

outline a definite and detailed scheme of reclamation. We think, however, that, for two reasons, we should not attempt to do so. The first is that the comprehensive scheme that we have recommended for adoption cannot be formulated until it is known precisely what the policy of the Hawke's Bay Rivers Board is in relation to the Tutaekuri River. The second reason is that any scheme we suggest would have to be carried out by the Harbour Board in conjunction with, at least, the Rivers Board and the Napier Borough Council, and it would be as unwise as it would be difficult to attempt to coerce or restrain those self-governing bodies in relation to this work.

If the Harbour Board recognizes the reasonableness and fairness of the principles that we have outlined above, we would like to see it entrusted with the task of endeavouring to put those principles into operation, with the co-operation of the other Boards interested and affected. If the problem is approached with a desire to meet the present needs of the district along the lines suggested by the foregoing principles, such a scheme should be successful. If, on the other hand, the will to carry out such a scheme is not present, any scheme formulated by us at the present juncture for adoption and enforcement in the future would not be likely to succeed, and the position will then be met by Your Excellency's Advisers.

We were informed that the Rivers Board has appealed to the Minister of Public Works for the appointment of an independent engineer to advise it in the adoption of a scheme for the protection of the district from river troubles, and we understand that this appointment has been made. We were informed that the Borough Council and Harbour Board have, prior to our sitting, met in conference to discuss reclamation in relation to Napier's needs. We suggest that these conferences be reopened, and that co-operation with the Rivers Board in the light of their latest expert advice and this report be sought, and that an endeavour be made along these lines to submit to Your Excellency's advisers a comprehensive scheme.

In connection with our inquiry into harbour matters we had to deal with specific projects designed and to some extent carried out in the past, and in the very nature of things our recommendations had to take the form of approval or censure, direction, and restraint. We went to the district as three quite disinterested and, we trust, reasonable men, and we have dealt with the harbour problem in the light of the evidence we heard and according to the best of our ability and knowledge, and with a sincere desire to help the district in its difficulties. We believe that we have under that heading tendered advice which is in the best interests of the district.

In regard to the problem of reclamation, however, we are dealing with a scheme of another nature; it lies in the future, and can now be formulated and dealt with in a comprehensive way without the complications and distractions of the harbour dispute, if our advice on the former matter is followed.

We would therefore prefer to end this portion of our report on a note of appeal. We understand that, in accordance with Your Excellency's usual practice, the matter of this report will be made known to the people of the district affected by it, and we wish, Sir, through you and by this procedure, to make an appeal to the interested parties to unite in an endeavour to deal with this present matter in a comprehensive and reasonable way for the good of the district as a whole. May we close this portion of our report with the hope that the present recommendation, which comes from three wholly disinterested men desirous of serving the province, should be accepted as a basis on which the interested local bodies should work together.

We desire to recommend definitely that the authority to complete the reclamation of the 28-acre Block should be preserved, or granted, as the case may be, and that, if desired, the cost of so doing should be paid out of the unexpended loan-moneys which in Part 14 (a) of our report we suggested should be held in reserve for harbour-works. We are further of opinion that, in accordance with the desire of the Napier Borough Council, the next portion of the Board's endowments to be reclaimed should be that portion of the Richmond Block which lies across the Tutaekuri River from St. George's Road, Napier South. We recommend that a portion of that block, to the extent of, say, 50 acres at least, in accordance with the plans of the borough's Engineer, should be undertaken as soon as possible, and that the balance of the unexpended loan-moneys referred to in Part 14 (a) hereof should be authorized to be spent on this work. Thereafter, our recommendation is that the formulation and approval of a plan of reclamation in accordance with the principles we have enunciated above should be left to the Harbour Board, and to Your Excellency's executive and administrative officers, in accordance with the provisions of the Harbours Act.

We append a statement prepared from figures supplied by Messrs. Hay and Rochfort in Exhibit No. 44, and from the evidence of Mr. G. F. Clapcott, setting out the aggregate cost of reclamation along lines consistent with their respective schemes. This statement contemplates the reclamation of 500 acres of the Richmond Block, and 60 acres of the North and South Ponds, by pumping silt to raise the level of the lands, and the reclamation of the Awatoto Block and the rural portion of the Richmond Block by the dewatering method. These methods, may, of course, require to be modified in accordance with the decision arrived at by the Rivers Board, and if so the effect will be, of course, to tend to modify or vary the statement of cost. The figures representing the aggregate cost of reclamation purport to show the position arrived at at the end of, say, a ten-years programme, when the blocks there set out have been fully reclaimed and occupied. We accompany it by a statement of the expected aggregate rentals from those reclaimed lands at the end of that period.

The progressive system of reclamation and the gradual settlement of the lands will, of course, proceed concurrently. We submit, however, that in carrying out such a scheme there would be no point short of completion at which the position would be better than it is at the point represented by our figures—viz., the point when the blocks are wholly reclaimed and wholly revenue-producing.