

4. What is the difference, for instance, on the bar?—Well, seven years ago a vessel could come in at the top spring, 9 ft. 6 in. The maximum now is 8 ft. That is, the bar has gone back 18 in. The river, taking it all through, has got worse all the time.

5. *The Chairman.*] Have you had any floods since you came here?—Yes.

6. Has that had any effect?—Yes, sometimes it scours the place out and at other times it blocks the river up—periodically.

7. *Mr. Weston.*] Allowing for fluctuation, the general condition is going back?—Yes, gradually filling up.

8. With regard to inside the bar, what length are the shoals?—The length of all the shoals to dredge would be about 100 chains, and the rest deep. There are five or six patches, but with the exception of those there would be no difficulty in maintaining the depth of water inside; but those will have to be dredged.

9. Knowing what sea you get at the bar, do you see any difficulty in dredging the bar with one of those suction dredges like the “Thomas King,” of New Plymouth?—I do not anticipate any difficulty. For a week at a stretch I have seen the bar as smooth as the river: that is on top tide. A low-draught dredge could work on the bar.

10. *The Chairman.*] Have you had any experience of any other bar harbours?—Yes, at Greymouth and Westport.

11. Is the sea here as heavy as at Greymouth and Westport?—At times. It is in a bight and is sheltered. The south-west and westerly winds are the worst. The southerly and easterly winds do not affect us.

12. *Mr. Weston.*] I think you have kept some returns of boats sticking?—Yes. [Return, 1913 to 1916, put in—Exhibit E.]

13. Where do they stick mostly—on the bar or the shoals?—The shoals in the river.

14. Have you deep water on both sides of the bar?—There are periodical times, but on the average it is deep water inside and out.

15. *The Chairman.*] Is the bar broad?—At times it is pretty broad, and at other times it is just narrow. It changes.

16. As to the weight of the sand, is it light or heavy sand?—It is the sand from the banks—not very heavy.

17. *Mr. Weston.*] If something is not done to the shoals what is going to be the result?—It means the port will have to be closed altogether. The shipowners will not send their vessels here on account of the risk.

18. Have the classes of vessels altered during the time you have been Harbourmaster?—No, just about the same.

19. I mean the size of the vessels—do they bring in the same cargoes?—Oh, no, not near.

20. *Mr. Myers.*] Is this return you have produced a return of all the strandings?—Yes; taken out of my diary.

21. And it is a complete list?—A complete list since 1913.

22. Have you got a list for the four previous years?—I have got my diaries. I could get that.

23. Will you make up a list from your diaries of all the strandings?—Yes, for the time I have been here.

24. Have you kept a record of the soundings from time to time?—Yes, I have it in my diary; but sometimes I do not put the soundings down. I will make out a copy of the records I have from my diaries.

25. Have you kept the soundings of the depth at the wharf?—Yes; I have sounded it right up to the wharf.

26. What has happened at the wharf—has the condition improved or otherwise?—Sometimes you may get 18 in. more water after a fresh.

27. Speaking generally, has there been any material difference in the depth of water at the wharf since you have been in Foxton?—Not a great deal.

28. I suppose really it is not appreciable?—No. The only difference has been at the bottom of the wharf where the Government has done a little dredging. That has improved there.

29. *Mr. Weston.*] When was the shingle-bank removed which had given trouble?—That is over twelve years ago.

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GEORGE HENRY STYLES sworn and examined. (No. 8.)

1. *Mr. Weston.*] You were Mayor of Foxton for many years, and have also been Acting-Chairman of the Foxton Harbour Board?—Yes.

2. You have also been in business here for many years as a drapery and general importer?—Yes.

3. What effect have the harbour difficulties had on the trade and growth of the Town of Foxton?—We consider that owing to the difficulties of the port we have been held back detrimentally for twenty years. Every ship that fails to come into port means a direct loss in wages. We are affected considerably here. We should be in a fortunate position, but the freight is differentiated to us to the extent of 3s.—that is, the sea freight. It is 12s. 6d. to us, but to Palmerston they charge 9s. 6d.

4. With regard to the condition of the river, is it going back or remaining as it was?—I know by statistics that it has gone back. Before the parliamentary Committee of 1910 the late