

9. When you built a wharf yourself, but not when it belongs to other people?—Of course, the chief point of the thing is, are we going to remedy a mistake that has been made in the past? That foreshore was taken from us, it was the property of the old Harbour Board, and it was taken from them, but the Department never gave anything back to us, as it did to the other Boards similarly placed.

10. You received all the endowments since?—We did not.

11. Have you not received from the Marine Department an endowment of something like 4,000 acres?—I do not think so.

12. Have you or have you not received the whole of the endowment set aside by Parliament?—Some 400 acres.

13. I am not certain about the acreage, but I want to know, have you or have you not received the whole of the endowment set aside by Parliament for the maintenance of this harbour?—Yes, except the part you took away from us afterwards.

14. That was vested in the Railway Department, and the Marine Department had no more power to give you the Railway property than you had to give it to me. It was only afterwards discovered that it was included in the schedule, and it was only then cancelled?—I think if you were to turn up the plans of this particular piece of ground, you would find that the portion you speak of was never included in the Proclamation of 1878.

15. Do you think that the consolidated revenue has a right to maintain the Foxton Harbour Board when they will not do anything to find their own money by way of rating?—The consolidated revenue has no claim upon the wharfares accruing from the wharves at Foxton.

16. As a Harbour Board, you claim a property for which you paid nothing, and which belongs to another Department altogether. The position is that you claim this for the purpose of getting revenue, which you decline to put your hands in your own pockets for. You want to get what you never paid a penny for, and what is owned by another Department?—We do not claim anything that we have not a right to, but I say that we have a perfect right to that wharf. I do not see why we should be put into any different position than the three ports I have mentioned, simply because we were forced out of existence in 1886. The Railway Department never let a penny of the wharfares go when the Act said they should do so.

17. The Railway Department under its own Act has no authority to spend a penny in clearing up a harbour?—I do not think they had any right to collect wharfares until 1894.

18. How did they get the authority in 1894?—They brought in an Act.

19. Who had it before that?—The Railway but they took it, I understand, illegally, because the position of 1886 called upon the Governor in Council to perform all the functions as if a Harbour Board existed.

20. And all property vested in the Crown then. Therefore, how could it have been illegally collected?—The Government are too strong.

21. If a Bill is repealed, and property vested in the Crown which formerly belonged to a particular body, how can you say that the Crown illegally collected the revenue? Has your Board been informed by the Government that when you take steps to rate yourselves and find a certain portion of the money, the Government will be prepared to favourably consider an application for assistance?—You have put that before me several times, but I am always met with the objection that it is not right we should be called upon to rate ourselves doubly, as the Railway Department is taking away our principal source of revenue, and to impose a further rate would mean that we should be still further improving the position and augmenting the revenue of the Railway Department without any corresponding benefit. That is, supposing the wharfage is at present worth £1,000, and that by means of rating we improve the harbour so that it comes to be worth £3,000, we should still have to collect the rate, while the Railway Department got the £2,000 extra.

22. Is the Railway Department asking you to improve the river?—No, certainly not.

23. Is it for your own benefit that you are improving it?—I reckon that the Department ought not to step into this position. As citizens of the Dominion we are trying to advance the Dominion, and I do not think it is the Department's place to try and block our advancement. They seem to think at present that we are there, and we may go to the wall that it is none of their business. That seems to be the answer.

24. Has the Department in any way attempted to stop you from improving your harbour?—They have not.

25. But you want their money to improve it?—We do not; but perhaps this would get over the difficulty: We reckon that we have got a grievance on account of the wharf, and we are prepared to buy it.

26. We are prepared to sell it?—But the figure you are asking is the capital value.

27. Yes, it is earning  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and if I am a seller I have a right to put my price on an article. There is no compulsion on you to buy and on me to sell. The wharf is under offer to you at the value it is earning, or we do not want to sell at all?—Yes, we have got the wharf under offer at that price.

28. *Mr Craigie.*] You had a Harbour Board constituted long ago. Have you got a harbour district?—No, there is no harbour district except New Plymouth on our coast. We have a Board brought into existence. The original one was dissolved in 1886.

29. What does your Board do now?—We have got no revenue. When we wanted the present Board constituted, we put all the endowments of the original Board into the Bill, but the Minister deleted that portion referring to revenues from the present wharf.

*Hon. Mr Millar.* I was not Minister when that was done.

30. *Mr Craigie.*] Has your Board spent any money for wharves?—No, the works were erected by the Public Works Department years ago, in 1881.