

respectively for a period of fifteen months, *i.e.* from January 1, 1869, to March 31, 1870, the North District would appear to have contributed at the rate of less than 26 per cent., as against rather more than 74 per cent. collected South of the Teremakau.

If revenue alone were to be considered, and these figures are to be taken as correct, £3,500 would represent the share of interest chargeable to the North District. I have reason to believe, however, that the proportion of revenue drawn from the North District is now much larger than it was represented to be in the above return, and I am of opinion that the liability of the Northern District under this head may be fairly put down at one-third of the total interest charged against the County, or £4,486 annually.

*Liability on account of Repairs of Road between Westland and Christchurch.*

From the nature of the case, nothing more than an approximate estimate of the annual liability of the County on this account can be given, the estimates of those even, who, from their position, ought to be best acquainted with the circumstances, having been hitherto singularly falsified by the result. Taking as a basis the three half-yearly estimates, from July 1869 to December 1870, inclusive, laid before the County Council, I find the average sum set down for the maintenance of the road during each half-year to be £2,910. This would imply an annual expenditure of £5,820. Proceeding on my former assumption that the district north of the Teremakau is fairly chargeable with a third of this sum, £1,940 must be set apart yearly to cover this item.

The inhabitants of the northern portion of the County evidently derive but little advantage from this road, in return for the enormous yearly outlay to which they must contribute; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that, if the matter were submitted to arbitration, the remoteness of the district from the line of road would be taken into consideration, and would go far as an argument for mitigating the burden of taxation on this account.

*Number of Officials employed by the County of Westland north of the Teremakau, with their Salaries.*

It is not contended, even by those who are most favourable to annexation, that any considerable saving in salaries would be effected by the proposed change, but merely that the service on both sides of the Grey would become more efficient.

The Resident Magistrate's Court at Cobden might, for instance, be dispensed with, as the Court at Greymouth would be sufficient for the requirements of the lower part of the Valley of the Grey, on both sides of the river; while the present Magistrate and Warden on the Nelson side, much of whose time is wasted in travelling between Cobden and the Ahaura, would be able to devote his undivided attention to the upper part of the Valley.

The services of the police would also be available over a much larger area, the machinery of the department would be less cumbrous, and some slight economies might be effected by reducing the staff of officers, who are out of all proportion to the number of privates.

The total number of officials at present employed by the County in the district north of the Teremakau is seventeen; but the salaries of seven of these, including the Harbour and Customs Departments, are borne equally by Nelson and Westland. The yearly expenditure in salaries alone is £3,884 10s.

*Road to connect Greymouth with the Greenstone.*

As the Greenstone Diggings are now connected with Hokitika by an excellent metalled road, whereas they are at present unapproachable from Greymouth, the whole of the traffic and much of the revenue is naturally diverted to the former place. It would therefore become a matter of importance, in the event of annexation being carried out, to open up communication between the Greenstone and Greymouth, either by a metalled track or a tramway. With the view of obtaining some idea as to the probable cost of this work and the difficulties to be overcome, I have traversed the country between the Greenstone and Marsden, to which point a tramway from Greymouth has been completed, the distance to the latter place being ten miles; seven miles remain to be completed, through a rough, wooded country. It did not appear to me that there were any formidable obstacles to carrying a tramway through to Marsden. The cost is estimated, by men who have had experience in this kind of work, at from £800 to £900 per mile, including bridges over the Blackwater and New Rivers. This work would open up a considerable tract of country known to be auriferous. I am given to understand that a subsidy of £2,000 would be sufficient to induce capitalists to undertake the work at their own cost and risk.

*Greymouth Protective Works and Borough Revenue.*

I have been at some pains to ascertain what amount has been expended in protecting the river bank to the present date, what is likely to be the annual cost of maintaining the works, and what revenue is derived from wharf dues and from the Borough rate, raised mainly to defray the cost of repairing the river works. The total cost of these works, up to 30th June, 1870, is £7,295 14s. 1d. An unprofessional opinion on a subject of this kind is not worth much, but it appeared to me that the works are very substantially constructed, the piles being driven to a depth of 20 feet; and that from the conformation of the bank the upper end of the work is effectually secured by a natural breakwater of rock, which prevents the river from taking the defences in rear—the chief danger to be apprehended in river works. The annual cost of maintenance is reckoned at £1,000, which seems a reasonable estimate. The Borough rate of 1s. in the pound has yielded £1,229 16s. yearly, taking the average of the last three years. The tonnage dues and wharfage rates for the past year amount to £1,373 4s. 8d., and the revenue from other sources, such as licenses, &c., to £174 5s. 6d. It will thus be seen that there is a sufficient margin to cover a much larger yearly expenditure on repairs than is likely to be required, and that it is extremely improbable that the maintenance of these works would become a burden on Nelson. The valuation of the property in the Borough, taken on the rental, is £28,730.

Unless I have altogether failed to make myself understood in the foregoing statements, a brief recapitulation of the principal points to which I have directed my attention in this enquiry, and a summary of the conclusions that I have drawn, are all that is now required. I have endeavoured to show—

1st. That the revenue of the district north of the Teremakau is likely to be permanent, and has even increased largely of late.