of.

2748. *Mr. Brown.* Do they appear on the Public Works Statement, do you know, Mr. Martin? I mean, as regards this expenditure generally on the works that are undertaken here, do you know if they appear in the Minister's Public Works Statement?—As to the fund they come out of, do you mean?

2749. Yes?—There is nothing said in the Public Works Statement about that, that I remember. The Treasury on the one hand are receiving the Board's revenue, and on the other hand they are making advances as they are required.

2750. Does the Audit Department pass it as a sum coming out of the £150,000 loan?—No; that is expended.

2751. Then, how do they pass it? I do not understand how the Audit could otherwise pass a sum of money for the purpose?—I expect it is passed under "Unauthorised Expenditure." But, really I have no knowledge on the point. The best way would be to ask the Treasury for the information.

2752. Do you know of any allocation by law of the surplus revenue that arises here, or any rule by which it might be allocated?—The Harbour Board have the power to spend the revenue on any object upon which such a Board can legally spend it.

2753. *The Chairman.* The question the Commissioners wish to arrive at is this: what is earning this surplus revenue, and whether it is a real surplus revenue available for works, or whether it should go to the payment of interest?—Which surplus revenue?

2754. The surplus you have alluded to here. Can you mention what the surplus revenue was last year?—It was very small.

2755. What was it?—Only about £1,400 or £1,500.

2756. What was it the year before?—It was about £7,000 or £8,000 the year before.

2757. And the year before that?—About £5,000 or £6,000.