

2758. Then, I assume that the Board is responsible only for the £150,000 and the overdraft from the Government?—That is all they are responsible for at the present moment.

2759. And without devoting any of the revenue of the Board to the payment of interest on the balance of the money that has been expended on the harbour-works. I do not quite understand it. The total sum spent on harbour-works you have put in as £279,000, apart from the railway altogether. There is only about £150,000 of that covered by the loan, so that there is £100,000 spent on harbour-works on which interest is not paid by the Harbour Board?—Yes. It is not paid out of the Harbour Board revenue.

2760. So that, if the interest was paid out of the harbour revenue on the whole amount, it would do away with the apparent profit?—Yes; much more so if the cost of the Brunner Railway was taken into account.

2761. As the whole debt would be £536,000?—Yes; it would not be 2 per cent. on the lot. The harbour revenue would not pay more than about 2 per cent., even in a good year, on the total expenditure.

2762. *Mr. Brown.*] I would like to get at what I asked you a little time ago as to the restrictions or regulations under which surplus is expended on the harbour here. Is there any printed document we could refer to as to the constitution and powers of the Harbour Board?—The Harbour Board is under the control of the Government, and when a work has to be undertaken the Public Works Department, usually by the Under-Secretary, writes to the Board and requests them to take the legal steps to get it authorised by the Marine Department, which they do, and it is carried out by the Public Works Department.

2763. What are the legal steps?—Just applying to the Marine Department for authority.

2764. They have to do that under colonial statute, have they not?—Under “The Harbours Act, 1878.”

2765. *The Chairman.*] Have you any plan or statistics to show the state of the bar before the harbour-works—say, ten years ago, or before that? You mentioned in your previous evidence that you would get something of that kind?—I have not got it ready yet.

2766. We want to see some kind of plan to show the harbour in its original state and as it is now. You said in your evidence that you would get something. You have not that ready?—I have not, but I will supply it in a day or two. I have been occupied by other returns asked for by the Commission, and with my ordinary work; so I am sorry I have not been able to attend to this yet.

2767. You said you had correspondence respecting a special provision which is made of 3d. a ton to be paid by the shippers as soon as £100,000 had been expended on the works. Have you looked up that correspondence?—No, I did not look it up. I think what I said was that I had mentioned in reports to the Engineer-in-Chief that this was a rate that might be levied, and I had not had an answer.

2768. We should be glad if you would kindly give us an extract from the letter, so that we could make it the basis for a further application, and have the matter cleared up?—I shall do so.

2769. You were to furnish us with a table of the steamers that loaded coal, and a return dividing the summer months and the winter months?—Yes; I have it here. [Table put in, and marked “Exhibit No. 28.”]

2770. There was also a return showing the number of days in succession when the bar has been unworkable, and a diagram showing the state of the bar?—Yes; it is here. [Return and diagram put in, and marked Exhibits Nos. 29 and 30 respectively.]

2771. Then you were also to put in a statement of accounts, being an analysis of the Greymouth Harbour revenue for three years?—Yes, taking the revenue really accruing. The return shows a considerable difference with the cash account, owing to the money not coming to credit exactly in the way it accrues. [Statement put in, and marked “Exhibit No. 31.”]

2772. You were about to explain the authority that the Harbour Board had for expending its revenue without its passing through the consolidated revenue?—It has the same power that every Harbour Board in the colony has. Clause 153 of the Harbour Boards Act says that “every Harbour Board may, within the limits of its jurisdiction, and subject to the provisions of this Act, make, construct, erect, and maintain harbour-works as defined by this Act.”

2773. Then, has the Harbour Board the right to deal with this revenue? Could it, for instance, reduce its charges? How are the charges by which the revenue is collected fixed?—The Harbour Board has nothing to do with the charges. Under the Greymouth Harbour Board Act it receives the net revenue of the Brunner Railway and the coalfields endowment. But this endowment is managed by the Government, and the railways are managed by the Railway Commissioners, and it is they who have the power of fixing the rate.

2774. *Mr. Brown.*] That is “The Greymouth Harbour Board Act, 1884”?—Yes.

2775. You could neither reduce nor increase the charges?—The Harbour Board have no power to alter the charges in any way. They have only the power to alter the charges as to the tug, which they purchased and which they work themselves. But the rates on the railway are fixed by the Railway Commissioners, and the royalties and the rents, &c., are fixed by the Lands or Mines Department.

2776. But, if the royalties or the haulage-rates were modified, that would affect the revenue of the Harbour Board?—Yes; it would affect their revenue, but they have no power to control that.

2777. You have stated that the Harbour Board has a surplus revenue. Do you think that revenue could be applied to the reduction of the royalty or the haulage-charges?—I do not think it would be a wise thing to do it in view of the absolute certainty that more money will have to be borrowed to cover further expenditure on the harbour-works and any additions required to the railway, because anything the railway requires has to come out of this harbour fund also. The Government are not likely, I think, to provide moneys to make additions to the railway. All the