

[Extract from *Evening Post*, 22nd February, 1882.]

THE Harbour Board met at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon to take further evidence on the question of the Te Aro reclamation. Present—Messrs. Levin (Chairman), Jackson, Fisher, Nathan, Lancaster, Krull, and Captain Rose. Messrs. C. C. Graham (Town Clerk), Baird (City Engineer), Jones (Harbour Engineer), and Captain Holliday (Harbourmaster), were also present.

The Chairman stated that Captains Campbell, Phillips, and Bowton had been asked to give evidence, and were in waiting for that purpose.

Captain PHILLIPS, of the "Euterpe," was first called, and said he could only speak with reference to vessels from Home. He had seen the plans, and it was his opinion that, by carrying the reclamation out as far as proposed, vessels would be put to very great inconvenience in berthing during strong north-west winds, because they had to anchor on the south side of the wharf, and the vessels tailed round. By having the land so far out, there was a chance of damaging vessels at anchor in the vicinity. The breastwork would not affect a vessel like his, because, if she dragged, she would go ashore before reaching the breastwork; but damage might be done to vessels lying about.

Mr. FISHER asked if the witness considered it a part of the navigation of a ship to warp up to the wharf, as he understood navigation to mean by means of sails.

Captain PHILLIPS considered warping up a part of the navigation of his ship, and pointed out that there were other means of navigating a vessel than by sail, *e.g.*, by steam.

In answer to Mr. Levin, Captain PHILLIPS asserted that the reclamation up to the point proposed would interfere with the easy moving about of ships, as there would be a lot of small vessels in the way; but if small vessels were not in the way the difficulty would be obviated, as ships could not reach the breastwork.

Captain HOLLIDAY said he had several times seen vessels drift ashore.

Captain CAMPBELL, of the "Kiwi," said he had had twenty-five years' experience of the harbour, and was of opinion the proposed reclamation would go into too deep water, and would leave no room for small vessels to anchor in the only safe place they at present had. It would also affect the harbour for small steamers coming alongside the wharf—steamers the size of the "Kiwi" and "Grafton." He did not think it would be safe to be alongside the breastwork. The reclamation would do no harm if it went out into 5 feet or 6 feet at high water.

Captain BOWTON, of the "Aurora," stated that he had been trading in and out of Wellington for thirty years. The proposed line of reclamation would leave large ships very little room to move, and vessels could only lie at the breastwork with anchors out, so as to be ready to haul out in case of a north-west gale. This would prevent other small craft sailing up alongside the breastwork, especially at night, as the anchors would be in the way. The reclamation, too, would prevent vessels sailing up to the lower Ts at night, as they were now able to do. He would not attempt to do so, and if, while lying off, his anchor did not hold, he would drive against the breastwork. It was his deliberate opinion that the line of breastwork came out too far for the well-being of the harbour. It would be better to take the reclamation further in and dredge. The sea which now ran down the head of the bay would, with northerly winds, break over the proposed breastwork.

Mr. FISHER.—Supposing all small vessels, hulks, and marine relics were cleared out of the way, would there be sufficient water with the reclamation to work up to the lower T?

Captain BOWTON.—Yes; in a moderate way.

To Mr. Nathan.] The principal danger is in case of vessels dragging, and it is therefore desirable to have as much room as possible.

In answer to Mr. Levin, Captain BOWTON said he did not think it would be possible to keep the space south of the wharf clear. Hulks were required to lie there, and if they had to be shifted they would interfere with the navigation. There was no other part of the harbour that could be used for small vessels.

Mr. FISHER.—That is a question for owners of hulks and yachts to consider.

After some further questions, which elicited nothing fresh, the Board resolved to go into committee.

Mr. FISHER proposed that strangers and the Press should not be excluded, and this was agreed to.

Mr. FISHER moved, "That, while the Board has the fullest confidence in the report of the Marine Engineer, it is of opinion that the proposed Te Aro reclamation will not encroach upon the waters of the harbour in such a manner as to injure the navigation of the harbour. The Board therefore recommends that no objection be offered to the reclamation, as proposed by the Corporation, being at once proceed with." He again pointed out that there was nothing in Mr. Blackett's report or the evidence to show that the harbour would be injured, and Captain Bowton, he said, had distinctly asserted that if the water was kept clear there would be room for navigation. Captain Holliday seemed to have a special affection for a boat harbour, but the question was whether Wellington should throw away a chance of obtaining an estate worth £100,000 for the sake of providing a boat harbour for the accommodation of small boats, yachts, and dilapidated hulks. The work of reclamation had been stopped, and he wanted to find out who was responsible for that stoppage. If the Board passed the resolution he had proposed, it would show that the stoppage did not come from that direction; if not, of course it bears a different interpretation. The silt question had been disposed of, and the balance of the nautical evidence went to show that if the water was kept clear of small vessels there would be ample facilities for coming up to the wharf.

Mr. LANCASTER seconded the motion. He did not see from the evidence they had had before them that any damage would be done to the harbour by carrying out the reclamation according to the City Engineer's plans.

Captain ROSE said he should be but too glad to see the citizens get all the land possible, but the question was whether the evidence they had heard showed it to be advisable to reduce the area of the harbour. As a nautical man his own opinion was that it was not desirable to take so much from the small space of the harbour, as they were bound to provide accommodation for small vessels. With regard to bringing vessels to the wharf it had been shown that vessels coming to the wharf were frequently in danger of being dragged, and it was better that they should drag on to the beach than on to the hard breastwork. Then came the question of large steamers. They would in time probably be required to berth at the large T, and the reclamation would seriously contract the space for backing out. He did not feel inclined to propose any amendment, but as a nautical man he considered Mr. Blackett's line the best.

Mr. NATHAN was also of opinion, after the evidence which had been taken, that it would be unwise to adopt the line proposed by the Council. He was sorry to come to the conclusion that he could not support that proposal. He, however, failed to see how Mr. Blackett's line spoilt the area for cutting up. He could not help coming to the conclusion that there would be a great element of danger if the reclamation was carried to the point proposed by the Corporation.

Mr. JACKSON said he had come to the conclusion that the line, as drawn by Mr. Blackett, was too stringent altogether, and this was borne out by the Harbourmaster. There would be ample room for vessels, and if they broke away they would go ashore before reaching the wall. The next important point was the curve line, as it followed the contour of the bay, and he was of opinion that small craft could lie there without being in the way of vessels rounding up to the wharf, because steamers did not go near there. Perhaps it was not desirable to go quite so far out as the Corporation proposed, and he would suggest a modified line. He would move, "That the Board approves of the plans of the proposed Te Aro reclamation, with the following modification: The starting-point to commence at a point on the Queen's Wharf marked A, 86 feet landwards from the face of the inner T, in a depth of about 5 feet 3 inches at low water; that the line should continue as nearly as possible parallel with the arms of the wharf until it reaches the mark K, which it would pass in, say, 10 feet water; from thence it would follow the curve line as shown on plan as nearly as possible until it reaches letter U in a depth of water not exceeding 11 feet 6 inches." He did not see why yachts and small boats could not use the almost natural basin on the north side of the Queen's Wharf. [Mr Jackson's proposal takes off a graduated slice from the Corporation's proposed line of from 14 feet near the Queen's Wharf extending to 70 feet at the curve, giving at this point 100 feet more than Mr. Blackett's line allowed.]

Mr. KRULL did not think the reclamation would interfere with the water, although it was natural for seafaring men to try and get as much elbow-room as possible. If they had less room they would be more careful. He quite agreed with Mr. Baird's plan, but, if they could not get all, they ought to accept the modification suggested by Mr. Jackson. If they could get the Marine Department to accept that, he would like to see it done.