

722. Are you well acquainted with the site of the proposed harbour works at New Plymouth?—I am pretty well acquainted with it, and the proposed plan.

723. You hold a certificate as master mariner?—Yes; a Board of Trade certificate.

724. How long have you been acquainted with the coast of New Zealand?—Since 1858. For the first three years, till 1861, I had command of a steamer principally trading on the coast; and since that I have been in the Government service, first as Admiralty Mail Agent, and then Warden of the several Marine Boards; and I have been in the Marine Department ever since. When this plan was approved of I was Secretary to the Department.

725. Do you think the works shown on the plan before you—M.D. 404—would in themselves suffice for the construction of a harbour of refuge at New Plymouth?—In the first place I do not think a harbour of refuge is wanted in this locality at all. If the whole of Sir John Coode's plan was not adopted, I do not think vessels would make use of it as a harbour of refuge, except in exceptional cases, and then only by small steamers.

726. If I understand you rightly, it would be necessary to construct the whole of the works indicated on Sir John Coode's original designs?—Yes; the present plan to *Y Y* will give very slight protection, and then only in fine weather. The wind that sets the heaviest sea into that bight is west-north-west, and that sea would prevent vessels lying alongside. There might be slight protection, but very little.

727. In your opinion, vessels of a certain class might find shelter behind that mole, but could not moor alongside in bad weather?—Yes; no warps could possibly hold the ship in bad weather; if a ship had a warp strong enough for heavy weather, it would tear out the ship's bits.

728. Then you regard the work, as a harbour of refuge, as one that is not required?—Yes.

729. Do you regard this as a work that would afford a harbour of refuge for vessels running on the coast?—Not this particular part of the design itself. It would be no great protection.

730. And, if completed in its entirety, what class of vessels would be likely to run for it?—Small steamers might occasionally use it as a harbour of refuge, but very seldom.

731. Would ocean-going sailing vessels be likely to run for a harbour of that character?—No, certainly not. An English ship would never make for that harbour, because Cape Egmont is only twenty-five miles off. A south-west wind draws into a north-west through the strait, and, if a vessel is bound through Cook Strait, of course she would go with a fair wind; and if she was bound for the westward, she would keep on the port tack, and clear the land altogether. A true north-west wind blows into the bight at New Plymouth, and sends in a heavy sea, and there would be no protection. A steamer that would take advantage of it would probably be a little steamer coming from the North, passing Taranaki, and meeting with a strong south-west wind. That is the only course she would be pursuing to take shelter there. In my opinion, the mole to *Y Y* without any further extension would afford but little shelter, even for small steamers, from a north-west wind, on account of the range of sea which would be running in.

732. Looking at the depth of water inside that breakwater, what class of vessels could safely make use of it in ordinary weather?—About the size of the "Hawea," a vessel drawing about 14 feet in fine weather; but in rough weather there would be too little water—too little margin under the bottom—for safety.

733. *Mr. Pitt.*] What is the nearest point to the shore, where a vessel the size of the "Hawea" could lie with safety, from *Y Y*?—In fine weather, within 1,250 feet of the starting-point of the breakwater, and, in heavier weather, about 1,500 feet; but it would depend somewhat upon how heavily she is laden.

734. Are you well acquainted with the nature of the bottom?—I have never anchored near the site of the works; but where I have anchored—off the town—the ground is rocky and covered with sand.

735. Is the bottom entirely covered with sand, or are there lumps of rock protruding?—There are rocky places off the landing-place, off New Plymouth.

736. What is the meaning of the letter "R" marked on the plan?—The gentleman who made this plan is here, if you wish to ask him about it. He is Engineer to the Wellington Harbour Board. The letter "R" stands for "rock" on marine charts.

737. Then, supposing this work is not continued beyond the site of the nearest pier to the shore, it would be practically useless?—Except in fine weather, for small steamers.

738. Could the "Hawea" be safely taken there?—At the top of high water, in fine weather; she could not lie there at low tide.

739. *The Chairman.*] Are you acquainted with the coast at Opunake?—I went there in the Hinemoa, and got what information I could from the local people, and I think I have a pretty good knowledge of it now.

740. Do you think a harbour could be more readily and cheaply constructed there than at New Plymouth?—I am not quite sure. The information I got is very indefinite, as to the direction and size of the reef, which partly overlaps the entrance. The principal boatman at Opunake told me the Hinemoa could get over the reef, and that the reef did not overlap the harbour entrance; but captains of ships say it does, and that there is very little water on it. I have since recommended the Government to make a survey of the place, and I understand they are going to do so. I am not in a position to say very much about it.

741. Do you know anyone in the Port of Wellington who has more precise information?—No; it would only be a matter of opinion at the best, as I believe no one has ever sounded the reef with any degree of accuracy.

Mr. J. BLACKETT, Marine Engineer for the Colony, examined.

742. *The Chairman.*] What is your Christian name, Mr. Blackett?—John.

743. What position do you hold?—I am Marine Engineer for the colony.

744. You are well acquainted with the site of the proposed harbour works at Taranaki?—Yes.

745. You reported as to the feasibility of constructing a harbour on that spot in 1875?—Yes, along with Mr. Carruthers.