

mile and a half north of Timaru, amounting in some places, as shown by the evidence of Mr. H. J. Sealy to four or five chains since 1863.

That the abrasion of the coast near Whale's Creek and further north was especially noticed, and, long before the breakwater was commenced, had necessitated the removal of the telegraph-poles further inland more than once. This refers to the sites between the present viaducts. Further to the north this encroachment and action of the sea had brought down, and still continues to bring down, the cliff far inland of where Captain Woolcombe's early survey-pegs had been placed.

Evidence also shows that a continuous supply of shingle was not, and is not, invariably maintained on the beach; but that this frequently alternated with sand, not only here, but as far north as the Ashburton and Waikanui Creek, if not to the Rakaia. This proves conclusively that the shingle is in no way the protective power asserted by Mr. Blackett.

The evidence further shows unanimously that these railway works, viaducts, &c., were erected in a most unfit and dangerous situation; and, whilst admitting that some acceleration in the denudation had been caused by the breakwater, it is clearly shown that it would be a mere matter of time, either to protect this part of the railway by the construction of powerful works, or for the utter destruction of the same by the sea. But the evidence of Mr. John McGregor (engineer to the Oamaru marine works) and of the Board's engineer, Mr. John Goodall, borne out by the opinion of almost all practical men here, shows that the breakwater, when carried out, will in itself fully protect this part of the railway; and, as shown by further evidence, the dolorite formation from and beyond the Dashing Rocks to the northern part of the Waimaitaitai Lagoon will protect that part of the coast.

It is also shown that the originally-intended railway-line was laid off further inland, and that the said creek (Whale's Creek) was, in the times of the earlier settlers, an inlet of the sea, only crossable by drays at half-tide.

Evidence also shows that Mr. Lowe had in contemplation, and had plans drawn out for, the protection of the railway-line by a sea-wall, extending from the present railway goods-shed to George Street or beyond. This was considered necessary by the denudation of that part of the beach before the construction of the breakwater; but the construction of the same, by retaining the shingle, has obviated this (then necessary) work, and saved a very heavy outlay to the Government, surpassing what has been or may be required to the north.

The committee would also point out that the very heavy outlay for stone brought down from Lyttelton or Christchurch for the protection of these viaducts might have been materially reduced by using the local stone, which is of a far better quality, and may be obtained at a much cheaper rate. This is shown by the evidence of Messrs. H. J. Sealy and S. Kirby, taken by this committee, and by the report laid before the Chamber of Commerce.

The committee scarcely thinks that the assertion made by Mr. Blackett that this breakwater would affect the whole coast-line to Lake Ellesmere or beyond, requires an answer, and would merely refer to what has been stated before in reference to the occasional alternation of shingle and sand along the coast.

Mr. Blackett infers in his report that only plans for a solid breakwater were laid before the Commissioners. On referring to the report of the said Commissioners to the Government it will be found that they had Sir John Coode's plan before them, took evidence thereon, and, furthermore, that they in the report give their reasons, strong and cogent, for objecting to this plan, and advocating that of a solid structure; also in their second report, which Mr. Blackett ignores altogether, they recommend the continuance of the solid structure.

Mr. Blackett comments on members in the Commission appointed for the purpose of deciding on the plan to be adopted for harbour-construction. This appointment was made, entirely outside of the Harbour Board's knowledge or influence, by the Government, whose selection of members the Board has no reason to doubt was made from good grounds; and the conduct of the Commission when in Timaru, carefully examining all the plans and data connected with the subject, and deciding on the plan which has been carried out, and the success which has attended the work in all its stages, are ample refutation of the inference which Mr. Blackett wishes to be drawn as to the ability and judgment of the gentlemen referred to.

The committee would further point out that, from the knowledge of gentlemen now on the Harbour Board, and who were appointed as a deputation to Wellington before the passing of the Timaru Harbour Act, the clause inserted in the Act authorizing the appointment of Commissioners by the Governor for the approval or otherwise of plans for such works at Timaru, was inserted on account of Mr. Carruthers having prejudged and being antagonistic to all such works; and he, having expressed his opinion thereon, was not considered a fit person to act as referee when the whole question was to be reconsidered.

The committee have in evidence also that neither the shingle-banks across the Waimaitaitai or Washdyke Lagoons have perceptibly changed.

In reference to Sir John Coode's later report, Mr. Blackett, in his report, in the clause commencing, "Sir John Coode, taught by a life-long experience," &c., says, "But, on this fact being brought to the notice of Sir John Coode, the latter felt that the objection might be just, and thought that all the facts of the case should be referred to the consideration of a third party of engineering celebrity before any rash steps were taken." The committee have had these papers from Sir John Coode before them, and what he did say is, "The line of action I have to suggest for your consideration is—1st, to forward this letter with its enclosures, or a copy, to Mr. Carruthers for any comments which he may have to make thereon; 2nd, should Mr. Carruthers's opinion still remain adverse to the success of the works, then I would suggest that the opinion of another engineer—say Sir John Hawkshaw—should be solicited;" and the committee cannot but consider this as a reaffirmation by Sir John Coode of his previous views, and an appeal to Sir John Hawkshaw to bear him out.

Taking what has been stated into consideration, the committee begs respectfully to say that it considers Mr. Blackett's report most exaggerated, one-sided, and unreliable, in that the damage to the viaducts has not been caused to any extent by the breakwater, but is a natural consequence of the false position of that part of the railway, and of the general wearing-away of the coast; also, that the