

The Provincial Secretary of Auckland, in renewing his application for a grant of certain lands in Tauranga Harbour, states that the application was for "all the lands between high and low watermark," and no doubt it was imagined that 20 chains from high water represented such tidal lands merely. A glance at the chart, however, shows that this is very far from being the case; in fact, a strip 20 chains in width covers the whole of the deep water channel of the harbour from the entrance right up to the town; and I am convinced that the Provincial Government would not desire such a grant, and equally convinced that His Excellency the Governor should not be advised to make it.

Further, Tauranga is one of those harbours to which the maxim applies in all its force, that all reclamation must be injurious, unless compensated by works of improvement, and as it is one of the few good natural harbours on the East Coast, it is all the more necessary to watch over it with care. I assume, as of course, that the Provincial Government is equally alive to the necessity of improving the harbour, and that it would not sanction any works which would be liable to damage it; but so long as the General Government of the colony is supposed to represent the Crown, as owner of all lands covered by the sea, I do not think it would be wise to grant any lands in Tauranga Harbour, except in accordance with the advice and opinion of the Hon. Attorney-General, above quoted. (Paragraph 5.)

I may state that the only conditions on which I should be prepared to recommend even a modified grant of land in Tauranga would be,—

- (a.) That the Provincial Government should prepare a plan showing what was proposed to be done with the land applied for.
- (b.) That the grant should be conditional on the works being completed within a certain period, the land otherwise to revert to the Crown.
- (c.) That all proceeds of sales of any such land should be set apart solely for the maintenance and improvement of the harbour; and
- (d.) That the Provincial Government should bind themselves, and give security of some sort, to maintain a channel through the harbour, at least as deep as the present channel, to all time coming.

The only other alternative which I can see, but which I certainly do not recommend, is that the General Government should grant the whole harbour to the province, and thus throw the onus of maintaining it entirely on the Provincial Government.

I have, &c.,

JAMES M. BALFOUR,

Colonial Marine Engineer.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

No. 6.

MEMORANDUM by Mr. BLACKETT.

Wanganui River Foreshore Grant.

Mr. SEED,—

28th February, 1874.

I have read the papers connected with the above, including Mr. Balfour's general remarks on foreshore grants, as well as yours directing attention to them. They are so obvious of application to the present case, that I may briefly say I can add nothing to them.

I concur entirely with the remarks as to the manner of carrying out such works, that is, as a whole, and not by piecemeal, as the land may be required from time to time for local purposes. Also, that they should be begun at the upper end and carried on continuously down the river.

Having been lately called upon to report upon the River Wanganui for the Provincial Government, in reference to the improvement of its channel, I was under no necessity of making another special inspection, having just had prepared complete plan and soundings of the river, including the part in question. I am, therefore, in a position to report at once that I consider the amount of reclamation proposed to be too great, and that it will encroach prejudicially on the present limits of the water-way.

I attach two plans, No. 1 and No. 2, to illustrate the following description:—No. 1 to a large scale, showing actual dimensions, and No. 2 to a small scale, showing general course of river, &c.

I propose that a total width of $3\frac{1}{2}$ chains only (measuring from the face line of the houses on Taupo Quay) be reclaimed this width, being parallel from Churton's Creek to the south boundary of St. Hill Street, thence on a straight line to a point at corner near Market Reserve $1\frac{1}{2}$ chain from the same face line, thence straight to another point (apparently a wharf) 1 chain from the shore line, thence in a straight line to meet the fascine protective works already executed, as shown on plans.

The angles formed by the meeting of these straight lines may, of course, be rounded off in actual construction.

The second straight line above described will cut through the two cylinders forming the most westerly piers of the Wanganui Bridge.

The work, I would suggest, should not terminate in a square line at Churton's Creek, but be carried down the river to the first projecting point, and Churton's Creek should be made to debouch in a confined channel placed at an angle with the front wall.

Should this reclamation be carried out, I may offer suggestions as to how the reclaimed land should be laid off, and have sketched this to scale on both plans, leaving Taupo Quay one chain wide, then four building blocks $1\frac{1}{2}$ chains wide, and two of a tapered form, the least width being half a chain; and in front of these a public quay one chain wide, the importance of retaining which cannot be over-rated. A portion of the reclaimed land should be reserved for General Government purposes, such as custom house, warehouses, &c.

JOHN BLACKETT.