

1888.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# GISBORNE HARBOUR BILL COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF THE), TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND APPENDIX.

MR. H. S. FISH, CHAIRMAN.

*Brought up on 2nd August, 1888, and ordered to be printed.*

## ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

*Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.*

FRIDAY, THE 13TH DAY OF JULY, 1888.

*Ordered*, "That a Select Committee be appointed, to whom shall be referred the Gisborne Harbour Bill. The Committee to consist of Mr. Allen, Mr. Fish, Mr. Ross, Mr. Tanner, Mr. R. Thompson, Mr. Whyte, and the Mover. Three to be a quorum; to report within ten days. To have power to call for persons and papers."—(Hon. Mr. FISHER.)

FRIDAY, 20TH DAY OF JULY, 1888.

*Ordered*, "That an extension of time for ten days be granted to the Gisborne Harbour Bill Committee in which to bring up their report."—(MR. ALLEN.)

## REPORT.

THE Select Committee to whom was referred the Gisborne Harbour Bill, having taken evidence relating to the Gisborne Harbour works and to the position of the Board, have the honour to report as follows:—

1. That the Committee are of opinion that the works already carried out are practically useless.
2. That the evidence taken goes to show that if the breakwater be carried out to a length of 1,160ft. the smaller steamers and vessels frequenting the Port of Gisborne could use the wharf in ordinary weather, which will be of some service to the district.
3. That to carry the breakwater out to 1,160ft. will cost about an additional £40,000.
4. That the present income only just meets the present expenditure of the Board.
5. That the expenditure of the said sum of £40,000 involves an increased charge on the district, to be met either by increased wharf charges and port dues, or an increase in the present rate, or both, amounting to about £2,000 per annum. Your Committee therefore recommend that, subject to the following conditions, the work be allowed to proceed:—
  - (1.) That previous to the proposed work being entered upon by the Gisborne Harbour Board a poll of the ratepayers, as hereinafter described, be taken, as to whether such works shall be proceeded with or not.
  - (2.) That the works shall not proceed unless a majority of the ratepayers actually on the roll, both as to number and value, shall poll in the affirmative.
  - (3.) That the words, "a poll of the ratepayers," mentioned in Condition 1, shall mean all those having rateable property in the Borough of Gisborne and within a radius of ten miles thereof.
  - (4.) That, inasmuch as the proposed work may be of little value to a large number of the ratepayers in Cook County, all those residing outside the aforementioned radius of ten miles shall not be liable for the payment of any greater rate than they at present pay—namely,  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound.
  - (5.) That the unexpended balance of the original loan, after deducting the said sum of £40,000 for the proposed work, shall be vested in an independent Board of Trustees, to be appointed by the Government; such Board to have power to invest the said money in freehold securities to an amount not exceeding one-half of the ascertained value of such securities.
  - (6.) That, as this matter is one of urgency to the inhabitants of Gisborne and the surrounding district, this Committee recommend that the Government introduce a Bill this session embodying and giving effect to the above recommendations.

H. S. FISH,  
Chairman.

2nd August, 1888.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 18TH JULY, 1888.

Mr. J. D. ORMOND, M.H.R., examined.

*Mr. Ormond* : I wish to give evidence chiefly because I have been requested to do so by the settlers who have petitioned the House against further expenditure upon the Gisborne Harbour works. The settlers—I refer to those living in the north part of Cook County—who have petitioned the House say in that petition that when the loan was raised for the harbour at Gisborne, and they were made parties to the rating district, it was with the intention, as set forth in the Bill, of making a harbour which would be of value to them as well as to the other parts of the district ; that the plan which was then approved, and, under the Bill, was to be carried out, has been entirely departed from ; and the works now going on, if carried to the extreme limit recommended by Mr. Higginson in his report, would be of no value at all to the petitioners. They would have no interest, direct or indirect, in such an expenditure, and they would be taxed heavily for a work in which they are not interested. These are the grounds they submit. If, as recommended by Mr. Higginson in his report, another £40,000 were spent upon this harbour, granting that all would go well, it would only admit of a small vessel of the size of the little steamer “Australia” going alongside. This same steamer, the “Australia,” calls at all ports north of Gisborne, which these settlers use. She calls at three different places—the centres of the district in which these settlers live. Therefore it will be manifest to the Committee that they can have no possible interest in this work. That puts, as shortly as I can, the case of the petitioners. I would wish to say that, although I have not signed the petition, on account of my being a member of the House, I am one of the people who have an interest in this district. I have a piece of property there. I believe the petition has been signed by every person who is in that rating district. I may say they did not raise any protest at the time the loan was raised for the reason already given, because the work which was projected was of a different character altogether. Had the original work been carried out, the wool-vessels, which would have been the only benefit gained by these settlers by the carrying-out of this work, would have been enabled to get alongside the wharf or under the shelter of the work. It is not pretended that the extension of the present work will enable wool-vessels to get alongside.

1. *Mr. Ross*.] Can you explain why the original plan was departed from?—I cannot. I only know that the work has been shifted from the place originally intended, as set forth in the preamble of the Bill. The preamble of the Bill of 1884 distinctly sets forth that the Gisborne Harbour Board “are desirous of constructing certain harbour works, to afford accommodation generally to shipping of a large tonnage, and to form a harbour of refuge for the East Coast.” If the Committee would allow me I would put briefly before them the monetary position of the Gisborne Harbour Board at the present time. The Board was authorised to raise a loan of £200,000 ; that loan was raised, and the money came into the hands of the Board. From that money immediately was deducted a sinking fund of £25,000. I do not know whether that was authorised or not ; at any rate, it was done.

*Mr. Graham* : Yes ; it was authorised.

*Mr. Ormond* : It was authorised afterwards, I believe, by the Act of last session. That Act also authorised an amount of £14,941, which was some debt or overdraft of the Board, for other purposes than those for which the loan was raised. I will support my statement by Mr. Higginson’s figures. On page 5 of his report, in section 2, he says, “The amount of the loan set apart for works being £175,000, as £25,000 was reserved on account of a sinking fund. The amount set apart for the work has also been reduced by the sum of £14,941 6s. 8d., which has been charged to loan, as provided in the Amendment Act, 1884, leaving available £160,058 13s. 4d.” Thus, after deducting the two sums mentioned, there is a balance available, as Mr. Higginson states, of £160,000. Then, on the same page, a little above, you will see what Mr. Higginson says as to the amount that will require to be expended before the works will be of service to shipping. “The steamship ‘Australia,’” he says, “which is a regular trader to the port, draws 11ft., consequently would require 15ft. alongside the pier. In order to obtain this the work must be extended another 1,000ft., where there is 13½ft. to sand and 17ft. to rock. It is possible that the tidal scour will increase the depth, so that at that distance 15ft. would be available. The Engineer estimates that the cost of the work up to this point will be £101,000.”

2. *Mr. Ross*.] The amount expended already is £60,000, I think?—Yes, £60,000. That would leave a balance unexpended, supposing these works were authorised, of £59,000. Then, Mr. Higginson, in the instructions given him, was directed to report as to the ability of the district to pay interest on the loan ; and if the Committee will turn to page 7 of his report, which is, I think, a fair one, they will see what he says on the subject. The estimated expenditure for this year he sets down at £13,678, and the estimated receipts—port charges and dues, and interest on balance of loan—at £8,465, leaving a deficiency of £5,000. This deficiency will be made up—at least, not quite—by the rate of 1d. in the borough, and ½d. in the county, which is being levied at the present time.

3. What is the maximum rate?—There is a division of opinion on that. Some people say, and many of the lawyers assert, that the present is the maximum rate. I am just coming to that question. Well, then, for the next year, ending the 31st December, 1889, Mr. Higginson estimates a deficiency at £7,663; and then, he says, to make up this, it will be necessary to increase the rates to 1½d. in the borough and ¾d. in the county, which would yield barely sufficient money to pay it. He then goes on to explain, "It seems to be generally supposed that the present Act does not give power to levy a higher rate than 1d. and ¾d.; but, after carefully studying it, I should understand otherwise. In clause 23 of the Gisborne Harbour Board Empowering Act of 1884 it states that the Board may 'make and levy a rate in the proportions in the different parts of the district hereinafter mentioned, not exceeding 1d. in the pound upon all rateable property in the harbour district.' Clause 25 provides also that 'the rate to be levied under this Act on the rateable property in the Borough of Gisborne shall be double the rate to be levied on the rateable property in the several ridings.'" Lawyers are at variance on this subject; a difference of opinion exists about it. Then, Mr. Higginson says, "According to information supplied to me by the secretary, as to the present rateable value, calculated at 1d. in the pound, the amount yielded would be: Total rateable value, including Crown and Native lands in borough and county, £2,119,367, at 1d. = £8,830 13s. 11d." So that you see, as I understand it, if the Act is given full effect to this rate will not raise the sum required to pay interest on the loan. The Committee will kindly keep this in recollection. I am quoting Mr. Higginson's figures; I have not made a calculation myself, but I assume Mr. Higginson's figures are correct. I would further refer the Committee to page 9 of Mr. Higginson's report, where he gives a statement of his estimate of receipts and expenditure in 1893. Allowing for an increase in trade, in anticipation that the land will be open for settlement, he makes out a deficiency of £8,445.

4. *Mr. Whyte.*] That is, if the whole of the money was spent?—That is, if the £101,000 was expended. He is, I understand, always going on that basis. In giving you these figures I have called attention to the leading points as regards the monetary position of the Board. Then, as to the ability of the district to pay interest on the loan, Mr. Higginson makes two or three statements on this point. The first one is on page 7 (last paragraph but one), where he says, "It is generally supposed that 'The Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, 1882 will be repealed; but I have taken no notice of this in the foregoing estimates. In the case under notice the repeal of that Act would relieve a large portion of Cook County from bearing its fair share of taxation, and which would, in consequence, bear all the more heavily upon the few settlers who have been for some years struggling to improve their holdings. I have made allowance for a small increase from port charges and wharfrage, but, unless Crown land is thrown open, and the restrictions removed from dealing in Native land, no extension of settlement can be looked for, nor any great improvement made in the present holdings, so that trade must stagnate.'" Then, on page 9, he refers to "The capabilities of the district to bear the burden of the present rate, or such a rate as it may be necessary to impose, &c." "Although the rate now levied of ¾d. in the county and 1d. in the borough has been shown to be insufficient for the purpose of enabling the Board to meet its engagements after this year, I find that there is a general feeling that the district cannot bear a higher one, as it would press too heavily on the many struggling settlers, who are already heavily taxed, and who, owing to the general depression existing, look with dismay on the prospect in store for them. Many hold the opinion that a mistake has been made in voting for the prosecution of a work which must entail so heavy a burden upon the present generation. The interest of the loan amounts to an annual tax of nearly £2 per head of the population." And on the next page he makes these remarks: "I am unable to report under this head further than that, in my opinion, the imposition of a heavier rate than that now levied—viz., 1d. and ¾d.—would create a bar to the progress of the settlement." Further down he also says, "The present harbour rate presses heavily upon many settlers along the seaboard who make no use of the Port of Gisborne, and probably never will, as they ship their wool direct into coasting-vessels at various points." That last paragraph refers to the settlers whose case I put before the Committee at the commencement of my statement. Now, I would like to say, the question, it appears to me, that arises out of all this, and which I desire to be considered on the part of those who have petitioned—Does getting the "Australia" to the wharf justify the expenditure that is required to accomplish it—that is, the expenditure of an additional £40,000? This is, of course, a matter which the Committee can form their judgments upon as well as any one like myself giving evidence. I believe there is a great difference of opinion in the district on the subject. I am not at all sure but that if it were referred to the people they would say they were in favour of stopping the work altogether, and leaving it as it is. I do not see myself that the £40,000 would bring any commensurate benefit equal to the interest on the sum which is to be spent. I am quite aware that this opinion entails the present absolute loss of the money that has been spent. I would point out that it would not be absolute loss, for, if the work is valuable, it is there and would not go away, and when the district came into the position of being able to bear the cost of such a work it might be carried out.

5. *Mr. Thompson.*] Would there not be the danger of its silting up?—Mr. Higginson says no.

*Mr. Tanner:* The same argument would apply even if it were completed.

6. *Mr. Allen.*] Were the whole of the settlers along the coast consulted as to this £200,000 loan; did they agree to it?—When authority was obtained to raise the loan there was a poll taken on it, and a majority of the settlers of the whole district voted in favour of it.

7. *Mr. Graham.*] Are you aware that a number of those who now object signed the original petition?—I cannot tell; I do not think they signed it.

*Mr. Graham:* To the best of my recollection two settlers voted against the loan.

*Mr. Thompson:* If the petitioners who now object originally voted for the loan they place themselves in an awkward position.

*Mr. Ormond* : I have pointed out that the plan has been altogether diverted from. The plan which is now being carried out is not the plan they voted for. I tried to show that the work now being carried out can be of no benefit to them whatever. The extension of the works is only sought for the purpose of allowing the small steamer "Australia" to go alongside [the wharf. This same steamer now calls at every port of the district which now protests against the loan. You can have no more absolute evidence that this district will not benefit by the work. The Act of 1884 describes the work to be constructed; I have already quoted it.

8. *Mr. Ross*.] Is the present work a diversion from the plans under which the loan was floated on the London market?—It is in a different place altogether.

*Mr. Ormond* : What I do ask the Committee to realise is this : These settlers have the same steamers which go to Gisborne, the "Suva" and the "Australia," trading to their centres at the present time. The steamers go to these places, land the goods at their doors, and take away any produce the settlers may have direct to Auckland, Napier, or Wellington.

9. *The Chairman*.] How do these steamers discharge and load their cargoes?—By means of lighters.

10. Is the work already finished any good at all?—Very little.

11. These steamers do not go behind the breakwater?—No. My opinion is, after the experience of Napier, that if carried to completion the work will be just as useless as it is now.

12. As to the other site?—It was in deep water and made provision for wool-vessels. It was higher up, further away from Gisborne, on the same side though as the present works.

13. You give the Committee to understand this, as a ratepayer and settler of the district : It will be better that the work should remain as it is, even if it involves the loss of the money already expended?—I believe so ; and I believe the people, if it were put to them, would say so themselves.

14. *Mr. Graham*.] You stated that the principal objection was that the original plan had been departed from. Are you aware that by Sir John Coode's plan the groundwork would have been on very nearly the identical spot as this?—No.

15. Within a trifle of it?—A very great trifle. Captains of steamers that trade there, such as the "Manapouri," have expressed the opinion that in the event of this work being carried out, if it ever got a depth of water which it was supposed it might have, they would not think it safe in anything like rough water to take advantage of it. Sir John Coode's plan, on the other hand, made provision for what is called a harbour of refuge for that part of the country.

16. *Mr. Whyte*.] Do you recollect the cost of Sir John Coode's plan?—£260,000, I believe.

17. What advantage do you consider it would have been, supposing Sir John Coode's plan had been started?—I maintain, however far it would have been carried out, it would have been of service for vessels of that class.

*Mr. Graham* : The district could not possibly have borne the expenditure.

*Mr. Ormond* : I can understand a district making a sacrifice for a work that would be useful to it, and I can understand a district protesting against being burdened for a work which would be absolutely valueless to it. For instance, at Napier, I myself, when I found that the work first carried out there did not effect the object desired, withdrew my support, and have been an advocate for the bigger work ever since. The next point I want the Committee to consider is, Will the rating for this work stop the settlement of the district? Now, I speak as a person who knows something of the settlement of land, and the motives which influence people in this transaction, and I say deliberately that if the expenditure goes on settlement will stop there. I do not care what the other inducements are, people will not go into that district when the incurring of such enormous obligations on their property threatens them. Mr. Higginson gives exactly the same opinion in his report. I ask the Committee to consider what would be the position, supposing they should decide to allow this expenditure up to £101,000 to go on. In such an event, I ask the Committee to consider the case of the settlers who will not be interested in the smallest degree in that work, whether they ought not to get some relief. I would point out that there would still remain in hand a balance unexpended of £59,000, which will not be wanted for the work, and which, if taken and properly invested, would go some way towards relieving these parts of the district. If it is decided to expend the £101,000 I think it a fair claim on the part of these settlers that the remaining £59,000 should be taken by the Government and invested in such a way as to reduce the rates falling on that part of the district—that is, the north part of Cook County. If the work is to be stopped where it is I would strongly advise that the whole of the money should be taken possession of by the Government, and invested in such a way as to secure the principal and reduce the rates which are now pressing so heavily on the settlers in the district. I would ask the Committee to look into the securities which have been taken for the £25,000 sinking fund. I have seen a list of these investments, and I am quite sure no loan company in the colony would have advanced such sums on such securities. I do not believe you would find a loan company which would do so. If the Committee look at them they will find I am correct in this statement.

18. *Mr. Ross*.] What revenue do you think the endowment of 40,000 acres would be likely to yield?—The best idea I can give you is this : Not long ago some small runs, of somewhat similar quality, were put up for lease in that district, and I believe only one of them was let. They were put up under the small-run regulations, at a valuation of 5s. per acre, and lessees had only to pay 5 per cent. on that, and they were not taken up. I see Mr. Higginson puts a rental value of £500 upon the Tauwhareparae Block. I do not think any such rental can be obtained for it ; certainly not if the district is to become liable for a loan such as this.

19. *Mr. Allen*.] You said a moment ago you would recommend the Government to take charge of the unexpended loan. Would that be with the view of carrying out the work at a future date?—No ; with the view of securing the public creditor and relieving the district.

20. Your idea, I take it, is this: If the work may be considered at a future time it should be done by fresh legislation altogether?—Yes. I would say that at the public meetings held with regard to the question, at Gisborne, there has been a great difference of opinion about this work. There has been a strong protest on the part of people in Gisborne, as well as those along the coast, against this work.

21. *The Chairman.*] With regard to the Government taking charge of this unexpended balance, would it not be better that the Government should refund the money and let the yearly interest accrue, not with the view of relieving the district, but of ultimately paying the loan off?—What I would ask for the petitioning district is that if any money be left over they would have a claim to have that money set aside to free them from liability.

22. It appears they took £25,000 out of the loan to form a sinking fund?—Yes. And the Act of last session condoned this; and also authorised the sum of £14,941 for an old debt besides.

[Mr. Graham was proceeding to explain that the old debt was to be repaid by annual sums from the general to the special account, when the Chairman suggested that Mr. Graham should make a separate statement.]

23. *Mr. Allen.*] How much of the part of Cook County petitioning is in the rating district? What proportion of the whole rating district?—I should not think it was very considerable as compared with the whole rating district. It is a very sparsely settled district. I do not suppose there are more than four hundred or five hundred people in it. You can easily obtain that from officers of the Board.

24. *The Chairman.*] Do you wish to have any witnesses examined?—I do not know whether the Committee would like to hear Sir George Whitmore or not. He is a property-holder in that district.

Mr. JOHN THOMSON, B.E., Engineer to Gisborne Harbour Board, examined.

*Mr. Thomson:* I am Engineer to the Gisborne Harbour Board. When I came to Gisborne, three years ago in July, I was told to make a survey of the bay and report upon the best site. It appears there was some dissatisfaction with Sir John Coode's plan. I made the survey, and prepared plans, and submitted them to the Board, and then I took them down to Wellington. I was here for several days, and went over them carefully with Mr. Blackett, the Government Engineer. I returned to Gisborne, and then I prepared a second set of plans—what is known as the Stony Point scheme—and sent them down to Wellington, so that the Government had both schemes before them at the same time. By-and-by we received notice that the Government had approved of what is called the river scheme—the work we are now carrying out. When I went to Gisborne I was told there was a great easterly drift of sand going from the west side to the easterly side of the bay along the Waikarae Beach. When I was told this I did not believe it. Sir John Coode's plan, in order to provide for this drift, provided for the construction of a large viaduct, and then he intended to build a concrete wall with two arms to it, at a cost of about £245,000, including the arms. We made sections all along, and took observations of the tidal currents, and everything of that kind, and never got the slightest indication of any current going in this direction. It was on this account that I pointed out there was no occasion for an open viaduct, and advised the construction of a solid structure. The drift of the sand was in the opposite direction to what Sir John Coode was told.

25. *Mr. Whyte.*] Is the drift very considerable?—No. Compared with similar places on the west coast of the North Island, such as Patea and Waitara, there is no drift of sand at all, comparatively speaking. I have been on that coast several years. I have seen it gather 14ft. high, and make 18in. in an hour.

26. *Mr. Ross.*] Can you explain why you abandoned the iron viaduct in favour of a solid structure? Does the change of position account for that?—Well, I took this because I wanted the river-current to scour along the pier and keep it clear of sand.

27. *Mr. Whyte.*] Is there any sign of the bar shifting further out?—No. When I went there in 1885 the bar was further out than it is now. [Witness indicated on the map the position of the bar at the mouth of the river, and indicated how it had shifted. He also produced the approved plans of the harbour work.]

28. *Mr. T. Thompson.*] If carried out to the extent proposed, will it be any good to shipping?—I do not think there is any doubt about that.

29. *Mr. Whyte.*] What depth of water would there be at the end of the extension?—13½ ft. at low water, spring-tides, on the sand, not the rock; the rock is 4ft. to 5ft. below that.

30. Have you any reasonable expectations of the sand clearing away?—I had some soundings made three months ago 500ft. ahead of the present works, and at only one point on the line was there the same depth of water that there was in 1885. It varied from 1ft. to 2ft. deeper, so that the sand is clearing out.

31. Is the work already done any good at all to the district?—No good whatever.

32. What do you expect to gain by the extension of the works?—To allow vessels to come alongside the wharf which have at present to be attended to by lighter. From 4s. 6d. to 6s. per ton is the rate at present charged for lighterage.

33. *The Chairman.*] What class of steamers could come alongside the pier?—In a report I made to the Board on the 12th October, 1886, I had a table indicating the approximate draughts of vessels. These draughts were—"Manapouri," 18ft. 6in.; "Wakatipu," 17ft.; "Hawea," 12ft. 6in.; "Penguin," 13ft.; "Australia," 11ft. This pier will take us out into a depth of 13ft. 6in. at low water, spring-tide; at neap-tide there will be from 12in. to 18in. more water.

34. What is the greatest depth of water a vessel could draw and remain at the pier in moderately rough weather?—About 9ft. 6in. in rough weather at dead low water.

35. *Mr. Tanner.*] How, then, do you make out the "Australia" could lie alongside in such weather as you indicate?—Here is my report, which gives the explanation. This vessel, the "Australia," could lie alongside the pier for 250 days in the year, because of the percentage of fine weather.

36. In moderately rough weather, then, the "Australia" could not lie at the end of the pier at low water?—That is so.

37. *Mr. Ross.*] That is, at the end of the extension?—Yes; my arguments are based on the extension.

38. Does the harbour shoal at all?—It does not shoal rapidly, because at the present time we have about 12ft. close at the end of the pier.

39. At the end of the extension you get a depth of 13½ft., and at the present end you have a depth of 12ft.: that will be variation of 15in. for the whole extension of 1,160ft.?—The depth of 12ft. is to the bottom. The river has scoured right out to the end of the present work.

40. Is the scour of the river likely to continue as you go further out?—Yes; but it will diminish slowly as you go out.

41. Is this depth of 12ft. at high water?—Yes.

42. At low water what depth have you?—At low water we have about 6ft. where we are now.

43. *The Chairman.*] Then there is a difference in 1,000ft. of 7ft. I think it would be necessary to tell us how far up that pier this 13½ft. would run?—One point may be remarked: the depth of 13½ft. was the sounding taken in 1885.

44. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] In rough weather, I understood you to say, a vessel could not lie at the end of the pier, but would have to be at least 200ft. in from the pier?—I did not say so. I would not say that, because I was allowing 4ft. more water than the vessel draws, on account of the send of the sea.

45. Supposing a steamer was caught in a south-easter, would not the captain clear out to Wise Head?—Yes.

46. Have you got any statistics about the south-easterly wind? How often does it blow in the year?—I have in Gisborne; not here. I reckoned in my report to the Board that for 250 days in the year a vessel drawing 13ft. 6in. could lie alongside the pier—that is, you know, at dead low water.

47. Is there any other wind which blows there?—There is only one particular wind that brings in any heavy sea at all. There is no continual roll, as in other harbours.

48. *The Chairman.*] In fine weather would a ship take any hurt if it lay in the sand?—No, not the slightest. There is another thing: at high water there is a depth of 18ft. 3in. at the end of the extension. The tide does not rise or fall very much within the two hours before and after the full. Instead of calling it 18ft. 3in., call it 16ft. A vessel, then, drawing 16ft. could lie alongside the pier for four hours.

49. *Mr. Allen.*] Who is responsible for the alternative plan?—I advised on the subject, and submitted the matter to Government.

50. The Government are not responsible for the alternative plan?—They approved of it.

51. As Harbour Engineer you advised that plan?—Yes. It was submitted to Government, and Government approved.

52. What is the main difference between the present and the original plans?—Sir John Coode was told there was a current of sand running along the beach in an easterly direction. We found no current of sand going that way. Another reason why the present point was chosen is that there is a reef of rocks to the eastward of the present line of pier. This reef of rocks acts as a breakwater to the present pier, and breaks heavy seas, so that vessels could lie alongside this pier in safety when they could not lie alongside an exposed pier like Napier.

53. *Mr. Whyte.*] Am I right in understanding that Sir John Coode's plan would be absolutely useless unless completed entirely?—It would be of some use without these two arms. Sir John Coode, I may say, had no opportunity of making a thorough inspection. He was only in the place an hour or so.

54. *Mr. Tanner.*] Mr. Ormond says that, had Sir John Coode's plan been carried out, vessels of sufficient tonnage would be able to lie alongside to be of use to the whole of the settlers. Do you think so?—Yes; there is about the same depth as at the outer end of authorised plan.

55. What is the extreme length of Sir John Coode's pier?—2,300ft.

56. You propose to go out 1,160ft.?—Yes.

57. *Mr. Ross.*] Your design is what is known as the Stony Point scheme?—Yes.

58. Did the reefs extend, under that plan, further out than in Sir John Coode's plan?—Sir John Coode's plan and the Stony Point plan include the reef of rocks.

59. Did the Stony Point reef of rocks extend further out than Sir John Coode's?—Yes. [Witness indicated the positions on the map.]

60. What induced you to draw the Stony Point plan?—Because the Stony Point work would be in deeper water than Sir John Coode's work.

61. *Mr. Whyte.*] Whereabouts will this work begin to be of use?—It will be of use when we get 6ft. at dead low water. By spending £300,000 in continuing the present line of work we would get 30ft. at low water, and would get 36ft. at high water: you would get a harbour of refuge for any vessel.

63. Is Sir John Coode's plan a complete plan?—You could not extend it any further on account of these wings. In the present work, if you want to get more than 20ft. or 21ft. all you have to do is to extend it. There is one important point I would like to mention: that vessels of large draught would be able to lie alongside the pier for four hours at high water; and I would also like to point out the increase of depth of water since the soundings of 1885, the increase varying from 1ft. to 2ft.

64. *The Chairman.*] The construction of the work so far, you mean to say, has had the effect of deepening the water?—Yes. [Witness produced a sketch-plan showing the varyings in depth.]

65. *Mr. Whyte.*] Have your estimates of the progressive cost been verified?—Yes: when I made up the accounts in April I was between £1,300 and £1,400 under my estimate—that is, to the good.

66. *Mr. Graham.*] What is your estimate of the selling-value of the plant?—The plant cost us £15,392, exclusive of the freight.

67. Supposing a market were found for it after having taken the breakwater out to the extent of 1,160ft.?—You should easily get £12,000 for it. I do not think it would be dear at the full value, for the purchasers would have the benefit of the freight-charges.

68. *Mr. Whyte.*] Is this plant of the most modern description?—Yes.

69. *Mr. Graham.*] What is your opinion with regard to public feeling in the district: is it to stop the work?—With the exception of about four, I have never heard any one suggesting the stopping of it.

70. *Mr. Ross.*] You said the Government had both plans before them—the present plan and the Stony Point plan—at the same time. That is not quite what Mr. Higginson says. The present plan, it would appear, was approved by the Governor in Council, and some time elapsed before the alternative plan was prepared?—Mr. Higginson got all his information from me. If the Committee will allow me I will read two paragraphs from my report to the Board in October, 1886, which explain the matter: “In October last plans and specifications and a report were submitted to the Government for approval, showing a solid breakwater beginning at the outer beacon and going seaward for 1,800ft., thence curving towards the west for 470ft. further. This pier was connected with the mainland by a light timber viaduct, and was parallel to the natural line of the river, so that the river would sweep along the inner side, removing any silt or sand in the way. A groin was also provided opposite Peel Street to intercept any sand coming from the west; the intention being that this would be ultimately extended into deep water, and to be used for shipping purposes. After these plans were sent down an alternate scheme was prepared. In this case the work began about 30 chains further along the Kaiti Beach, at Stony Point. It shows a concrete root 700ft. long at low-water mark, then runs 1,500ft. seaward in a straight line, from which it curves to the west for 550ft., making a total of 2,050ft., with 25ft. at low water, and if carried to 2,420ft. it intersects the line of the other scheme at 23½ft. at low water. Both these plans were before the Government, and they selected the former, making a slight alteration on the breakwater line at 800ft.” They were both before the Government before the present one was approved.

71. *Mr. Whyte.*] It has been said that this sandspit has been coming forward. Is that so?—There was a sandspit in 1885. Then, some time ago, this spit was washed away, and the bar came in inwards. We have had a lot of heavy weather, and this heavy weather has sent the sand further out than it was six months ago; but the sandspit is nothing like what it was when I went there first.

72. Sand will always make up in heavy gales?—In 12ft. of water it is a recognised fact that waves do not act upon the bottom.

73. As a matter of fact, has the work made the sandspit worse or better?—It has not affected it, practically speaking. It just comes and goes a little. The fact is, there is less sand than there was. [Witness indicated on the map where the sand had backed up.]

74. *Mr. Allen.*] Is there any chance of its going over this work?—No; I do not think there is the slightest prospect of its rising and going over the works.

75. *Mr. Whyte.*] Is the quantity of sand considerable?—Comparatively speaking, it is not.

76. *Mr. Graham.*] With respect to the lighterage of the larger steamers which could not go inside, would not the lighterage be very much facilitated if this work was done?—Yes, if we were only to go out a few hundred feet beyond the present works.

77. The great risk now is crossing the bar. You can avoid that altogether?—Yes: about 350ft. more would take us into 6ft. at low water, and that would be a great convenience.

Mr. A. GRAHAM, M.H.R., examined.

*Mr. Graham:* Mr. Ormond says one great objection of the people on the coast to this work going on is because the original site—that is, the one in the Act of 1884—was not adhered to. The schedule to that Act states the object of the work is the construction of, at, or near, the site reported upon by Sir John Coode. It does not say particularly it is to be Sir John Coode's plan. The whole of the money authorised in this Act of 1884 was obtained when the loan was floated. The Board then set to work and got an Engineer. Sir John Coode's plan was made out from data supplied him; he only spent some two hours in the place. Soundings were taken by the Government at considerable expense, which were supplied to Sir John Coode; but when we got our own Engineer through he commenced to take soundings and make surveys again, it being considered necessary to have this done. I do not think Sir John Coode's plan was supplied with the idea of having it carried out as a work at all. I have no doubt that had Sir John Coode had further data and correct soundings given him, he would have altered his plans entirely. The Board's Engineer found very serious discrepancies in the soundings, and found it absolutely necessary to change the plans. Mr. Higginson refers in several places in his report to this. On page 3 he says, “Upon comparing the soundings taken for Sir John Coode with those more recently taken by the Harbour Engineer I find a considerable difference, denoting either that the sandy bottom is changing or that there had been carelessness in taking them originally.” As to how the site and plan were fixed upon, Mr. Higginson goes into that fully on page 2 of his report, where he says, “Upon the 12th May, 1885, a petition was presented to the Board, signed by two hundred residents, praying that the breakwater might be approached from the lower side of the Turanganui River. On the 13th October, 1885, the Engineer exhibited his sketch of the proposed harbour works to the Board, and was instructed to proceed to Wellington at an early date, for the purpose of obtaining the approval of the Marine Department to the plans. At a meeting of the Board, on the 22nd



December, 1885, the following resolution was passed: 'That the alternative plan laid before the Board (Stony Point) this evening be forwarded to the Marine Department, and that the Government be requested to give its sanction to either plan approved at the earliest possible date.' I may state that the alternative plan was the plan submitted to the Board by the Board's Engineer, which laid the work to the eastward of Sir John Coode's work, and which would have given all the advantages, and more than the advantages, of the latter, had it been possible to have carried it out.

78. *Mr. Whyte.*] Was not some theory of the drifting of the sand found to be incorrect?—Yes. In Sir John Coode's plan a large portion of his work was an open iron viaduct, and all that portion of the work shown as far as the wings. Sir John Coode's plan was to allow the drifting of the sand from the west towards the east. It was found there was not the slightest drift of sand in that direction; in fact, the sand was going in a different way altogether. Another point I would like to call attention to is this: Sir John Coode's plan for £196,000 only provided for the work without the wings. With the wings the estimated cost was about £260,000. Without the wings the work would have been practically useless, according to Sir John Coode's own admission in his report. I was going to show how this site was fixed. The site was fixed by the Government Engineer. Two plans were submitted to him—both schemes are shown in the sketch plan attached to Mr. Higginson's report. I would just call the attention of the Committee to that portion of Mr. Higginson's report dealing with the fixing of the site, which shows that the plan was fixed by the Government Engineer. Mr. Higginson says, "The foregoing extracts from the correspondence will show that the Board used every endeavour to have the most suitable site fixed upon." I would like to call attention particularly to this because the impression has got abroad that the Board fixed the site with the Board's Engineer. Referring to Mr. Higginson's report, on page 2, we find that, "Upon the 29th October, 1886, the Board wrote to the Minister, Marine Department, intimating that, as their Engineer had prepared plans differing somewhat from Sir John Coode's, they sent their Engineer with them to Wellington, where he was informed that it would be unnecessary to consult Sir John on the matter, provided that the Minister was satisfied. These plans were left in Wellington, and ultimately approved by the Governor in Council. As it was some time before this was done, the Engineer prepared an alternative plan of a breakwater, now known as the 'Stony Point plan.' The department did not consider that this possessed advantages over the first, which had been authorised in December; and the Board, being satisfied with the scheme, began work at once, and have expended—at that date—about £20,000 on railway, plant, wharf, viaduct, and block-yard. On the 14th September, upon the requisition of Mr. W. L. Rees and others, a public meeting was held to protest against the breakwater being built on the authorised site, and to advocate its construction at Stony Point. A committee was formed, with Mr. W. L. Rees as chairman, who waited on the Board and laid their views before them. The Board agreed to ask Messrs. Blackett, Goodall, and Napier Bell, with their own Engineer, Mr. John Thomson, to consult as to the best site for the breakwater; but, before doing so, decided to lay the matter before Mr. Blackett to see if he considered there were sufficient grounds for making the change, and instructed their Engineer to draw up a report stating the relative advantages of the two sites. This was laid before the Board at their meeting on the 12th October, while at the same meeting Mr. Rees's committee sent in a document formulating their views. Before submitting the latter to Government, the Board asked their Engineer to report to them on the 'objections and suggestions.' This was done in accordance with the following resolution of the Board: 'That the report of the committee of the public meeting, and objections, be referred to the Engineer to consider and report thereon; and that the Engineer's report, along with the copy of objections, be forwarded to the Governor with a request that if sufficient cause be shown the Governor will sanction the reconsideration by a consulting engineer of the several schemes of a breakwater.' I now enclose these three documents, with the object of asking if Mr. Blackett considers there are sufficient grounds for annulling the authorised plan in favour of Stony Point; and, if so, does he think it [necessary to call in Messrs. Goodall and Bell?] The reply received from the Marine Department in answer, dated 29th November, 1886, was as follows: 'I have the honour, by direction of the Minister having charge of this department, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, submitting to the Government the proposal which has been made to the Board that the Gisborne breakwater should be constructed at Stony Point instead of at the site approved by the Governor in Council; and, in reply, I am to state that the Government, after having carefully considered the matter, see no reason for agreeing to the proposed change of site.' The Government absolutely refused to sanction any change of site.

79. *Mr. Ross.*] The plan upon which the work was constructed was originally furnished to the department by your Engineer?—The present plan was submitted, and also an alternative plan for works further to the eastward, which would, if carried out, have been better as a harbour of refuge than the works as laid down in Sir John Coode's plan.

80. The present plan was submitted to the Marine Department and approved by the Governor in Council; then, afterwards, you submitted the alternative plan—the Stony Point plan? Mr. Higginson says that "upon the 29th October, 1886, the Board wrote to the Minister, Marine Department, intimating that, as their Engineer had prepared plans differing somewhat from Sir John Coode's, they sent their Engineer with them to Wellington." "These plans were left in Wellington, and ultimately approved by the Governor in Council. As it was some time before this was done, the Engineer prepared an alternative plan of a breakwater, now known as the 'Stony Point plan'?"—The Government had this alternative plan known as Stony Point before them before they agreed to the present plan.

81. We would not gather this from that report?—That is so; though, with reference to the fixing of the site, there was a report as to the relative merits of the two sites by the Engineer.

82. *The Chairman.*] Anything the Engineer can give, I think it would be better to leave to him. You can bring that out from him in evidence?—Mr. Ormond seems to think the only advantage to be derived from the spending of this £40,000 now asked for in the Bill would be to allow



the "Australia" to come in. I do not think he puts the advantages quite fairly in that way, nor do I think Mr. Higginson puts the increased accommodation quite fairly in one portion of his report. He presumes that the "Australia," which only draws 11ft., would require 15ft. of water alongside the pier. From what I can gather, even from Mr. Higginson's own report, vessels drawing considerably more than the "Australia" could, for an additional expenditure of £40,000, come in and lie alongside this breakwater—vessels even drawing 16ft. to 17ft.—by waiting for high water.

83. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] Is it not a rock bottom?—It is a sand bottom just now, and below the sand it is flat papa rock. The present depth is 6½ft. on the bar at high water and 2ft. at low water; so that there is a very great difference between 2ft. at low water and 15ft. at low water, as this extension would give us, provided the sand disappears, as all the Engineers have said it will.

*Mr. Ross :* For the expenditure of £101,000 it is 13½ft. on the sand and 17ft. on the rock.

*Mr. Graham :* The advantages would be very much more than allowing the "Australia" to come in now and again, as Mr. Ormond would presume. Practically, with that depth of 14ft. or 15ft. at low water, we could get all our cargo landed alongside the breakwater and save lighterage.

84. *Mr. Tanner.*] Supposing this work were carried out, would the Union Company's steamers trading to that coast be able to use that wharf?—Which ones?

85. The "Rotomahana," for instance?—No; they draw more water than that. It would enable some of them, but not the larger class—the "Australia," "Suva," "Hawea," and "Taupo," for instance. These are the class of vessels which do the bulk of the trade with Napier now. The principal part of the cargo is carried by these boats. I may say that it is confidently anticipated the sand will all disappear, and thus give a depth of 17ft. to the rock at low water. The advantage would be this: that all the cargo for the place could be landed direct on the wharf, and the exports similarly shipped direct, and a lighterage would thus be saved of from 5s. to 6s. per ton, which is the present rate. Stock we cannot ship at all just now, except at the prohibitive freights of 3s. per head for sheep and £2 10s. for cattle; and then you have to bear the risk of lighterage—shipping the stock firstly into the lighter and then from the lighter on board the vessel lying in an open roadstead. The trade in stock is one of the principal trades we look forward to, and, at present, with the high freights and risk of lighterage, the development of the trade is seriously crippled, and, in fact, absolutely prevented. The depth mentioned would allow stock steamers to come inside and load. Then, as to the frozen-meat trade, greater facilities would be afforded. At present the district is practically shut out from the trade in frozen meat, for which it is specially adapted, on account of the difficulties of lighterage. An extension of the work as proposed would overcome this, and give the same facilities for transshipping into the Home vessels as they now have in Napier, or even to have the meat sent to Napier for transshipment at a small cost.

86. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] I wonder you did not put this question to Mr. Ormond. He said that would be of no use at all?—Mr. Ormond was not very well up in a lot of his figures. This report of Mr. Higginson's, I may say, requires to be read very carefully over. Some extracts taken from it will no doubt appear very damaging, but I ask the Committee to read it over and consider the matter as a whole. There is another point, as to the sum of £14,961, Mr. Ormond referred to. One portion of that is an overdraft authorised by the Act of last session. That amount is to be repaid in annual instalments; it is a loan from the special account to the general account.

87. *Mr. Ross.*] How was that incurred?—There was an overdraft of the previous Board before the loan was floated. It was incurred in making wharfs and other such works, and some of it was for interest advanced, so as to save rating the district.

88. It was never legalised till last session then?—No. With respect to the Crown and Native lands, it was, as I understood, distinctly promised by the Government last session, that, in repealing the Crown and Native Lands Rating Bill, it would not affect bodies in receipt of these rates who had in any way pledged these rates. They would, as I understand, have to be paid in a case of this sort, as these rates form part of the security under the loan.

89. *The Chairman.*] You do not desire to convey to the Committee this impression: that the rates derivable by your district from the Crown and Native lands formed part and parcel of the security given for the money raised by loan in the London market?—In this way: that the security was the Board's power to rate over a certain area, including these lands.

90. It might have been stated in the prospectus as security for the payment of interest?—I cannot say; I do not think there was any special mention made of Crown and Native lands in the prospectus, but they were included in the Board's calculations of revenue, submitted with the prospectus.

Section 16 of the Act of 1884, referring to this security of debentures, was read.

*The Chairman :* I do not think we need discuss this further, because it is so ridiculous.

*Mr. Graham :* Except for this, Mr. Chairman, that the people of the district, when they voted for the loan, looked upon this as a source of revenue, and a source of revenue they had reasonable grounds for supposing would be always available.

91. *The Chairman.*] This only brings forward the question whether the House would be bound to provide an amount equal to the rates. As a matter of fact, have the rates under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act formed part of the revenue of the Board?—Yes, they have. I believe I am correct in stating so. I have always understood that it was so. Mr. Ormond stated, he believed, it was his opinion that if the matter were put to the district just now a majority of the ratepayers, even in the central part of the district, leaving those along the coast out of the question, would be in favour of stopping the works. I am perfectly certain Mr. Ormond is mistaken. I believe, in the whole district, three-fourths of the ratepayers would be in favour of going on with the work, because they believe it would be of importance to the place if carried out to completion. With reference to the discussions on the Board, and the newspaper reports of meetings, I may

mention that one paper is kept going for the purpose of running down the harbour. It publishes the most fallacious and absurd accounts of the Board's meetings, and the people generally take not the slightest notice of what this paper says. There are two other papers published in the place, and if the Committee would wish to see the reports I will produce them.

*The Chairman* : I do not suppose members of the Committee see any of these papers.

*Mr. Graham* : This paper has been circulated, I know, amongst members who are known to be opposed to the work.

92. *Mr. Ross*.] I see by Mr. Higginson's report that the Board had power to levy a harbour rate on Crown and Native lands; how about these petitions from Cook County?—I just got a glance at them when they came before the Petitions Committee. I did not read them through. I saw a number of Native signatures. To the best of my belief there is not a single Native that pays rates on the coast. I would like the petitions to be submitted to the secretary to the Board, and he will be able to state the number of ratepayers whose names appear on them. With respect to the statement made by Mr. Ormond that the "Australia" already trades to the ports along the coast where the petitioners reside, and that the work could be of no possible advantage to these people, I think he is in error there. If Gisborne were able to accommodate inside vessels of the size of the "Australia," or larger, these petitioners trading with Gisborne would save the cost of lighterage, and get their goods considerably cheaper than they do at present. As a matter of fact, the principal part of the settlement up there just now is by Napier people—Mr. Ormond, Sir George Whitmore, and Mr. Williams—and they deal, naturally, with Napier, getting their wool, &c., shipped there; they do not deal with Gisborne. Taking generally the settlement of the country into consideration, if the Gisborne port were made to accommodate vessels of the size mentioned it would eventually be a considerable saving to the people generally on the coast. It would enable them to get their freights at a considerable saving on the present rates. It does not make any difference to these three gentlemen just now, but I believe it would eventually benefit them.

93. *Mr. Tanner*.] Do you assume that these three gentlemen only signed the petition against it?—No.

94. These other residents to whom you refer, have they not signed the petition against it?—We will see when we get the petitions.

95. Have you seen the petition against it?—I saw it for a moment. I did not examine it very carefully. There is another point: If the Government step in now and stop the work which was authorised by them, which has been so far carried out, and which (I contend it has not been proved otherwise) would, if carried out to a certain depth, prove of very great benefit to the place, and be the means of increasing the revenue of the Board; it places the Board in a very awkward position indeed.

96. *The Chairman*.] You mean to say it would give to the people of Gisborne a claim upon the colony which now does not exist?—It would place the Board in a very peculiar position. The Government authorise certain works, the works are carried out in a very efficient and economical way—a fact which cannot be denied—and they are going on with an authorised loan to a point which the Government has already approved of, when the works are stopped by the vetoing of further expenditure.

97. Why do you require to come to the House at all?—Because last year, when the Amendment Act was brought in, two clauses were inserted, limiting the expenditure to £65,000, in order that a report might be made.

98. *Mr. Whyte*.] You say that the expenditure was limited to £65,000 in order that an impartial report might be obtained; if this impartial report is in favour of spending the extra £40,000, then the issue is before us?—Yes. There is no reasonableness in this matter as to the harbour of refuge. It is a preposterous idea that the Cook County is able to provide a harbour of refuge for the whole colony. What was wanted was a work for the requirements of the district's own trade, and that will be obtained if the expenditure of £101,000 be made. They will get all that they are practically entitled to, and what they ought, in my opinion, only to have asked for in the first instance. If it be any advantage to the district to have a harbour of refuge it can be made by extending the present work to 30ft. or 35ft. This would cost only £10,000 more than Mr. Higginson's scheme for a harbour of refuge.

99. *Mr. Allen*.] You say the district is not called upon to make a harbour of refuge?—I do not say whether they are or not. I think it is out of their power.

100. Was it not, in the preamble of the Act, stated that that was one of the objects of the loan? [*Mr. Allen read the preamble, as already given.*] That is the preamble to the Act, and on that they borrowed the money. They have departed altogether from that?—I say it was absurd to expect the district to do anything of the sort.

101. *Mr. Thompson*.] According to your argument it would come to this: The Gisborne people borrowed the money under false pretences?—I do not know, I am sure. My own individual opinion is that they could not have undertaken such a work; it was far too much for the district.

102. *Mr. Whyte*.] No sum under £300,000 or £400,000 would supply a harbour of refuge?—About that sum would be required.

103. Would any sea-captain go in here in rough weather? would he not go round the East Cape?—Certainly he would keep out to sea or go round the East Cape.

*The Chairman* : I do not think that question is before us.

104. *Mr. Whyte*.] As to these investments?—The secretary has got a full statement of these securities. I do not take the same view as Mr. Ormond in regard to them. I know the districts well in which these securities are, and I feel certain that there are lenders who would be willing to take over the Board's securities, and that within three months. I am perfectly confident of that. There is a hotel security which I do not think should have been taken. I think this class of

security should not have been taken; but, as a hotel security, it is a good one. The amount of the loan is, I think, £3,500. The land alone, exclusive of buildings and improvements, is worth about £3,000.

105. *Mr. Allen.*] Who appointed the Sinking Fund Commissioners?—The Board appointed them. Another point: If the Committee has the Bill before them they will observe the Bill seeks power to invest the funds not expended on works.

THURSDAY, 19TH JULY, 1888.

Mr. J. THOMSON further examined.

106. *The Chairman.*] Have you ascertained how far the depth of water at the end of the extension will be maintained along the pier?—The depth of water 370ft. back from end of the 1,160ft. extension would be 12ft.

107. *Mr. Whyte.*] Is that to the sand, or to the rock?—To the sand.

108. Is there any reasonable probability of that sand disappearing?—As far as we have gone with the work the sand has been scouring out all the way.

109. Will the scour continue all the way as you go out?—The scour will decrease slowly.

110. Is it probable that you will get a depth to the rock?—No. I think, however, we shall get 2ft. more than I have given in my report.

111. *The Chairman.*] In 370ft., then, there is a difference in depth of 1½ft.?—Yes.

112. What is the length of the "Australia"?—I do not know.

113. *Mr. Ross.*] How do you expect it will scour below 13ft. if no wash is exercised below 12ft.?—I do not think there is any prospect of its shoaling up.

114. *Mr. Whyte.*] I do not think you understand what Mr. Ross is driving at. How do you expect the scour to continue when the wave-power will not exercise an influence?—By the body of water from the river being confined by the breakwater.

115. *Mr. Ross.*] Is there a large volume of water in the river?—There is a large tidal body.

116. Is there any basin behind?—From the two rivers at the back. The Taruheru and Waimata unite, forming the Tauranganui.

117. *Mr. Whyte.*] On the question of the harbour of refuge: Can a harbour of refuge be constructed at this point as cheaply as at any other of the proposed points?—Yes. You would not get deep water so soon.

118. But for the same amount of money approximately?—You would get it sooner on this site than on the Stony Point site.

119. *Mr. Ross.*] Would you get it as soon as by Sir John Coode's plan?—By Sir John Coode's plan you do not get an increasing depth at all. It is a complete work in itself.

120. By his plan would it cost as much to construct a harbour of refuge as by your plans?—Sir John Coode's plan is estimated to cost £245,000. By an expenditure of £300,000 a depth would be attained on the present authorised site of 30ft. to the sand.

121. *Mr. Whyte.*] Can you construct a harbour of refuge on your present plans as cheaply as on Sir John Coode's plans?—Yes.

122. *Mr. Tanner.*] We were told by Mr. Ormond the loan was raised on the distinct contract for a particular work. Can you tell me what that work was? Is it that plan? Because the contention was raised that the plan was departed from?—I do not know what the loan was raised upon. I think the Act says, at or near the site. There is one point, that Sir John Coode's plan was never approved by Government—it was merely what you might call a suggestion.

*The Chairman:* The Engineer has already explained to us that Sir John Coode's suggestion was made on information given him at the time, which was subsequently found to be incorrect.

*Mr. Ross:* That only applies to the open work.

*The Chairman:* Just so.

*Witness:* I might say I have had a good deal of connection with seafaring matters.

123. *Mr. Ross.*] Were you employed as engineer in the Old Country?—Yes, at the Belfast Harbour works. I graduated at Queen's University as Bachelor in Civil Engineering. [Witness produced his certificate of degree at Queen's University; and also certificate of "Companion as Only Mate," and indenture of five years' apprenticeship at sea from 1863.]

Mr. WILLIAM SIEVWRIGHT examined.

*Mr. Sievwright:* I am Chairman of the Gisborne Harbour Board.

124. *The Chairman.*] We want to get information, Mr. Sievwright, as to how far the House will be justified in allowing the Board to expend a further sum of £40,000?—I should say the first reason would be that if this is not done the works at present constructed would be of no use—we should have to rate ourselves, perhaps, a little less to pay for what is of no benefit to us; whereas, if the works were extended to the distance proposed, they would be useful for shipping, though we might have to rate ourselves a little more, and we would be able to derive a revenue from the extended works.

125. What would be the amount of dues you would receive in consequence of the extension?—That is a little difficult to arrive at. Upon an estimate, if we exacted a moderate charge for tonnage, we should get £2,000 per annum from tonnage-rates and increased wharfage-dues.

126. *Mr. Whyte.*] Would there not be a very large trade created in stock if they could be put on board the steamers without lightering?—A very considerable trade; because at present it is an extremely difficult matter to ship stock. They get dreadfully bashed about on the boat, and often the tide does not allow of their getting off at the time; and they are taken backward and forward, and then perhaps have to be put out in the fields.

127. Is it not a fact that stock which would otherwise go to the Auckland or Napier markets has now to be sold to the people resident in the district at a very low price?—It is a fact that stock is practically unsaleable, because they cannot get them away.

128. *The Chairman.*] You estimated the annual revenue at £2,000. At what rate per ton would you levy dues so as to get that sum?—I would take it that the tonnage-dues would not exceed half the statutory rates as set forth in the Act of 1878. I think it is 6d.

129. You thought you could get this £2,000 by charging how much?—Something like 2d. per ton on the tonnage.

130. You think there would be so many dues chargeable as to raise £2,000 at 2d. per ton?—Well, I hardly think that would do it. It would have to be more than that.

131. *Mr. Graham.*] Do you not include in that estimate of £2,000 an increased charge in wharfage?—Yes; I include the revenue from increased wharfage.

132. *The Chairman.*] What is the charge per ton for goods that the traders and mercantile community of Gisborne have to pay now in consequence of vessels having to lie away from the pier?—They have got wharfage-dues of 2s. 6d. to pay; and they pay a lighterage of from 4s. 6d. to 6s. per ton.

133. To what extent will they save by carrying out this work?—They would save the whole of the lighterage-fees, because unless we increase our wharfage-dues there would be nothing else to charge them for.

134. Have the merchants to pay at present 6s. per ton outside the wharfage-dues of 2s. 6d.?—Yes.

135. Can you give the Committee any information as to the number of tons of goods landed per annum?—I confess I cannot do that. I fancy the only way to obtain that information would be through the Customhouse.

136. Supposing this extension is made, to what extent will it benefit the objectors to this work—those people living in the north part of Cook County?—Well, it seems to me it will benefit them in this way: that it will, I think, be a considerable means of inducing the settlement of the country, and every acre of land taken up there necessarily enhances the value of the more distant portions of it.

137. Do you not think that the imposition of the maximum rate will retard settlement?—I believe not. The settlers, I believe, are almost universally in favour of the work, and would be quite willing to pay; but they do not think, in the present circumstances of the county, they should be asked to pay more than  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. If the times had not been so very depressed, they would not have thought much about it. That is the way they put it.

138. What is your interpretation of the Act as to the maximum rate?—I have always held it to be 2d. for the town and 1d. for the country.

139. Have you taken any legal opinion on that question?—I believe a legal opinion has been taken.

140. *Mr. Allen.*] If the people knew that a rate of 1d. and 2d. were likely to be imposed, would they object to the work going on?—I believe the people would object to pay more than  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d.; but they say they are perfectly willing to allow the work to go on as far as the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. rate will allow.

141. Have you made any estimate as to the expenditure and receipts?—We have had the matter repeatedly before the Board.

*Mr. Allen:* I suppose the secretary will give us that.

142. *Mr. Tanner.*] Is the rate now being raised paid as interest on the whole of the loan?—The rate raised just now cannot pay interest on the whole of the loan, but we have considerable revenue from the money invested and otherwise.

143. *Mr. Allen.*] Supposing this £40,000 were expended, would you then expect your income to be such that you would not have to increase the rate?—Yes.

144. How?—Well, we have a valuable endowment to begin with, for which we get nothing at present, but which ought to yield considerable revenue.

145. How much do you expect to get from it?—For a moderate expenditure in opening up the block by roads, it should be worth £30,000. We ought at least to get 6d. per acre—that is, £1,100 a year—for it.

146. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] I understand that no one would take up similar blocks of land in the district when offered?—The blocks recently let under the small grazing-run system were all taken up; but they are very rough blocks, and not at all to be compared with the endowment block we have got. We had two of the best men in the place sent out to examine this block, and they brought up a report which surprised most of us.

147. How have you not let it?—Because there is no road to connect with it.

148. How are you going to get a road?—We hope this Parliament is going to be liberal enough to give us a road.

149. *The Chairman.*] You expect to get £2,000 extra revenue from the extension. I see by your general account you received £2,000 only from wharfage-dues. If you only received £2,000 for wharfage-dues, how do you expect £2,000 extra from the tonnage-dues for vessels lying at the wharf?—I do not quite understand that. I am going, I may say, upon such information as merchants—experts in the matter—have stated. You can see quite well that if the merchants are to save a lighterage of 6s. per ton they can very well afford to pay a much higher wharfage-rate.

150. *Mr. Ross.*] You are charging the maximum rate now?—I do not think so.

*Mr. Ross:* Oh, yes! you are. You cannot charge more than 2s. 6d.

152. *The Chairman.*] You forget this: The merchants may gain to the extent you have mentioned; but when it becomes a question of raising a rate over the whole district it is not the merchants

who will have to pay. The mere fact of merchants telling you such things is not evidence, as they are interested parties in saving so much per ton upon their goods?—The merchants say they would readily pay higher wharfage-rates if they were saved lighterage.

153. *Mr. Allen.*] Mr. Higginson estimates that in five years' time you will have a deficiency of £8,445?—What we propose to do is to ask Parliament to allow us to spend £40,000, so as to bring this work to a useful distance. All we have got to provide is the interest on the £40,000, which will be about £2,000. To raise the money we ask to be allowed to invest the unexpended balance of £60,000. The rate we levy now can pay interest on £100,000. The loan is £200,000. We have deposited in the bank £105,000, and we have £25,000 as a guarantee reserve sinking fund. We have spent £59,000 upon works, and the balance is necessarily what we would have to spend.

154. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] What interest do you get on this £105,000?—On one deposit of £85,000 we are getting  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. from the Union Bank.

155. What interest do you pay on the loan?—Five per cent. The guarantee sinking fund is invested differently by sinking-fund commissioners, and is realising something like  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

156. *Mr. Tanner.*] You have said that if £40,000 more were expended it would mean a trifling addition to the rates?—It might; I do not say it would. Supposing the trade of the district does not increase much, and settlement does not progress, it might involve a trifling addition.

157. What do you call a trifling addition?—If we stop now we would have a fraction less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d., and if we go on we might have a fraction more than that. The question is, is the district prepared to pay a fraction more than  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. to get some accommodation, or pay a fraction less than that to get no accommodation?

158. *The Chairman.*] The Act, according to my reading, will not allow you to levy more than  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d.?—I cannot say that.

159. *Mr. Tanner.*] If this pier were extended as far as £40,000 would carry it, you would be able, you say, to ship a large quantity of stock?—I have no doubt we would.

160. What size of vessels can you ship stock in?—I think the depth of water would allow of vessels this the "Omapere," the "Ohau," the "Australia," and "Suva" going alongside the pier.

161. Are they large enough to carry stock?—Yes.

162. How many feet do they draw?—I cannot say exactly. The "Ohau" and "Omapere" draw very little water: they are larger vessels than the "Australia" or "Suva," but they are of light draught.

163. It is only contended that vessels of the size of the "Australia" would be able to lie alongside the wharf if it were extended?—Generally speaking, vessels of the size of the Union Company's smaller steamers.

164. Would vessels of the size of the "Australia" be equal to the requirements of the stock trade?—Yes.

165. *The Chairman.*] Do you know the gross amount actually paid for lighterage?—I cannot say. Our Secretary will give you that information.

165A. The "Australia" is about the only boat you have trading to Gisborne?—We have also the "Suva," the "Omapere," and the "Ohau."

166. Could these boats lie at the pier if this extension were made?—I think so, in ordinary weather.

167. Have you seen these petitions presented against the passing of the Bill?—I have not seen them. I have heard of them, though.

168. Are you able to say, looking at this petition [produced], whether the signatures are those of persons who are ratepayers?—[Petition examined by witness.] I should say that all here are ratepayers except the Natives. I do not think the Natives are ratepayers.

169. Why do you think the Natives are not ratepayers?—I signed the rate-roll as Chairman of the Board, and I have no recollection of seeing Native names on it.

170. Here is another petition. [Produced.] Will you examine that?—I see a number of Native names here. I can hardly say whether the names are those of ratepayers or not. Our Secretary will be able to tell you, no doubt. I should like to say this: There has been considerable trouble about this harbour question, but I think the opposition that has been made to it has been of an insignificant character, and I do not think the community have taken any part in it at all.

171. Is it not a fact that some of the members of your Board are strongly opposed to the further prosecution of this work?—They are now; they were not at one time. I have stated in the Board plainly that that divergence of opinion arose from one point. We were always unanimous as to the plans and carrying-out of the works up to a certain stage, when the Board resolved to construct the work by labour under the superintendence of the Engineer. From that time the members who wished to have the work done by contract went into opposition, and have persistently obstructed since.

172. *Mr. T. Thompson.*] Then your Board is divided amongst themselves?—Unfortunately so.

173. *The Chairman.*] Did not one of the members of your Board say at a public meeting recently, "We must tell the Government plainly, if we do not get some assistance we must stop at the end of the year"? Then another gentleman, Mr. Matthewson, said, "That is not what the ratepayers voted for. The present scheme is proved to be only an abortion, and the sooner it is stopped the less we shall have to pay for a useless thing"?—I can only say that Mr. Matthewson and Mr. Dixon are the two men who proposed and seconded that the present plan should be given effect to.

174. Then, again, Mr. Chambers says, "It is plain that all the money upon which we could pay rates would be exhausted by the end of the year. If we went on we might spoil the river. I am not in favour of shutting down the works altogether, but, still, we shall have to stop if there is no assistance given."

*Mr. Sievwright:* May I ask what you are reading from?

*The Chairman:* I am reading from a report of a public meeting held some time in May, as published in the *Poverty Bay Independent*.

*Mr. Sievwright:* Miserable rag!

175. *The Chairman.*] Did these gentlemen make these statements?—I simply say the paper lies all round as to harbour matters.

176. You are reported to have said, “The only thing was that if the Board was stuck up for money before getting into 14ft. they must urge the Government to assist them”?—I do not think I ever made such a statement. I always emphatically said from the first, however, that we ought to go to the Government for assistance.

177. *Mr. Tanner.*] What did you mean by that?—I meant this: that, considering how little public money had been spent in the district, I thought the district had a very fair claim for special consideration from Parliament.

178. *The Chairman.*] In another portion of this report Mr. Matthewson is reported to have addressed you thus: “Do you contend that, after all our trouble, expense, and struggling, we must be content with 14ft. of water? Even if we get that it will never be safe, except in calm weather”?—Do not give any weight to what appears in that paper. I say deliberately that that paper misrepresents what is said. I say it systematically misrepresents what takes place.

179. Has it been contradicted?—Well, it is looked upon as not worth contradiction.

180. A member of the Board further states, “It is agreed on all sides that we are not able to bear the heavy rate, much less a heavier one; and the only thing is to hang the work up at once”?—I think the Secretary will show you from the statement I asked him to prepare that that is not the true position.

181. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] Supposing the works were stopped at the present point, would a small steamer be able to go alongside, and load and discharge cargo?—Certainly not. The works just now are nearly alongside the bar, and are right into broken water. We have got to cross the broken water; and unless we do that and get into deeper water, the works will be absolutely of no use.

182. *Mr. Tanner.*] Is it not a fact that no vessel could lie alongside the pier and discharge and take in cargo only in perfectly calm weather?—I do not think so; but any person acquainted with nautical matters can perfectly see that if this breakwater was put out there must be a wash of the sea round the point, and so cause a rising and falling of the steamer moored to the pier. If the swell was heavy she would, of course, have to loosen moorings and clear off altogether. The only wind which causes a heavy swell is the south-east wind. Only an enclosed harbour could avoid that.

*Mr. Ross:* The Engineer has said he considered there would be 250 days in the year on which vessels could discharge and take in cargo alongside the pier.

Mr. HARRY PASLEY HIGGINSON, M.Inst.C.E., examined.

*Mr. Higginson:* I am a civil engineer resident in Wellington. I made a report, at the request of the Government, on the Gisborne Harbour works.

183. *The Chairman.*] The Committee would like to hear from you, Mr. Higginson, a kind of epitomised statement with regard to the present position of the works, and your opinion as to the propriety of the House authorising a further expenditure of £40,000 to carry out the work to the 1,160ft. line?—When I made my report I made no recommendation whatever; I simply reported the facts as I found them. My opinion is that it would certainly be a great pity to stop the works at present, because no advantage whatever is gained from the money that has been spent. If the work is not continued, the £60,000 or £70,000 already spent will have been simply thrown into the sea, because the work has only arrived at such a point that it is of no advantage for improving the bar, and of no use for shipping.

184. *Mr. Tanner.*] Do you think an adequate advantage would be gained by expending the £40,000?—Yes; they will have 13ft. or 14ft. at the end on the sand, and that depth may be increased by the scour along the wall.

185. *The Chairman.*] Do you think the scour will have any effect at the extreme end of the wall?—No, I do not think it will.

186. The effects of the tidal current will decrease as you get further out?—Yes.

187. You think it may be felt as far as 1,160ft.?—I think it will.

188. *Mr. Tanner.*] What would be the rise and fall of the wave alongside the breakwater?—All the ship authorities agree that there should be from 3ft. to 4ft. under a vessel's keel.

189. Does the rise and fall of the tide regulate the wave-motion?—No; that simply depends on the size of the rollers. In deep water it is likely to be more than in shallow: 4ft. or 5ft. is a very large swell, and is equal to 8ft. or 10ft. measured from trough to crest of wave. It takes a very heavy sea to cause that. I think that 5ft. would be the limit there.

190. If anything like 5ft. it would not be safe for a vessel drawing more than 9ft. of water to be there?—No. The vessel's berth would be under the lee of the work, I may say, and the rise and fall of the wave would not be so much as it would be outside.

191. *Mr. Ross.*] The waves and south-east wind strike the breakwater diagonally?—Yes.

192. *Mr. Tanner.*] The wave would go round the corner at the end of the pier?—Yes, to a certain extent.

193. The seas there are not so heavy as in Hawke's Bay?—I should not think so.

194. *Mr. Whyte.*] Do you think there is any reasonable probability of the sand shoaling up along the line of wall?—I do not think so. My opinion is there is very little sand deposited there.

195. *Mr. Tanner.*] Did you ascertain in what direction the sand was drifting?—I am under the impression the sand travels westwards along the beach.

196. I should say very little sand travelled towards the east side of the breakwater?—This beach all the way along to the island is papa rock, and there is very little sand there.

Mr. Allen produced plan showing varyings in soundings since 1885, and Mr. Higginson was questioned as to a “hump” which had arisen off the end of the pier. He gave it as his opinion that

this "hump" was the result of the waves striking on the bar. Mr. Thomson was recalled to fix the position of this "hump," which, he stated, was about 450ft. from the commencement of the works.

In answer to Mr. Allen, Mr. Higginson said the deepening at the point indicated by Mr. Allen on the map had nothing to do with the work. The bottom there was always altering in depth in consequence of fine or rough weather. It was too far off to be affected by the work.

197. *Mr. Ross.*] Apart from the financial view, do you think it desirable to continue the works from an engineering point of view?—It was from an engineering point of view I spoke previously. My opinion is, the works are of no use whatever at present. They are not even of any use in improving the bar. If extended a certain distance they will probably improve the bar, and enable them to work vessels by lighters or at the end of the wharf. My impression is that these works will improve the bar so that a vessel may enter even in rough weather.

198. *Mr. Allen.*] In your estimates of receipts and expenditure on page 7 of your report you say an increased rate will be necessary?—Yes; unless trade increases sufficiently to give enough revenue.

The Chairman here brought up the question as to the maximum rate which the Board could levy, and suggested the Committee should obtain the opinion of the Solicitor-General on the question. The suggestion was agreed to.

199. *Mr. Allen.*] Can you give any evidence as to the feeling of the people with regard to the increased rate?—They certainly think the present rate is more than they bargained for. There are people over a large area of the county who never use the harbour at all, and are very bitter against the work.

200. *The Chairman.*] To what extent, as far as your knowledge extends, will these works benefit the people in the north part of Cook County?—Well, considering the state of the roads, and the fact that there are no railways, the benefits will not extend very far.

201. It has been stated by Mr. Ormond that the vessels which could lie alongside the wharf are just now trading to the parts of district in the north of Cook County: is that so?—Yes.

202. So far as these people up there are concerned, then, this work would be of no further benefit to them?—Not to the people in the outer districts.

203. The only benefit they might get would be if ships of considerable tonnage would load wool there?—Yes: if they sent their wool down they could ship it direct.

204. What we are to understand is that, outside of your report, you give your professional opinion that if the works are stopped now they would be entirely useless, and if extended to a distance of 1,160ft. they will give some facilities to the townspeople?—Yes.

205. Also, if the funds were available, it is work you would recommend to be done?—Yes; looking at the matter in its present position.

206. *Mr. Tanner.*] You do not think the additional £40,000 would be wasted?—No, I do not think so.

207. *The Chairman.*] That is not taking into consideration the financial aspect of the question?—No.

JOHN BOURKE examined.

*Mr. Bourke:* I am Secretary to the Gisborne Harbour Board.

208. *The Chairman.*] We want you, amongst other things, to give us if you can, the exact financial position of the Board?—The loan was £200,000. £25,000 was taken as a sinking fund; the expense of raising the loan was £3,153 1s. 4d.; the amount spent on works was £58,382 5s. 4d.: so that there is £86,535 6s. 8d. to be deducted from the £200,000, leaving a balance of £113,464 13s. 4d. From this amount £10,834 1s. 8d. was advanced to the general account for ten years, to be repaid in ten annual instalments, the balance of the loan being £102,630 11s. 8d. This balance is lodged in the bank. We have £85,000 for twelve months at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in the Union Bank of Australia; £10,000 for six months at 3 per cent., and another £10,000 for six months at 3 per cent. The difference between that amount and £113,000 is made up by loan from the Loan Account to the General Account.

209. Will you give us a statement of your present liabilities and revenue?—Liabilities: Interest on loan, £10,000; exchanges, £192; paid to sinking fund to make up 1 per cent., £521; annual repayment of £10,000 loan from Loan Account, £1,083 8s. 2d. Ordinary expenses (engineering, clerical, &c.), £1,300; bank interest on overdraft, £200: total, £13,296 8s. 2d. With respect to the item, "bank interest on overdraft," the Board had to lodge their moneys for periods of three, six, or twelve months; and during these periods they were very often overdrawn to a considerable extent on their General Account, on which overdraft the bank charged interest. Revenue for year ending the 31st December, 1887: Receipts on General Account—license-fees, £51 17s. 6d.; port charges, £614 18s. 3d.; wharf-dues, £1,895 13s. 11d.; storage and sale of water, £26 8s. 10d.; weighbridge-fees, £40 8s. 6d.: total, £2,629 7s. Interest received from bank on loan-money lodged, £7,152 10s. 1d.

210. *Mr. Tanner.*] Do you levy no rate?—The rate was struck on the 31st August, and up to December £998 9s. 9d. was collected. The whole amount of rate is £5,087 for one year, at  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. in the pound.

*The Chairman:* That gives a total of £10,770 6s. 10d.

At the request of the Committee witness gave the following estimate of the revenue for the current year: Balance on rates, 1887, £4,007; rate for 1888, £5,005; interest on fixed deposits, £5,750; interest on short-dated deposits, £325; receipts on General Account, £2,629 7s.: total, £17,716 7s.

211. *The Chairman.*] If these proposed works are gone on with, your expenses will be increased by what?—Expenses will not be increased.

212. We want to get at what your ultimate position will be?—I have here a statement showing estimate of receipts and expenditure up to 1891. [Statement handed in.]



213. Assuming you get power to proceed with the extension, will it entail any further charges for professional assistance?—Certainly not. The work is in full swing now. The staff we have now will be sufficient then.

214. Will you tell the Committee how the extension, if granted, will benefit the objectors to the work in the north part of Cook County?—There is no reason why it should not benefit them if they chose to ship their stock from our port.

215. What access have they from their place to Gisborne?—Overland.

216. That is the only benefit they could get?—Shipping their wool and grain.

217. Large vessels could not go alongside the jetty?—Large vessels would be able to lie there.

218. No vessel could lie there of the size of a Home wool-ship?—Oh, yes!

219. How much will those vessels draw?—The vessels would be of about four hundred tons.

220. *Mr. Allen.*] But ships of that size do not take wool home to England?—They always take it from our port—the “Lochnagar” for instance.

221. *The Chairman.*] What do these ships usually draw?—I cannot tell you what their draught is. We hope that when that £105,000 is expended our next wool-ship will be able to come alongside and load and discharge.

222. If this be so, the objectors in the north part of Cook County would benefit to that extent?—I think so.

223. *Mr. Allen.*] Have they roads from the north part of Cook County to Gisborne?—They have not made the roads; they have rough tracks along which they drive their stock.

224. *The Chairman.*] To what extent would the extension of this jetty benefit the people of Gisborne?—It would considerably benefit them. At the present time they are paying 6s. per ton for lighterage, which would be saved.

225. What is the amount of tonnage of goods landed at the Port of Gisborne?—I could not say from memory.

226. Approximately, the tonnage of goods landed at the Port of Gisborne is 16,000 tons?—I could not say that; I believe it is much more. A large portion of the goods has a special tariff.

227. What extra revenue do you expect the Board will derive from vessels going alongside the pier when extended?—I reckon it will be about £2,000.

228. How do you arrive at this?—We will have charges which we cannot at present levy—charges for berthage, tonnage-dues, supplying water to vessels.

229. How much per ton can you charge for port charges?—By the Act of 1886 you can charge 6d. per ton half-yearly for sailing-vessels, and 4d. per ton for steamers. We have four steamers of the Union Company which regularly call at the port.

230. What amount of tonnage do you think would come alongside the pier during the year?—I cannot say.

231. You estimate an increase in revenue of £2,000. The Committee wish to know how you arrive at that?—There is the change in the tonnage-rates, which we hope will bring in £500 a year. Then there are berthage-rates, and increased wharfage-dues.

*Mr. Ross:* You cannot increase your wharfage-dues.

*The Chairman:* I would suggest that you give us that information to-morrow. We will postpone the question till to-morrow.

232. *The Chairman.*] We next want information as to the securities for the sinking-fund investments?—They are invested in freehold securities: £10,000 is lent to the Borough Council at 6 per cent. on a bond and security of a sixpenny rate over the whole of the borough; £50, at 10 per cent., to Mr. ——— on security of suburban allotments valued at £150; £8,000, at 6 per cent., to Mr. ——— on security of 1,470 acres of freehold land in Whataupako Block valued at £14,000; £900, at 8 per cent., to Mr. ——— on the security of 208 acres and 32 perches of land, 13 acres of which are in Whataupako Block and balance in Kaita Block, valued at £1,227; £350, at 8 per cent., on security of Town Section 112, with buildings thereon, valued at £500; £3,700, at 7 per cent., on security of Town Section 51, containing 1 rood, with buildings thereon, valued at £5,000; £300, at 9 per cent., on security of town section, containing 1 rood, with buildings thereon, valued at £500; £3,300, at 6 per cent., on security of Sections 57, 58, 22, 23, Whataupako Block, containing 34 acres 3 roods 7 perches, 1 rood 24 perches, 61 acres, 49 acres 1 rood 3 perches (Matawhero Block), and 15 acres (Waikanae Reserve), valued at £7,490; £475, at 8 per cent., on security of Town Section 207, with buildings thereon, valued at £800; £215, at 8 per cent., on security of Section 96, Whataupako Block, valued at £300; £300, at 8 per cent., on security of Town Section 173, valued at £500; £200, at 8 per cent., on security of 2 acres of suburban allotments, valued at £350; £1,000, at 6½ per cent., on security of Sections 99 and 77, Patutahi, valued at £2,994; £320, at 8 per cent., on security of town sections, containing 1 rood and 33 perches, valued at £500; £350, at 8 per cent., on security of Town Allotments Nos. 104 and 105, containing 8 acres 3 roods 4 perches, valued at £630.

233. *The Chairman.*] What is the total of the amounts lent?—£29,000.

234. What is the total revenue arising from these investments?—The interest on the whole averages £6 8s. 10d.

FRIDAY, 20TH JULY, 1888.

Mr. J. THOMSON further examined.

Mr. J. Thomson, engineer, attended the Committee and handed in the following statement: One most important point in connection with the expenditure on the harbour-works is, that out of the expenditure, which may be taken at £59,000, we have in stock, at a low estimate, material worth at least £5,000—say, concrete blocks, £4,500; coals, timber, &c., £500: also cement, either landed or in transit, £3,300, which is not paid for yet. So that if the works were stopped at present

there would be material on hand worth about £8,000; and the stoppage and recommencement of the work at a future date would at least increase the cost by £2,000 or £2,500 additional—made up in dismantling and storing the portions of plant which would be destroyed unless carefully stored away, and, secondly, in re-erecting same and relaying whole railway-line in, say, three or four years' time, and getting and training men for this special work.

Mr. JOHN BOURKE further examined.

235. *The Chairman.*] You were to give us, Mr. Bourke, the items making up this £2,000 which you expect to gain from the extension of the works?—Yes. I may say that yesterday the tonnage of the port was, by the Committee, stated at, or, rather, guessed at, 16,000 tons. I wired to the Collector of Customs at Gisborne to obtain the correct information. I said to him, "Please answer the following questions: First, the total tonnage of steamers trading to the port in one year; second, the total tonnage of sailing-vessels." His reply was, "Tonnage of steamers, 154,617 tons; sailing-vessels, 8,262 tons: imports and exports together, 20,000 tons for 1887."

236. Is that the tonnage upon which you will be able to charge berthage-dues?—I understand so. Yes.

*Witness:* There was a statement made yesterday by one gentleman of the Committee that there was a limit to the wharfage-rate. I think under the Harbours Act that is not so. I have gone carefully through the Act since yesterday, and I have taken advice upon the question this morning. There is no limit to the wharfage: you can, in fact, charge £1 per ton if you choose.

237. *Mr. Ross.*] Section 216 of the Harbours Act of 1878 says, "Every Board may from time to time make by-laws providing that harbour-improvement rates not exceeding in any case 2s. per ton, by weight or by measurement, as shall be expressed in such by-law, shall be levied upon all goods and merchandise discharged at or shipped from the port." Your rate is a harbour-improvement rate, is it not? Your wharfage is included in that. Have you any authority to levy wharfage at all?—We have levied wharfage under the Harbours Act of 1878.

238. Section 171 of the Act says, "The harbour fund shall consist of the moneys arising from the following sources: (1) Harbour-dues and pilotage-rates and all other dues which the Board may be empowered to levy or receive; (2) harbour-improvement rates; (3) rents and profits of land vested in the Board; (4) proceeds and profits of land set aside as endowments; (5) all other moneys which may be received by or become the property of the Board, under the authority of this or a special Act." You have no authority that I can see to charge wharfage at all?—I may say the advice I took was from Mr. Wilson, Secretary of the Marine Department; and he distinctly stated there was no limit to wharfage.

239. There is no wharfage mentioned?—There are no harbour-improvement rates, Mr. Wilson says, charged in any port in the colony.

240. That is nonsense; and I do not allow Mr. Wilson to be an authority at all for making that statement. The Otago Harbour Board is a body that levies a harbour-improvement rate?—Mr. Wilson was not sure as to that Board.

241. *The Chairman.*] How much do you charge for wharfage?—2s. 6d. per ton.

*Mr. Ross:* That is 6d. more than you have a right to charge.

*Mr. Graham:* In other ports, I know, both harbour-improvement and wharfage rates are charged. I know for a fact that at Napier there is a separate wharfage-rate charged.

*Mr. Ross:* At Wellington and Napier and other places the wharfage-rates charged are for the use of the piers and cranes, and storage. It is a very trifling sum they charge.

*Witness:* I will give you an instance of the wharfage-rates charged by the Wellington Harbour Board: for bricks and slates, in and out, the charge is 3s.

*Mr. Ross:* That is illegal, then, in my opinion, because it is over 2s.

*Witness* handed in a copy of the by-laws of the Gisborne Harbour Board.

*Mr. Graham:* These by-laws were sanctioned by the Governor, and it is not likely they would have been passed with that charge in them if it had been illegal.

*Mr. Ross:* If this was allowed by the Government it is in contravention of the Act, and it would still be illegal.

*Mr. Graham:* I would suggest that we take the opinion of a lawyer on the question.

242. *The Chairman.*] We are going rather from what we wanted to get from Mr. Bourke. He says about £2,000 will be received as extra moneys resulting from the extension of the pier. How do you expect to get that increase, Mr. Bourke?—By increasing the wharfages on goods that come on the wharf, and upon the tonnage of vessels. As I say, the people are now paying 6s. per ton for lighterage, and they would very readily pay a higher amount for wharfage to save that 6s. per ton.

243. I understand you to say that in order to get this £2,000 you will have to charge an amount for wharfage equal to that which you now charge as dues. Is that what you meant to convey?—I meant to convey there would be an additional wharfage amongst other things.

244. Is that all the solution you can give?—And the charge on the tonnage of vessels.

245. How much would that give?—About £1,500.

246. What is that charge? How do you make up the £1,500?—Under the port charges at the present time we charge only 3d., 1d., and 4d. per ton. Under the Harbours Act of 1886 we have a right to charge 1s. 3d. per ton.

247. That is only on the goods, is it not?—No: on the registered tonnage of the vessels.

*The Chairman:* Why, that would be prohibitory. No ship would come to your port.

248. *Mr. Graham.*] Do you mean the Committee to understand that the full rate would have to be charged to make this up?—No; I do not think that—not the full rate; only a portion of it. The port charges in Wellington are—for every vessel plying within the port only, or employed in coasting only, 3d. per ton quarterly in advance; for every vessel not plying within the port only, or

not engaged in coasting only, 2d. per ton. Our port charges are—for vessels plying within the port, or engaged in coasting only, 3d. per ton quarterly; for vessels not plying within the harbour, and not engaged in coasting only, 1d. per ton; vessels from beyond the Australian Colonies, 4d. per ton.

249. *The Chairman.*] How many of these charges do you put into operation?—The whole of these charges.

250. The £2,000 it will cost you extra upon spending the £40,000 is to be raised by extra charges on the shipping?—No; I do not say that. I say we shall have a surplus this year which will be sufficient to meet that, so that we will not have to make any extra charges this year.

251. That is not an answer to my question. How are you going to get £2,000 more by the extension of this work?—I can only say that these port charges can be increased up to 1s. 3d., and the wharfages can be increased and doubled if necessary. The wharfage-rate of 2s. 6d. could be made 5s. if necessary.

252. *Mr. Tanner.*] I think the contention is that the extension of this wharf will save the cost of lighterage. If you put on these heavy charges, will they not amount to more than the present rate of lighterage?—No; less, I think. There would be a saving, I reckon, of 2s. 6d. per ton.

253. *Mr. Ross.*] 162,879 is the tonnage of vessels which visit your port: that includes all the large steamers?—Yes.

254. If these works are carried out as proposed, will not the large steamers which at present call run past your port, because all the goods will be brought by smaller steamers to your port?—We do not anticipate that at all.

*Mr. Graham:* I may point out that the rate on these steamers is only a half-yearly one, and, although the tonnage of these steamers is very large in the aggregate, it does not bring in much revenue. There would not be very much increase if the present rate were doubled.

255. *Mr. Allen.*] Do you only expect to get £1,500 from the whole of your charges?—No: that is in addition to what we get now.

256. *Mr. Ross.*] How can you reasonably expect that the Union Company will send their larger steamers, with the increased dues, when the smaller vessels can do the trade?—There is a passenger-traffic.

257. *The Chairman.*] Do you charge dues now on large boats like the “Mararoa,” for instance?—Yes: 1d. per ton.

258. I cannot believe that this tonnage is stated correctly at 154,000?—The rate is not charged on that. As a matter of fact this is how the charge is made: The Union Company have a certain number of boats which trade regularly with the port, and these boats pay once in every six months. In this telegram from the Collector of Customs the aggregate includes the tonnage on every visit.

259. That is misleading the Committee?—That is called the tonnage of the port.

260. The Committee want to know what you can charge upon for your revenue? We want you to tell us how you are going to make up this £2,000 of extra revenue?—I expect to have to increase the wharfage, and I have a margin in the port dues between 3d. and 1d., and 1s. 3d.

261. Can you tell us what amount of tonnage is included in this £600 which appears as revenue from port charges in the estimates for 1888?—I cannot tell you. I have not got the information with me.

262. Under what section of your by-laws are you now collecting for the Board?—Under section 4. The Collector of Customs verifies this in his telegram.

*Mr. Graham:* I might suggest to the Committee that a simple way of getting at it would be this: Mr. Bourke says they have power to raise the rates. The present port charges are 3d. and 1d. Supposing these charges were double, they would bring in another £600. Then, as to the wharfage-dues, supposing an extra 2s. per ton were put on, the revenue from this source alone would be £2,000. There you have £2,600. These are the items from which, Mr. Bourke says, they look for the increase of revenue. As to the question of lighterage, the present rate of lighterage is 5s., which would be saved; so that, if 2s. extra were put on the wharfage-dues, there would still be a saving of 3s. per ton on the total cost of landing goods.

263. *The Chairman.*] What sum did you obtain for your debentures?—£204,107 5s., £4,107 5s. of that sum being premium.

264. What was stated in the prospectus? Have you got a copy?—Yes. [Prospectus read by witness.]

265. There is nothing stated in the prospectus with regard to any rate arising from the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act: that was not offered as a security?—No.

266. You tell the financial public at Home you have a right to raise a rate of 2d. on town property and 1d. on country property. How do you make that out?—Under the Act, I take it, we have a right to levy that rate.

267. Have the Board taken any legal opinion on the question?—Yes, several.

268. How many opinions have you had?—I think two.

269. What was the purport of either of them?—There was a difference of opinion. One considered 3d. and 1d. the maximum rate, and the other 1d. and 2d.

270. What solicitors gave these opinions?—I cannot remember this moment.

271. Were they practising in Gisborne?—Yes, I think so.

272. You made a positive statement to the bondholders at Home which may prove erroneous, and about which, in any case, there is very grave doubt?—There was no doubt at the time.

273. What amount have you raised from rates arising from the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act?—On Crown lands, £285 4s. 1d. per annum, and on Native lands, £499 5s. 10d.

274. How long have you raised those rates?—This amount was received as rates for 1887. That is the only rate we have received from these lands.

275. How do these rates come to be handed to you at all? Where did the rates from the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act go to previously?—It is under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act we received these rates.

276. If the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act is repealed you lose that amount of revenue?—I am afraid so.

277. Assuming that your contention is correct, that the Board has power to levy a rate of 2d. in the town and 1d. in the country, do you think the district would be able to bear such a strain as that upon it?—I think they would feel it hard to pay.

278. Do you think it would be detrimental to the progress of the district?—I do not think it would be wise to strike a rate of 1d. and 2d.

*Mr. Ross* : I find, Mr. Chairman, that by section 216 of the Harbours Act the Harbour Board has power to “fix and authorise the levying of Harbourmasters’ fees and port charges, not exceeding the rates specified in the Fifth Schedule to this Act; to regulate the use of wharves or docks,” and so on. So that I do not think there is any limit to the wharfage.

279. *The Chairman*.] With regard to these petitions, will you kindly look at the signatures and tell the Committee what you think as to the *bona fides*—whether they are ratepayers or not, as far as you know?—Well, none of the Natives are ratepayers.

280. Your answer will be this: Any Native names which appear on these petitions are not ratepayers?—Yes.

281. *Mr. Allen*.] You have received revenue, have you not, from Native lands?—Yes; from Government. The Natives are not on my rate-roll, I may say, and the money we have received on account of Native and Crown lands forms part of the £5,000 yearly received in rates.

282. *The Chairman*.] Touching these Sinking Fund Commissioners, under what authority did you appoint them?—Under the Harbours Act of 1878.

283. Are any of the Commissioners members of the Board?—None. There are two Commissioners, the manager of the Union Bank and a Mr. Bennett.

284. Has any of the money been lent to members of the Board?—They were not members of the Board when the money was lent. There are two gentlemen now on the Board to whom money has been lent.

285. *Mr. Allen*.] When were the valuations which you have given of the securities made?—At the time the money was lent. They were made by local valuers.

286. When was the bulk of the money lent?—Last year.

287. I suppose the valuations have all been made within the last two or three years?—All since 1886. I should like to make one statement with regard to these sinking-fund investments, and that is, that the Sinking Fund Commissioners employed a solicitor, and also a valuer to report upon the securities before the money was lent.

288. *The Chairman*.] The Committee, I suppose, has a right to assume, from the fact that you have levied what I believe to be the maximum rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d., that you are compelled to do so in order to meet current expenses?—Yes.

289. You could not have done without it?—Certainly not.

290. The demands you have upon you compel you to raise the maximum rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d., assuming my contention is right?—Yes.

291. *Mr. Ross*.] Can goods be landed at any other part of the harbour than at the jetty?—No; unless inside the river.

Witness handed in balance-sheet of the Board for year ending the 31st December, 1887; copy of the Board's by-laws; and the telegram received from the Collector of Customs.

Mr. WILLIAM SIEWWRIGHT further examined.

292. *Mr. Graham*.] With reference to how this deficiency is to be made up if the works were carried out to the extent proposed, what increase in the revenue would there be? Mr. Bourke has told us the amount would be made up by an increase in the port dues and wharfages—that these could be increased to make up this amount, and there would still be a saving as far as the goods are concerned?—I said yesterday, although I had no figures by me, that I had no doubt the revenue could be obtained. If we spend £40,000, we have a sum of £2,000 to raise. By expending £40,000 we will enable shippers to save a lighterage of 5s. per ton at least; and if the merchants can be saved that lighterage it would be perfectly just to say to them, “If you want this additional accommodation you must pay a higher wharfage.” Half the sum they are paying now would give us over £2,000 a year. From the telegram which we got yesterday from the Collector of Customs at Gisborne, I find, to my surprise, that the lighterage actually came to £4,000 in 1887. If we obtain half of that in the shape of wharfage-dues, we should have quite as much as, and more than, we would require, in addition to any other sources of revenue.

293. In addition to that 20,000 tons there must be other items of wharfage?—There will be stock, which is not included in that at all, and I do not think wool is included.

294. Is it not likely, if these works were carried out to the extent proposed, a very large trade in stock would result?—It is certain that the stock is there in any quantity, and it only wants an outlet to take it away. If we had facilities in the way of shipping, I have no doubt the stock would be sent away.

295. It would only be reasonable, then, to expect a very considerable increase in that direction?—Once facilities were given, the steamers would be bound to come, and the trade would necessarily create an increased carriage. Hence I think it is possible some kind of steamers, well adapted to carrying stock, would probably take the place of some of those that come just now, or in addition to them.

296. *Mr. Ross*.] It appears the rate you are levying is really a harbour-improvement rate under the name of a wharfage-rate?—I do not think that is the meaning of “the harbour-improvement rate.” I take it that “the harbour-improvement rate” means that when you require a special work to be done you pledge a special rate for the purpose.

297. What was contemplated by a wharfage-rate was simply a charge for the use of the wharf?—It is difficult to draw the line between one rate and the other.

TUESDAY, 24TH JULY, 1888.

Mr. JAMES MCKERROW, Surveyor-General, examined.

298. *The Chairman.*] The Committee wish you to give, Mr. McKerrow, what you consider to be the value of certain lands upon which the Gisborne Harbour Board have lent moneys?—I may say that I have gone over the papers and looked up the maps; but I do not know the properties particularly: I only know the district generally. Very many of the properties are town sections, with houses, of which I know nothing at all.

299. First, there is £8,000 at 6 per cent. on 1,470 acres of freehold land in Whataupako Block, valued at £14,000: what do you estimate the value of that?—That is Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ property. I rode past it once eight or ten years ago. It was a very nice place; but I really could not pretend to know the value of it. The property consists of flat land and hilly land combined.

300. *Mr. Ross.*] Is it worth £10 per acre?—The flat land would be worth more than that; but the hilly land would not be worth more than £2 per acre.

301. *The Chairman.*] Do you know the proportion of hilly land to flat land?—No, I do not. Mr. Sperrey got the particulars of the properties after I had done with them. I fancy he will be able to tell you.

302. Can you tell us the value of any of these lands? Here is, for instance, Town Section 51, containing 1 rood, with buildings, valued at £5,000?—It is in a very good position—the very best in the township.

303. What do you think land in that position would be worth per acre?—I really could not say.

304. Would it be worth £12,000 an acre?—I should think that would be a very high price indeed.

305. You do not know anything as to the building there?—It is a hotel, and is a very fine building.

306. Have you any idea at all as to the average price per acre of the land in the blocks mentioned—approximately, say?—No, I have not. As I have said, I only rode through the district some eight or ten years ago, and I would not like to mislead you in any way. I may say I notice there are two sections in the Patutahi Block mentioned amongst the securities. The upset price of the unsold Crown lands around is 10s. per acre, and these sections were sold at that, I think.

307. *Mr. Allen.*] How long ago was that?—I could not say exactly.

308. Has it been improved?—I do not know whether it has been improved or not. It is a purely pastoral country: the land is hilly and very poor. The level land in this District of Gisborne is very good, and the hilly land is all very poor.

Hon. Sir GEORGE WHITMORE, M.L.C., examined.

309. *The Chairman.*] You reside in Gisborne, or, rather, have property there, Sir George?—I have property about eighty miles north of Gisborne.

310. You are well acquainted with the district?—Yes.

311. The Committee desire to obtain your opinion, as a settler of the district, as to the prospects of the district as a result of the work proposed by the Gisborne Harbour Board being carried out?—The original proposal for a harbour, which was agreed to by Parliament in the Act of 1884, stated that the Gisborne Harbour Board were to carry out the work in accordance with the plan laid down by Sir John Coode, which provided for a harbour of refuge for vessels of large tonnage; and the loan for this was to be secured by rates levied throughout the whole of the Cook County, at the rate of 1d. in the pound in the town,  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the country.

312. *Mr. Allen.*] Are you clear about the rate being  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d.?—Yes; I have got the Act here.

313. We have read the clauses of the Act, and there is a little doubt about it. The Harbour Board obtained two legal opinions on the question, and they differed?—I know, because I was on a Committee sitting seven weeks on the subject in 1884, and the particular bargain was, in the Legislative Council at any rate, that the rates should be  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. and no more.

314. That was your idea, I take it?—Yes; and that was explained, I believe, in inviting the country district to poll in favour of the work; and Mr. Graham, the then Chairman of the Harbour Board, published an address to the ratepayers of the district in which he promised them they would not have to pay more than  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d.

315. *The Chairman.*] Are you aware that the Board, in its prospectus to the money-lenders at Home, stated that they were authorised to levy a rate of 1d. and 2d.?—No; nor had the country district anything at all to do with it. With reference to the work now under construction, that was arranged with the Government in some way, and the people who had to pay rates were never again called upon to say whether they were willing or not to pay rates towards the construction of a totally different work, and a work which, according to the statements of captains of ocean-going steamers, would be absolutely of no use whatever to vessels of large tonnage. Consequently the interests of the town and country are totally different in any further extension. Mr. Graham, in giving evidence before the Committee of the Legislative Council, stated that the proposed extension would be of no possible benefit except to the inhabitants of Gisborne and those people around the town; consequently the people of the coast district have no possible interest in further expenditure which can only bring in small craft, and not vessels of large tonnage at all. Mr. Graham stated in his evidence the other day that the harbour which originally existed was improved rather than otherwise by the works already carried out, and, further, if the works were stopped now Gisborne would be no worse off—rather better—than before; whereas an expenditure of another £40,000, in giving them a few improvements, would put a considerable liability on the country district, which would derive no benefit in any way from it. Consequently the country settlers object, and object

very strongly, to anything more being done. The works, they assert, should never have been undertaken in the way they were without their being referred to a poll; and they are satisfied that, by the admissions of the Board themselves, an extension which will only allow of a small steamer like the "Australia" coming in can have no possible effect on their interests. All the way up the coast they have been obliged to create a steamer-service to take away their produce; and, as the vessels which would call at Gisborne are no larger than those at present trading up the coast, it would be infinite loss to them if they had to send their goods down to Gisborne, and pay harbour dues, and then put them on a vessel in an open roadstead which takes from three to five months to load. The question as to whether or not this is a proper work from an engineering point of view I am not capable to offer an opinion on, but I would like to place before the Committee the opinion of practical people on the question—I refer to Captain Fairchild, who published a letter in the *Auckland Star* on the subject about March last, and also to the opinions of captains of any of the ocean-going steamers like the "Mararoa" and "Wairarapa." I think these opinions should carry weight, although not those of marine engineers. There is no marine engineer that has reported on the subject with the exception of Sir John Coode, and the present work is not Sir John Coode's scheme at all. I would strongly recommend the Committee to get Sir John Coode's plan before coming to a decision. It has been asserted that Sir John Coode's scheme would have cost more than the present one: I think you will see by comparing the lengths of the two works that this is manifestly impossible.

316. Your main objection to this work as proposed now is that it will be no benefit to the settlers in the north part of Cook County, and their fear is that further rates may be imposed upon them in consequence of carrying out this work?—As the law now stands they will undoubtedly be liable to further rates.

317. *Mr. Allen.*] What means of communication have you on the coast district?—The "Australia" comes up regularly every week, and calls at all the small ports on the coast.

318. If the proposed extension were made, so as to allow of the "Australia" going alongside, would the people up the coast derive any benefit?—No, not the slightest. To get to Gisborne you have to climb the steepest of hills in one part, and at other points you have to go at low water from half a mile to two miles amongst papa rocks, to the danger of your life. [Sir George indicated on the map the route to Gisborne, and particularised the difficulties met with at the different localities.]

319. Is there any settlement back in the country?—Very little, because there are no roads except the tracks we have made at our own expense.

320. *The Chairman.*] If you have no roads, supposing Sir John Coode's plan were carried out, how would you have benefited by it?—We got the promise of endowments of land from Government, and then there is a sum of about £20,000 which was granted by Government, and during the past six years an equal sum received from rates and other sources in this northern district to make roads.

320A. You expected, if the scheme had been carried out, that Government would have been bound to make roads for you?—The £20,000 obtained from these northern rates, &c., is a great deal more than would have been required, in addition to the sums already given, to complete these roads, parts of which are already formed. And then there were, besides, these endowments of land from Government.

321. If Sir John Coode's plan had been carried out, and the roads had not been formed, the work would have been of no benefit to your district?—No. We speculated, of course, on Sir John Coode's well-known reputation, and we were prepared to run the risk of the success or non-success of his scheme, believing the roads would be made.

322. What solid reasons can the settlers in the northern part of Cook County give for being absolved from future rates? One of the things Mr. Ormond put forward was that the unexpended balance should be invested with the view of reducing the rates of the Cook County settlers?—We never voted for the present work at all, and, even if the prophecy that it will produce a good harbour for vessels like the "Australia" prove correct, it is admitted we have no interest in it whatever. If the people of Gisborne wish to speculate in a harbour which will in all probability prove just as vain as the present scheme, let them do so; but we do not want to be taxed for it. As you have referred to Mr. Ormond's suggestion, I may say what we would like to see would be the stoppage of the works, to see the Government put its fist down, take over the whole of the money, and use it as a sinking fund until we were able to pay off the debt.

323. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] I understand from your evidence that you consider any further expenditure on these works would simply be for the benefit of the Gisborne Township?—Yes; the township and the country between the two little rivers in the locality of the township.

324. The works would be of no benefit to your district?—Not the slightest.

325. Would it not be possible for the district which would be benefited by this further expenditure to rate itself sufficiently to pay interest and relieve your district from any further liability?—I understand they are willing to do that. I understand so from a communication made to me by Mr. Sievwright, the present Chairman of the Board. He said to me, "Well, if we exempt your district, will you consent then?" I said, "Certainly; we do not want to do you any harm, or avoid payment of the rates which at present have to be levied. What we want is to be placed in the position that whatever you do in the future, you do entirely at your own risk."

326. *Mr. Whyte.*] Did you vote for the Bill of 1884?—Yes.

327. On the idea of Sir John Coode's plan that you would get a harbour of refuge?—Solely.

328. Do you see by this report of Mr. Higginson's that that would have cost £60,000 more than the present scheme?—£46,000 I make it. But that is not Sir John Coode's estimate; his estimate was £200,000.

329. Do you see that by the present scheme you can get a depth of 21½ ft. for £175,000, and you can only get the same depth under Sir John Coode's plan for £246,000?—These estimates have

not been made by people of the eminence of Sir John Coode, and I do not place the slightest reliance on them. I would strongly advise the Committee to obtain Sir John Coode's harbour-refuge proposals, because I do not think they will bear the statement out at all.

330. *Mr. Allen.*] How long did Sir John Coode stay at Gisborne?—Sir John Coode has such familiarity with harbour works that when he has once ascertained the trend of the sand and shingle you can rely upon what he says.

*The Chairman:* It has been proved beyond a doubt that the information supplied to Sir John Coode as to the drift of the sand was incorrect.

331. *Mr. Whyte.*] At any rate, you will admit this: that to get a harbour refuge under Coode's plan, it would cost more or as much as the proposed scheme?—It is new to me to hear that.

332. At any rate, if Coode's plan had been carried out in its entirety, you consider the district that voted for it ought to be liable?—Oh, yes!

333. Your knowledge of the district is sufficiently great, I think, to enable you to state as to how the people do with their stock there. If the people could load their stock without lightering, would there not be a considerable export trade in sheep and cattle?—The number of sheep in that district is very small. I do not think they number over 200,000. We have exactly the same difficulties up the coast in the way of shipping our stock, and yet we manage to export our sheep. Mr. Ormond recently sent three loads of sheep from Tolaga Bay.

335. *Mr. Ross.*] If the works are completed, and a road made from the coast district to Gisborne, would you be able to export your goods and stock at a less price than you pay now?—It might have been possible to do it at less price at the time we polled for the work, but since then we have made excellent arrangements with the Union Company, and though we should have preferred to send our wool down that way, it would probably be some time before we did so. I might draw your attention to the report of the Committee of the Legislative Council with regard to the Sinking Fund investments. It was stated that the Board had scooped the pools, as it is vulgarly called—that the money had all been lent to members of the Board. We had an exhaustive inquiry into this matter, and while we do not think there have been any loans at all in bad faith, we have strongly recommended that no more of this kind of thing should go on, and that all the money should be invested in debentures of the colony of New Zealand or other colonies. As to the value of these securities, I may say, I cannot venture an opinion, because my opinion is so entirely opposed to the opinions given here by men with such local experience as Mr. Graham, for instance, that these opinions destroy all ideas of value you have formed.

336. *Mr. Whyte.*] With regard to the investment of the balance of the loan in Government debentures, if you invested this money at 4 per cent. and pay the higher rate of 5 per cent. to the money-lenders at Home, there would be a huge deficiency, would there not? There would not be a huge deficiency. It would only be 1 per cent., and we are willing to pay that. There would be the advantage of absolute safety in the investment proposed.

337. *The Chairman.*] You know the block of land set apart as an endowment for the Board; what would be the probable rental value of that block?—If roads were made to it I think it would be a cheap run on a long lease, say, thirty years, at a rental of £1,000 per year. Without roads it is absolutely worth nothing; nobody would have anything to do with it.

338. How much would have to be expended to open it up?—I do not think the cost would be above £5,000. I may say that very serious things have been shown before the Committee of the Legislative Council regarding the Board's finance, in view of the probability of the repeal of the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, and of a less valuation for property-tax; moreover, there has been great difficulty in getting in the rates. As regards the investments of the Sinking Fund, the report upon the subject says, "Without taking exception to any of the investments that have already been made, your Committee would recommend that in future the Sinking Funds should be invested in the debentures of the Colony of New Zealand or other colonies."

Mr. JOHN SPERREY, Property-tax Commissioner, examined.

339. *The Chairman.*] The Committee desire, Mr. Sperrey, to get information from you as to the property-tax valuations of certain properties upon which the Gisborne Harbour Board have lent certain moneys. First, we have "£8,000, at 6 per cent., on 1,470 acres of land in the Whataupako Block, valued at £14,000." [*Mr. Sperrey:* My valuation is £13,965.] Then there is "£900 on 208 acres and 32 perches of land, 13 acres of which are in Whataupako Block, and the balance in Kaita, valued at £1,227"—My valuation is £792. There is one section valued at £140 in the Board's list of valuations which has been transferred from the Natives since the property-tax valuations, and of which I have therefore no valuation. That brings the valuation up to £932. I may say that there are one or two sections which have been so transferred since the property-tax valuations, and of these I have no account.

340. *Mr. Allen.*] When were the property-tax valuations made?—Some three years ago.

341. The land would not be worth more now?—No, but there may have been improvements on it since.

342. *The Chairman.*] The next is "£350 on Town Section 112, with buildings thereon, valued at £500"—I have got the valuation of Town Sections 111 and 112 together. The two are valued at £600. The one section, No. 111, is valued in the Board's list, I see, at £500. It may be that there are no buildings or improvements on Section 112.

343. Then comes "£3,700 on Town Section 51, with buildings thereon, valued at £5,000." That is the hotel property?—My valuation is £5,500.

344. Next, "£300 on security of Town Section 30, containing 1 rood, with buildings thereon, valued at £500"—There must be some mistake about this section, as that is the one on which the Union Bank stands, and is valued at £1,213 by me. This cannot be the section.



345. Then, "£3,300 on Sections 57, 58, 22, 23, Whataupako Block, containing 34 acres 3 roods 7 perches, 1 rood 24 perches, 61 acres, 49 acres 1 rood 3 perches (Matawhero Block); and 15 acres (Waikanae Reserve), valued at £7,490." Part of this I have not got, as the land has been transferred since the property-tax valuation. The total valuation for that is £2,514. I have got in my valuation Sections 57, 58, 22, and 23, £700; Sections 44 and 21, containing 1 rood 24 perches, £127; 34 acres 3 roods 7 perches, Matawhero, £687; 15 acres, Waikanae Reserve, £1,000: total, £2,514. I have not got the valuations of the 61 acres and the 49 acres.

346. Next, "£475 on Town Section 207, with buildings thereon, valued at £800"?—My valuation is £722.

347. "£215 on Section 96, Whataupako Block, valued at £300"?—I have got the value of the land at £35. The building, upon which there is, I notice, a fire insurance policy of £220, has been erected since the property-tax valuation.

348. "£300 on Town Section 173, valued at £500"?—My value of the land is £300. A building has, no doubt, been erected since, as there is an insurance policy of £300 on it.

349. "£200 on 2 acres of suburban allotments, valued at £350"?—My valuation of the land is £150. There is an insurance policy of £150 on the buildings.

350. "£1,000 on Sections 99 and 77, Patutahi, valued at £2,994"?—My valuation is £2,400.

351. "£320 on Town Section 141, containing 33 perches, and Town Section 177, containing 1 rood, valued at £500"?—My valuation is £180 on Section 141, and £250 on Section 177; total, £430.

352. "£350 on Town Allotments Nos. 104 and 105, valued at £630"?—My valuation is £650.

Mr. JOHN BOURKE, further examined.

353. *The Chairman.*] What are the sections upon which present members of the Board have borrowed money?—Mr. ——— has borrowed £900 on the 208 acres in the Whataupako and Kaita Blocks. Mr. ——— was not a member of the Board when he borrowed the money.

354. What other members have borrowed?—Mr. ———, who is a member of the Board, by virtue of his being Mayor of the town—he was not a member of the Board at the time—he has borrowed £3,300, at 6 per cent., on lands in the Whataupako and Matawhero Blocks and in the Waikanae Reserve.

355. Mr. — was not connected with the Board when he borrowed the money?—No.

356. Are there any others?—No, those are the only two.

357. Have you got the valuation of the 61 acres and 49 acres mentioned in the £3,300 security?—The valuation of the Commissioners was, I fancy, £2,200. For those particular blocks there are other values stated by the Commissioners.

Mr. JAMES MILLS, M.H.R., examined.

*Mr. Mills:* I am managing director of the Union Steam Shipping Company of New Zealand.

358. *The Chairman.*] We wish to get some information, Mr. Mills, with regard to the effect these works will have, beneficial or otherwise, on the trade of the port in respect to your company's steamers. We would like to know if your company includes lighterage in their charge for freight?—Yes, they do.

359. What do you pay for lighterage per ton?—4s. or 4s. 6d. per ton.

360. Do you know if a higher charge is made to others?—I think so; in fact, I know our rate is lower than the ordinary rate.

361. What steamers belonging to your company trade to Gisborne?—The coastal cargo-boats, "Ohau," "Omapere," "Australia," and "Suva;" and also the intercolonial steamers, such as the "Mararoa."

362. Do the larger boats carry cargo?—Yes; there is not necessarily any difference between the rates by these steamers and the other boats, because they all pay the same lighterage.

363. If the works now proposed be carried out so as to give at the end of the wharf a depth of 13½ ft. at low tide, how many of your steamers would be able to use the wharf?—What is the rise and fall?

364. 5 ft. or 5½ ft?—The smaller cargo boats, such as the "Ohau," could use the wharf in smooth weather.

365. All your steamers, then, except the large ones, could use the wharf?—Yes, in smooth weather.

366. Can you give us any idea as to the length of time during the year you can expect smooth weather?—I could not tell that from my experience.

367. Could they lie alongside at low tide?—Only in perfectly smooth water. On ordinary occasions they would go alongside, and do their work in two or three hours at and about high water.

368. Bar bad weather, then, the majority of the smaller class of steamers would be able to make use of the wharf?—Yes; they would be able to go in and out on the same flood tide.

369. What extra charges would the Board be likely to make on steamers using the wharf?—They would probably be very heavy. The effect of this would be that the trade, such as it is, would be done by the smaller steamers entirely, and the larger steamers would not call there, because the larger steamers could not afford to pay the dues on their larger tonnage with a cargo of only fifty tons, or less.

370. *Mr. Whyte.*] If steamers of the size of the "Penguin" could go alongside, would not a large cattle export trade arise which practically does not exist now at all?—A trade would arise, but I question if it would be a trade of any magnitude.

371. I may tell you that that district is not more than one-fifth occupied; it is estimated that when wholly occupied it would carry as much as the Hawke's Bay District. The question is whether the trade in stock justifies such large expenditure on harbour works?—Of course.

372. *The Chairman.*] To what extent, if any, would your company reduce their freights by steamers using the wharf? Supposing the Board do not charge your company any more for port charges than at present, would there be any reduction in the freight to the people?—No doubt it would be reduced to the extent of the lighterage charge—say, 4s. per ton.

373. Provided there were no further charges levied upon the steamers?—That is so. I may point out that if the large steamers do not continue to call the Board would need to make a very large rate on the small steamers to obtain the aggregate amount they wish to raise.

374. The secretary to the Board has said in his evidence, “We will have charges which we cannot at present levy—charges for berthage, tonnage dues, supplying water to vessels.” Taking that answer as a fair indication of the intention of the Board, do you think you would be able to reduce your freight by anything?—They could not possibly make charges which would amount to 4s. or 5s. per ton. They would have to seek other means of revenue. The principal charge would be upon goods, and that would fall upon the consignees, and not upon the vessels.

375. We want to be able to see what benefit it will be to the people to construct this work. If you reduce your freight by 4s. or 5s. per ton it will be a benefit to the people?—Yes, unless wharfage dues to a like amount are levied.

376. *Mr. Ross.*] How many of your steamers visit the port of Gisborne on the average?—Two large steamers per week.

377. And the smaller ones?—Three or four a week, I should think. The “Australia” and “Suva” trade there regularly twice a week; and the “Ohau” and “Omapere” call at intervals on their way from the South to Auckland.

378. What is the average tonnage of goods carried by your steamers?—I cannot tell you. I could get the information for you.

379. I presume that you would not send your large steamers to the port?—I do not state that we would not. I think that that would probably be the result, though. They could not carry cargo against smaller steamers using the wharf; and I do not think the passenger-traffic would justify their calling there.

380. *The Chairman.*] Do you think the construction of the wharf as proposed would increase the facilities for shipping stock and wool?—Yes.

381. What depth of water more than a steamer draws is necessary to enable her to lie alongside with safety?—If it is perfectly smooth you do not want over 1ft. The vessel could lie aground.

382. Take an ordinary swell. I suppose there is always some swell there?—I should think from 2ft. to 3ft.

383. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] As your regulations are so strict, I suppose the captains of your steamers, if they saw any risk, would refuse to go alongside?—Certainly they would. The regulations to which you refer do not apply to accidents inseparable from a particular trade, such as bar harbours.

384. Do they not apply, then, to cases like that which occurred at New Plymouth the other day?—Not necessarily. We have many things to guide us in coming to conclusions.

385. *The Chairman.*] Supposing the Board were to greatly increase the port dues, is it probable you might not use the wharf?—Well, so long as we traded to the port, we should use the wharf; it would simply be a matter of calculation what freight we would charge.

386. You would use the wharf?—Certainly, if it was safe; and unless we found the lighterage was less than the wharf charges.

387. Then, again, if the lighterage was not less, you might choose to lie alongside the wharf and charge the people the extra freight?—It is our policy, if the townspeople provide the wharf, to use it.

388. If the depth of water at high tide was 18ft., would that enable your larger steamers to lie alongside?—The “Rotomahana” and “Te Anau” could perhaps go alongside at high water, and in a perfectly smooth sea. There are difficulties, however, to be considered, which I cannot give evidence upon, such as the going in and out, the room to swing, and that sort of thing. The captains would have to use their own judgment in the matter. There would be no object in going alongside to lie for half an hour or an hour at the wharf, and then go out again.

389. All your smaller steamers would use the wharf, and then, in that case, it is probable your larger steamers would not call?—That is so.

390. What we are to understand then is, that the extension of the wharf as desired by the Board, would be a convenience and benefit, looking at the matter from a shipping point of view?—Yes, it would be a benefit to the small steamers, and no doubt a benefit to the townspeople in some ways. I do not express an opinion as to its being a financial success.

391. The works as they are now are not of the slightest use to you?—No, not the slightest use.

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FRIDAY, 27TH JULY, 1888.

WILLIAM CHRISTIE SINCLAIR, Captain of the s.s. “Tarawera,” examined.

392. *The Chairman.*] What we want to know, Captain Sinclair, is whether, from your experience of the Port of Gisborne, the bar has shoaled up since the work has been carried out, or whether there is a better entrance now?—The captains of our small steamers say the bar is much worse than it was before, and that is what I expected. For nine months of the year there is a heavy roll of the sea setting in from the south-east, and this roll brings with it a continual drift of sand. This sand is washed up and taken back again with the backwater, and so a continual swirl goes on. Now, this breakwater, being so close to the mouth of the river, prevents this drift of sand from going out again as far as the moving water goes, and so the sand backs up and just keeps along the line of the pier.

393. Supposing the work is extended another 1,100ft., will this have the effect of making it better or worse?—The silting-up will continue into the deeper water; and my impression is that, if the extension were made, there would be almost a dry sand-bank from the mouth of the river to the inside of the breakwater.

394. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] And they were warned of this by you?—Yes. I did not warn any one in particular, but I talked about it, and expressed my convictions to those whom I met.

*The Chairman* pointed out on the map the direction of the proposed extension, and explained that it was proposed to extend the pier another 1,100ft. in a straight line, where a depth of 13½ft. at low water would be obtained.

*Witness:* If they extend it in a straight line none of the smaller vessels will be able to go alongside except in fine weather, because of the roll which would be occasioned by the swirl of the sea along the breakwater.

395. *The Chairman.*] It is your opinion, then, that if they carry that pier in a straight line small vessels will not be able to lie alongside?—Except in very calm weather. Wherever there is a bay there is motion with the roll that comes in from the sea, and, though the sea may be like oil, if you measure with a pole you will find there is a rise and fall of about 18in., which would cause the ship to go backwards and forwards, and smash up against the pier. If you were to make a turn in the pier it would protect that.

396. How many feet do you think that turn should be made at the end to be of any good?—It would require 100ft. at least, and that would not be much.

397. *Mr. Allen.*] If they carry out the proposed extension, will vessels have sea-room to get in and out?—That is what we cannot tell. The sand will not rise above low-water mark; but, still, it might bank out and bank out as time goes on.

398. *The Chairman.*] Your impression is that unless this turn at the end of the wall be made the extended pier will be no good?—It will be no good, even if they get a depth a 13½ft., except on very favourable occasions, when fine summer weather prevails.

399. *Mr. Ross.*] What is the prevailing weather?—In summer it is variable from west and north-west; but all the time the sea is setting in. If a wind is blowing fifty miles away it sends the sea in although it might not be blowing in the harbour at all.

400. Sir John Coode, in his report of December, 1880, expressed an opinion that any solid structure between the shore and the line of three fathoms at low water would cause a serious amount of sanding-up on the inner or western side of the new work, and recommended the construction of an open viaduct, the level of the deck of which he proposed to be 15ft. above high water of ordinary spring tides, which would allow the heaviest seas to pass through and underneath it with almost undiminished force, and, consequently, would insure such an amount of agitation as would prevent the deposition of sand in the vicinity of the entrance to the river and shoreward of the outer harbour proposed by him. Have you formed any opinion on the points raised by Sir John?—I have not seen Sir John Coode's report, but that is just my idea.

401. *The Chairman.*] You think, then, the work already constructed has had the effect of shoaling up the bar on the river, and the extension of the pier may make it worse rather than better?—Yes. Small vessels will not be able to lie alongside that pier except in very fine weather, unless they make a turn of, at any rate, 100ft. I just simply call it fencing in the beach, and that is just what it is, in my opinion.

402. *Mr. Ross.*] What is your average tonnage of goods for that port?—About thirty tons per month.

#### TUESDAY, 31ST JULY, 1888.

Mr. JOHN BLACKETT, Engineer-in-Chief of the colony, examined.

403. *The Chairman.*] What the Committee wish you to tell them, Mr. Blackett, is, whether you, having heard read Captain Sinclair's evidence, concur in what he says—that is, whether your professional knowledge enables you to say if he is correct or incorrect?—He is speaking from what he has observed personally. I have not had the opportunity of doing so.

404. He mentions what, in his opinion, would be the effect if the end of the breakwater were turned 100ft.?—Yes.

405. That refers, however, to the safety of a ship lying alongside, and not to deposit of sand. In the way these works were planned as a whole the idea was that the scour by the river and the water inclosed between the breakwater and the beach would keep a channel clear between Gisborne and deep water, and that the quantity of sand that would be deposited, if any, would be inconsiderable?—I think the effect would be the same at Gisborne as it has been proved to be in other places where work had to be carried on under the same conditions.

406. *Mr. Allen.*] What we desire to know is, how far that scour would act supposing the pier to be extended?—The scour would be quite sufficient as far as the pier extended.

407. The whole length?—Yes.

408. *Mr. Ross.*] That is, if the water were confined at the other side?—Yes. I think the scour would act the full length of the breakwater.

409. Do you not think it would be diminished as it got more sea-room, or would its action be the same all the way out; and would it have any appreciable effect on the sand at the outer end of the pier?—It would be considerably diminished.

410. *The Chairman.*] It is argued that there are 3ft. or 4ft. of sand on the rock all the way out. Do you think that the scour would have any effect in removing that?—For a certain number of feet I think it would.

411. How many, do you think?—I should not like to say right off.

412. *Mr. Whyte.*] If it went out such a length as to have 13½ft. of water, do you think it would act?—Yes.

413. *The Chairman.*] Captain Sinclair says that if it is extended to the length proposed it will be dangerous except in fine weather : that the swirl of the sea and the sand would come in from the south-east, at the end of the pier, and in consequence of the pier being solid it would prevent the sand going back with the backwash?—I cannot go against the evidence he gives from his experience ; but Mr. Thomson, the engineer, has reported that the measure of the amount of sand as formerly reported on was not correct.

*The Chairman :* Still, there is sand, because we have it already in evidence that it is banking up.

*Mr. Whyte :* If you saw the place you would say that it was very trifling.

414. *Mr. Graham.*] When Mr. Thomson was down here with his plans for your revision, what was the evidence given as to the quantity of sand?—I should like to read Mr. Thomson's report on the subject, and my memorandum upon his report, if that would help the Committee at all.

The same were read as follows :—

"SIR,—

"Harbour Engineer's Office, Gisborne, 23rd October, 1885.

"The harbour surveys being sufficiently advanced, I have prepared a scheme for future works at Gisborne, and have been instructed by the Harbour Board to proceed to Wellington to submit it to the Government for approval, they having given me a letter to the Minister of Marine to that effect. There are two drawings, No. 1. showing the complete scheme, and No. 2 that portion proposed to be executed with our present loan.

"I arrived in Gisborne about the 1st of July, and since that time have made careful examinations of the tides, currents, and winds ; also a minute survey of that portion of the bay shown on plan. Several series of sections have been taken, and the bottom probed with long steel rods to ascertain the depth of sand.

"It is rather more than seven years since Sir John Coode visited New Zealand on a tour of inspection. He was only able to call here for about an hour, and, unfortunately, could not examine the place for himself. From my own observations and inquiries, and as the result of the surveys, I have not the slightest doubt but that his report is founded on erroneous or insufficient information received ; and it was only after coming to this conclusion that I felt justified in modifying his design. He practically says, from the information he has received as to the physical conditions of the bay, that he has come to the conclusion that it would be inexpedient, at any rate under the present circumstances of the trade of the district, to attempt to improve the entrance, which could only be done by long and expensive breakwater-piers, as the result would not justify the outlay. He then proposes a concrete root 550ft. in length at the boat-harbour, rising with a slope of 1 in 50 to the level of an iron bridge or viaduct 15ft. above high water, and stretching 1,400ft. seaward, which carries the railway to a small sheltering-pier, only 900ft. long, out in the sea. The estimate for the above is £195,000. The connection with town is not included, and would not be under £5,000 ; making a total of £200,000. Two cross-jetties shown on his plan are estimated at £51,000 extra.

"Had the conditions been as Sir John was led to suppose, there is no doubt that his would have been the only method for providing deep-water accommodation ; but in that case it might have been more advisable to give up the idea of large vessels, and spend the money in making the river suitable for the coasting trade. The natural conditions, as we find them, are—the range of tide at springs is about 6ft. ; the sea-bottom opposite the town is composed of papa rock covered with about 3ft. or 3ft. 6in. of sand. When clear of the immediate indraft of the flood-tide at the entrance there is no indication of currents which would carry sand or silt from the 'big river' towards Turanganui ; indeed, there is very little indication of currents in any direction—and we carefully tried for them not only on the surface, but also below. The direction and whirl of the sea is shown on the plans. It breaks parallel to the beach. After the late heavy gales the river-channel set towards the west, passing close to the stem of the wrecked vessel. This was the result of the south-east sea throwing up the sand and forming a submerged spit from the east head, extending across the entrance. At last it extended the whole way, and the river then cut out a new channel straight out, that portion of the old spit on the west side being washed up and along the beach, or carried into the river by the flood-tide, as is usual with rivers on sandy coasts elsewhere. The Waimata and Taruheru Rivers have been examined, and I believe no practical deposit need be feared from them, the bulk of sand in the Turanganui coming in from the sea.

"The conditions being as indicated, I propose to construct a solid pier on the east side, being, in reality, a continuation of that bank of the river. This pier would extend seawards to the same extent, and be parallel to Sir John Coode's. It would be constructed in a somewhat similar manner, and be available for shipping for its whole length when depth permits. The object of this pier is not only for shipping purposes, but also to shelter the bar and intercept in future the sand thrown up by the south-east gales. At the foot of Peel Street a groin is shown projecting seawards. It is proposed to construct this from time to time as circumstances and funds permit, its object being to guide the ebb-current, form a tidal reservoir, and prevent any drift-sand between high- and low-water mark from being carried into the harbour. Ultimately, it would form part of a wharf when additional berthage was required.

"I may point out that the works as indicated will interfere in no way with the present shipping ; that, although it is not the intention to do anything directly at present to improve the river, yet nothing is done which will prevent its being utilised in future, and indirectly the main pier will cause the bar to be scoured out probably to the papa, the result being that as the work goes out a substantial benefit will be obtained, and when completed the larger vessels will discharge at the pier and the smaller in the river.

"Future works are indicated in the plan. They consist of an extensive reclamation on the town side, with wharves extending from the cattle-yard seaward ; of reclamation, with wharves, on the Kaiti Bank ; of blasting and dredging the bar ; and, finally, of carrying the outer end of Peel

Street Wharf to within the distance of the main pier shown on drawing, and extending that pier 400ft. further. These works are in the distant future, and are only indicated to complete the scheme.

"I have, &c.,

"JOHN THOMSON, C.E.,

"Engineer to Harbour Board, Gisborne, Poverty Bay.

"J. Blackett, Esq., M.Inst., C.E., Engineer-in-Chief, Marine Department,  
Wellington."

"Memorandum for the Hon. the Minister, Marine Department, re Gisborne Harbour Plans.

"Public Works Department, Wellington, New Zealand, 10th November, 1885.

"It will be observed that Mr. Thomson advises a complete departure from the plan proposed by Sir John Coode. His reasons are stated fully for so doing; and, should the information which he has collected from observations during a period of four months' residence be applicable to the whole year, his reasons may be considered good. It is to be noted that the months during which the observations were made—viz., July, August, September, and October—include winter and spring months, during which it might be expected that almost every variety of change would occur, such as heavy floods and strong winds, &c. Sir John Coode designed a small detached harbour, connected with the shore by means of an open iron viaduct, to allow the sand free movement along the coast, and to guard especially against the movement of sand from the west, which would, he feared, fill up any harbour constructed with a solid breakwater. Mr. Thomson fails to find any indication of a constant movement of sand from the west—in fact, he has found evidence of a movement in the opposite direction, and argues from this that a solid main breakwater may with safety be adopted; and to guard against the chance of a movement of sand from the west his plan includes a smaller and lighter solid breakwater, for the purpose of checking any such movement. Assuming this new information to be correct, and taking it at its full value, I see no objection to the erection of such a breakwater as now proposed. A slight modification might, however, be introduced so as to insure the ebb-tide and flood-waters following closely the inner line of the breakwater—viz., by changing the direction of this line, say, at a distance of about 800ft. from the root, by an angle of about 3°, as shown by a green line on the tracing. The position of the western or smaller breakwater might also be altered with advantage, by moving its point of junction with the shore westward fully 600ft. This would cost no more, would include a larger harbour-area, and more water for scouring purposes. These modifications I should recommend for adoption.

"JOHN BLACKETT.

"P.S.—I beg to submit for your consideration whether Sir John Coode's opinion should not be obtained on the alteration of his design for a harbour at this place, laying before him, of course, all the latest information and reports on the question. I believe Sir John is now in Australia.—J.B."

415. *The Chairman.*] Your memorandum was written on the supposition that they were going to carry it out the full length?—Yes, as a whole. It must stand or fall by that.

416. Mr. Thomson's report refers to the pier as shown on this plan?—Yes.

417. Upon reading the report and examining the plan, you recommended the Government to do certain things: how far would the opinion you then formed, and the recommendation you gave the Government, be modified had you known they were going out only 1,160ft.?—I would not have approved of it at all.

418. Now, assuming that to be the length determined on, is it your opinion that the sand may be brought round the shorter length, and shoal up the harbour?—Quite likely.

*Mr. Whyte* : I think, if you saw it, you would say there is none worth speaking of. You should see the place.

419. *The Chairman.*] But still, in your opinion, there must be some sand held back by the back drift?—Yes, I think so—that is, on the eastern side.

*Mr. Whyte* : Then the quantity must be extremely small.

420. *The Chairman.*] If it comes in with the southerly gale, and formed the spit Mr. Thomson speaks of, would not the effect be the same—to accumulate the deposit of sand in other places when the wind and sea acted in another direction?—It would.

421. Now, it is intended to carry out this pier or jetty 1,160ft. : is that a work that commends itself to your professional idea—such as would afford safe accommodation for shipping? Involving as it does an expenditure of £40,000, do you think that is a work which should be allowed to proceed, or which you would recommend, having in view the amount of public benefit to be derived from it?—It is a scheme that I should not recommend if it stopped there.

422. *Mr. Ross.*] You mean as not being a complete work?—Yes.

423. *Mr. Graham.*] Do you think it would be of any use at all?—It would be of use in fine weather.

424. *Mr. Whyte.*] They cannot afford to go the whole distance out: the question, then, is, if they go half way, will they have something that will be of use to them? Of course, they hope some day to go on according to the original plan; but the portion they now propose to make—would it be of use to them?—Yes, in fine weather.

425. But it would be of some use to them, even if they could not afford to complete the whole?—Yes.

426. But if made according to Sir John Coode's plan it would not?—No; not till the whole, or nearly the whole, of the work was done.

[The witness was examined at considerable length on the maps and plans of the locality and works.]

427. *The Chairman.*] Suppose this pier to stop at 1,160ft., is it likely that Captain Sinclair's statement could be verified—that sand would shoal up in the harbour?—It is possible that it might do so in a certain place.

428. But it would not prevent the channel being kept open?—There would be always a channel.

429. By which a small steamer might pass in?—Yes.

430. But she would have a difficulty in doing so?—She might have a difficulty in turning round.

431. But she would have to hit the channel very accurately, or she would go ashore?—Yes.

432. In any case you think there should be a turn of 100ft.?—No; that would make it worse than ever.

433. Why?—Because the turn would be in the wrong place.

434. You base that opinion on the fact that the work as proposed does not go out far enough?—Yes.

435. But still you think that Captain Sinclair may be right—that, unless in fine weather, a vessel could not lie alongside on account of the swell, which would make the vessel bump against the breakwater?—Yes.

436. *Mr. Graham.*] Have you any idea of the quantity of sand that would get round?—I have not.

437. If it were demonstrated to you that there was very little sand there, that would get rid of Captain Sinclair's objection, would it not?—Yes, to a great extent.

438. Suppose there was not any sand coming through, would that meet the objection?—Yes, if it could be proved.

439. *Mr. Thomson* says there is no travelling sand there at all?—I think that, after being there for two or three years, he would be likely to be correct, having carefully examined the place. When he first planned the work he had been only about four months there. What Captain Sinclair speaks of is going on at the mouth of almost every river, more or less.

440. *The Chairman.*] If the work is carried the full length is it your opinion that would prevent the sand coming round altogether?—If the work was carried out and completed I presume not.

*Mr. Ross :* But, according to the evidence, it is banking up slowly.

*The Chairman :* What is presumed in Captain Sinclair's evidence is that if the work is carried out only to this distance the sand would still come round.

*Mr. Whyte :* If there were a fiftieth part of the sand here that is usually found on the other parts of the coast, I would not think for a moment of supporting this scheme.

*Mr. Ross :* Captain Sinclair says there is a backwash by which the sand is taken back—that is, round again.

*Mr. Graham :* He said so.

*Mr. Allen :* It is most people's experience of rivers and harbours that the sand begins to work round when the ordinary flow and ebb of the tide is interrupted.

*Mr. Graham :* That is, if you have a large-enough supply of sand; but this bay is a very small bay, so that you might presume there was no large supply, suppose that sand does travel in one particular direction: but there is scarcely anything but papa rock on the eastern side.

*Mr. Whyte :* Practically, the quantity of sand that you have to contend with here is worth very little consideration compared with that in other works of this kind.

*The Chairman :* But it must be taken as a fact that there is sand here to form this spit.

*Mr. Graham :* The idea is that it must have come from the papa rock; but that is as bare as my hand.

441. *Mr. Allen.*] The sand on the beach—where does that come from?—That would probably be thrown up from the bottom. Captain Sinclair says it comes in from the south-east to this bank.

*Mr. Graham :* There is very little.

*Mr. Whyte :* There are not as many barrels of it as there are hundreds of thousands of tons at New Plymouth.

442. *The Chairman.*] Have you, Mr. Blackett, seen Mr. Higginson's report?—Yes.

443. He says that as the work stands at present it would be useless, and taking all circumstances into consideration he recommends that an extension should be made to such a distance that it would be of some use, and that they should be allowed to spend £40,000 for that purpose. If I understand you aright you would not make a recommendation of that kind. That it would be useful in fine weather is all that you can say, even with that extension?—Yes.

*Mr. Whyte :* That is the opinion of an engineer; but Mr. Blackett might give us more information as to the necessity of this work—as to the trade of the place.

*Mr. Blackett :* I can give no opinion upon that.

*The Chairman :* He would not recommend the expenditure of this £40,000.

*Mr. Whyte :* I think we would be entitled to the information and knowledge that a businessman would have of the trade of the port.

*The Chairman :* Mr. Blackett says that he is of Captain Sinclair's opinion, that vessels would be able to lie alongside only in fine weather.

444. *Mr. Graham.*] How far along the breakwater would that apply?—Several hundred feet.

445. *The Chairman.*] Captain Sinclair says vessels would bump against the pier and be injured in rough weather: is that your opinion, Mr. Blackett?—Yes.

446. Will you please supply the Committee with a copy of Mr. Thomson's report and your memorandum in reference thereto?—Yes.

Mr. A. GRAHAM, M.H.R., further examined.

*Mr. Graham* asked to be allowed to make a statement to the Committee:—As to Captain Sinclair's evidence, I do not suppose that in one out of every ten trips he comes ashore at Gisborne. With reference to the opinion of Mr. Blackett as regards the sand coming in, I think Mr. Blackett

should have been put in possession of the quantity of sand (or as nearly so as possible) supposed to be likely to come in, as ascertained by reliable data, before he is asked to give an opinion as to the result of carrying out the work to the point here indicated. The fact that he was not put in possession of such a calculation as to the quantity of sand on the eastern side of the breakwater prevents his speaking authoritatively as to whether sand is likely to come round the end of the work from the eastern side. It seemed to me as if Mr. Blackett would not approve of the work when carried out to the point indicated, if it were to be regarded as a complete work; but even then, if we had 13½ ft. of water, the work would still be of great advantage to the port in the meantime, and we hope, in course of time, to carry it to completion—that is, the complete plan as authorised, if not further. Indeed, it is one of the particular advantages of this plan that the work is capable of being extended from time to time as circumstances permit, and be still available and of great service as the work progresses, even without putting a turn on it as Captain Sinclair suggests. The next point is as to the benefit likely to accrue from this work to the harbour and district. I would point out that this district has been settled only about fifteen years. When I went there first the number of sheep was between thirty and forty thousand. But from the returns of the 31st May, 1887, the number of sheep was 452,394. Eighteen years ago it was unsafe to live there. After Te Kooti's raid nearly the whole of the European population had to leave. The whole of the development which has taken place has accrued within fifteen years. The number of sheep in the other twenty-one counties comprising the Auckland Provincial District is only 299,479, or about 153,000 less than in Cook County alone. The increase of sheep in Cook County between 31st May, 1886, and 31st May, 1887, was 66,007. This was considerably the largest increase of any county in New Zealand for that year. The increase in Hawke's Bay County, with 1,251,000 sheep, was only 37,643 during the same year. This increase is bound to go on in the future, and Gisborne to become the shipping port of a large and important district, being its only possible outlet. As to the acreage in the county, there are 408,000 acres of Native lands rated under Crown and Native Lands Rating Act; 365,500 acres Native lands, rates paid otherwise, in European occupation; 640,000 acres Native lands not rated at all; 450,000 acres Crown lands, not occupied; and 455,000 acres on which rates are paid by Europeans. The 365,500 acres of Native land occupied by Europeans is mostly held under defective titles, which they cannot improve until the titles are completed. Indeed, it is only a patch of the whole district that can be regarded as settled at all. As to Tolaga Bay, they come to Gisborne along the coast by a road which is gradually being made available for dray-traffic. If we had the same facilities for obtaining cheap freight as they have in Napier, we could load wool-ships at the same rate as in Napier. The coastal freight would be less, and that, of course, would be a very considerable benefit to the coast. There is a vast extent of country totally unoccupied, which is sure to be taken up if good titles can be obtained and the country is opened up by roads. By these roads most of the lands would send down their produce of all kinds to Gisborne.

*Mr. Whyte*: That is the great point—roads. For the want of roads the district is only about one-fifth developed.

*The Chairman*: Assuming the Committee were to decide to allow the works to proceed, or to recommend this extension, would the Harbour Board object to taking a poll of the ratepayers before entering on it?

*Mr. Graham*: I do not think so. I would advise them to do it.

447. *The Chairman*.] Would they be willing to restrict the rate levied in Cook County to what it is at present?—I think so. I think the opinion of every one of the present members of the Board is strongly against spending more than is absolutely necessary—more than the ½d. and 1d. rate would cover. They believe, from the advance of the district, that would be sufficient.

448. Would the Board object to the balance of the loan being tied up in such a way as to be unable to expend it without coming to Parliament?—No; that is practically done now.

449. Supposing, then, we were to restrict the rating radius as regards the county and extend it as regards the borough, would there be any land outside which might be taken in as getting a direct benefit from these works—that is, is there any land around the borough which would be properly rated with the borough?

*Mr. Whyte*: No doubt there is.

450. *The Chairman*.] How far is Tolaga Bay?—Thirty-six miles.

451. Supposing we were to fix the radius at five miles round the borough, would that do?—In my opinion it ought to be taken further. There is a great deal of the best land in the district situated ten or twelve miles from the borough. As a matter of fact, I consider all the land in the county would be benefited by the work. But the great difficulty in the district is connected with Native lands. People will not improve until they get a perfect title; indeed, it has been costing as much to get the titles to Native lands completed as the whole of the interest upon the loan: yet, in spite of all that, the district has increased to the extent I have described. But there is one thing I should specially point out to the Committee: If these works are stopped it will be very difficult to get them started again. It will leave the impression on every one's mind that the thing is wholly useless.

452. *Mr. Allen*.] You put the number of sheep at 452,394: how much of that is in the northern part of Cook County?—There might be eighty or a hundred thousand; I cannot say exactly.

453. *The Chairman*.] With regard to the rate-roll, do you get a special roll made for these rating-powers?—The Board takes the municipal roll and the county roll.

454. Would there be much difficulty if we were to make the rating radius ten miles? Are most of the ratepayers resident in the district in the event of a poll being demanded?—Most of the absentees are on the coast.

455. Assuming they were willing to vote for the work, there would be no difficulty in getting an actual majority of ratepayers on the roll?—I do not think so.



456. *Mr. Allen.*] Did you issue an address when the first poll was taken?—Yes.

457. This is a copy it?—I was Chairman of a Committee authorised to draw up some statistics. We assumed that the power was given to levy a rate of 1d. and 2d.

458. *The Chairman.*] What is the amount received under the Crown Lands Rating Act?—The exact figures were given in Mr. Bourke's evidence.

459. *Mr. Allen.*] You say in your address, without any parliamentary tax on property you could do with  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the borough and 1d. in the county?—Yes. We calculated on an increase in rating-values and in the trade which has not come about, and possibly, also, with a view to getting a vote, rather exaggerated the prospects.

460. *Mr. Whyte.*] Do you not build more than anything else on the change of Native-land legislation?—Yes. With good titles a great deal of money would have been expended in the district, and values would have much increased.

461. *The Chairman.*] How much nearer to that are you now?—The Native-policy Bills are now before the House. It appears to me, however, that the people would like to go on with the work, and make up any deficiency out of wharfages and port dues, not out of increased rates on property.

462. *Mr. Whyte.*] That would go on increasing with the increase of trade?—Yes, certainly.

## APPENDIX.

### TELEGRAMS HANDED IN BY MR. GRAHAM, M.H.R.

Andrew Graham, M.H.R., Wellington.

TOTAL rates North Tologa, three hundred and twenty, eleven, four.—JOHN BOURKE, Gisborne, 31st July, 1888.

Andrew Graham, M.H.R., Wellington.

DECLARATIONS as follows from Chrip, McGiven, and Skinner (Gisborne Harbour Act, 1888).

Evidence of Captain Chrip.—I, Thomas J. Chrip, of Gisborne, shipmaster, solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:—

1. I am a master mariner, holding a foreign-going certificate, and reside in Gisborne. I have had my residence there during the last twenty years, for ten years of which time, down to 1883, I was Harbourmaster of the Port of Gisborne. I assisted in making the surveys and in taking the soundings of Poverty Bay upon which Sir John Coode founded his report as to a harbour there. I am therefore intimately acquainted with the bay and the Turanganui River and bar. I know the breakwater now in course of construction, and I have particularly watched its progress.

2. I informed Sir John Coode, and it is my opinion still, that there is a tide-drift from the westward, along the Waikanae Beach, towards the mouth of the Turanganui River, which carries sand, and forms, or helps to form, the river-bar. If the Waikanae Beach groin, which forms part of the authorised breakwater works, were constructed, that would form an effectual stop to the drift of sand I speak of.

3. Is the bar deeper or shallower since the breakwater was commenced?—The water on the bar is deepening steadily, and will, in my opinion, continue to deepen as the work is carried out.

4. If the breakwater were extended out to 1,100ft., what effect would it have on the channel of the river?—Provided the groin were built to suit, I think the first "fresh" in the river would entirely clear out the bar, while these works would prevent it forming again.

5. Is there any ground for holding that the breakwater, when constructed, and as it is constructed, will simply carry the bar outwards, and increase the deposit of sand all along inside of breakwater?—No one, I am sure, acquainted with the works and the river-entry would say so. I look upon that as an absurdity. The facts are dead against such a view, and so, I think, is common-sense. I speak after careful observation, made during many years and under variety of circumstances, and the conclusion I have come to is that, the works being constructed, the bar would disappear, as would all the sand inside the breakwater along the river-channel down to the rock. It is manifestly doing so even now, just as the work is extended. What was formerly sand-covered is now bare rock.

6. Would the breakwater, if extended to 1,100ft., be of use to shipping and the district?—The "Ohau" and the "Omapere," and vessels of that class, would work cargo alongside all the year round, with few exceptions. I say "with few exceptions," because, even in the winter season, when south-easterly gales are experienced, the weather at the usual times of arrival of these vessels may be perfectly smooth, as often happens. I think it would be safe to say that three hundred days of the year such vessels could work cargo alongside of the breakwater; when the expense and risk of lightering would be avoided—and these are serious at present—and live-stock, so abundant in the district, could be got on board without the very serious expense, as well as the delay and the bashing about and damage they receive in shipping. So great are these that it is seldom worth sending stock to market, as they do not pay. Facilities given for shipping live-stock would really mean a substantial profit on their sale.

7. Do you know Captain Sinclair, of the s.s. "Tarawera"?—Yes.

8. Are you aware whether he is possessed of special qualifications and knowledge of the river and harbour-works to give a reliable opinion as to the usefulness of the works and the effect their construction would have?—As to his qualifications in general, I suppose he is as good as the run of shipmasters would be for that purpose; but I am satisfied he can have no special knowledge of the river and works, because he seldom comes ashore; and I think I am safe to say he has not been

asore during the last three to four years. I believe he has a chronic dread of Poverty Bay, having once touched rock from anchoring in the wrong place. He always now anchors about two miles off, in the most exposed situations. [Shown telegram stating evidence given by Captain Sinclair, and reads same.] His statements are wild and loose, and are made without knowledge. I cannot understand a man in his position making statements so rashly and carelessly. My statements already made hereon, I think, completely answer his. His are anything but reliable.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of "The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882."—THOMAS CHRIP.

Declared at Gisborne this 31st day of July, 1888, before me, W. Sievwright, notary public.

Evidence of Archibald McGiven.—I, Archibald McGiven, diver, Gisborne, solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:—

1. I am employed as diver for the Gisborne Harbour Board at the harbour-works now being constructed, and I have been engaged in like work at Home for six years, and during the past nine years in New Zealand.

2. In the ordinary course of my work at Gisborne Harbour works last week I had to examine the site of the works 80ft. ahead of where the breakwater now reaches. I find that the river-channel is clear of sand to the rock at the end of the works built, and some 18ft. beyond. At end of 18ft. I found about 9in. of mud on the line of the inner side of the work, with 6in. of sand on the top of it. I can say positively that the channel of the river along the inner side of the breakwater is deeper than when works were begun. The sand is scoured out down to the rock, which is now bare. It is plain that there is a clearing-out of the sand to a considerable extent ahead and in line of the works. Out as far as the 80ft. I went the scour appears to carry the sand away. The deepest part at the 80ft. which I got was 15in. of mud and sand.

3. What amount of scour do you find in the channel?—Besides the ordinary weight of 210lb., I have had to be weighted from 30lb. to 34lb. extra to enable me to keep on my legs in the channel in the line of the works: the scour is very strong. There has now been finished about 360ft. of the breakwater, and the sand has all scoured out to that distance and beyond, so that the rock is bare along the inner or river side of the works.

4. Is the river-bar deepening or becoming shallower?—The bar is certainly deepening, and, in point of fact, vessels are now able to take the bar at a lower state of the tide than they used to before the works were out so far. The extension of the works has had the effect of deepening the bar. As a matter of fact, instead of the bar following the works outward, there is more water on what is commonly called the bar than there is some distance up the river.

5. How do you find the sea in the bay affect your work as diver as compared with other places of which you have had experience?—I have had a long experience of diving, and there has been less interruption at Gisborne than at any other place I have worked on at a breakwater.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of an Act of the General Assembly of New Zealand intituled "The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882."—ARCHIBALD MCGIVEN.

Declared at Gisborne this 31st day of July, before me, W. Sievwright, notary public.

Evidence of Captain Skinner.—I, John Henry Skinner, of Auckland, shipmaster, solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:—

1. I am master of the schooner "Gisborne," and trade regularly from Auckland to Gisborne. I have been so engaged during the last twelve years. The "Gisborne" carries a hundred tons, and I always take her over the Turanganui River bar to the town wharf.

2. I am intimately acquainted, from experience, with the Turanganui River and the bar. I know the breakwater now being built. It is now about in line with the river-bar, and I have frequently observed and examined it. I believe I am competent to form a sound opinion as to the effect of the breakwater on the bar and the river.

3. Is the river-channel along the line of breakwater, so far as that has gone, shallower or deeper than it was before the works were commenced?—It is deeper about 1ft., and it is gradually deepening. It is certainly not a fact that the bar is worse now than before the works were commenced.

4. Suppose the breakwater extended to, say, 1,100ft.—that is, to 13½ft. depth to the sand—what effect would that have on the bar?—It would deepen the bar, or clear it out. That is the effect already, and I have every reason to think like results would follow from extending—only greater. It is absolutely certain that the bar is already deepening. If the breakwater were extended as mentioned, and if the groin authorised from Waikanae Beach were built, then, in my judgment, the cause or causes of sand accumulating and forming a bar would be, I think, completely removed.

5. Will breakwater 1,100ft. out be of use for loading and discharging steamers like the "Ohau" and "Omapere" and smaller vessels?—Yes, in ordinary weather; but not with a south-east wind and sea. The prevailing wind is about north-west, and the bay is then smooth, and vessels could easily be worked alongside. That would be the case 275 days at least in the year. I think such a breakwater would be a boon to the shipping of the port.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of an Act of the General Assembly intituled "The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882."—JOHN H. SKINNER.

Declared at Gisborne aforesaid this 31st day of July, 1888, before me, W. Sievwright, notary public.

Gisborne, 31st July, 1888.

WILLIAM SIEVWRIGHT, Chairman.

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