

1767. Would it be apt to silt up?—Possibly. I think any harbour outside the river would have a tendency to silt up.

1768. I thought Port Elizabeth was well protected?—No; it is not well protected; it is an exposed place. It is exposed to the full force of the worst seas: to the south-west, and north-west, and westerly gales.

1769. There is no shelter there worth speaking of?—Except on the eastward, where the land shelters. Port Curtis is the real name of the place.

1770. *Mr. Guinness.*] Mr. Blair gives a different opinion from that of the captains. You say, Mr. Blair, that Port Elizabeth is shallow?—Yes; very shallow.

1771. What do you call shallow?—16ft. to 18ft. is shallow.

1772. What is the distance from the line of rocks to the shore?—I could not tell you from memory.

1773. Is it not a mile or two from the line of rocks to the line of the shore?—I think it is a mile; more than a mile perhaps; but I could not give you an accurate estimate just now.

1774. Within what distance of the shore was it that you say you were able to find water so shallow as from 16ft. to 18ft.?—It is shallow till you get close within the line of the breakwater, then it is probably 25ft.

1775. Do you not know that soundings have been taken, showing from 8 fathoms to $5\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms at the lowest, over a considerable area—three or four hundred acres?—No; I saw some recent soundings, but they were not anything like that anywhere near the shore.

1776. Which sea on the West Coast would you call the worst?—The south-west.

1777. You think Port Elizabeth is not protected?—No; it is not protected there.

1778. With regard to the works at Greymouth Harbour, will you look at the plan? You see Cobden Bridge: the Government commenced the training-wall a little way behind Cobden Bridge: is the half-tide training-wall at the place where it should be, according to Sir John Coode's plan?—According to Sir John Coode's plan it comes down a long way from that.

1779. Is the effect of leaving it there to allow some shingle to get down into the port?—I believe it would be proper to continue the work. I think that the training-wall should be continued.

1780. Are the Government going on with it?—I do not think it is quite fixed yet, but I believe it is the intention to go on.

1781. Does the Government Engineer, like the Harbour Board Engineer, keep a record of the average depth of water on the bar?—Yes; we have the depth of water.

1782. Do you not know that the Harbour Board used to keep a tidal record, showing the depth of water on the bar?—Yes.

1783. Has the Engineer in charge of the works continued that practice?—Yes.

1784. Can you tell us what it was from the 1st April, when the Government took charge?—I have given an abstract of it here in my report. The mean depth from April, 1888, to March, 1889, was 20ft. at high-water spring-tides, and $18\frac{3}{4}$ ft. at high-water neap-tides.

1785. What has been the greatest depth?— $23\frac{3}{4}$ ft.; the lowest was 16ft.—that is, the highest of spring- and lowest of neap-tides. The lowest spring-tide was $17\frac{1}{4}$ ft. You will find the improvement in 1881 referred to. There were 305 days on which the depth was under 12ft.; only fifty-seven on which it was between 12ft. and 14ft.; and three days between 14ft. and 16ft.

1786. Since then, up till now, it has been gradually increasing?—Yes; the Greymouth harbour-works have been perfectly successful.

1787. *Mr. O'Connor.*] I would ask you to come back to Westport, if you please: I wish to ask you whether any instructions were given by Government, when appointing their dummy Board, that the proceedings of that Board should not be made public?—I could not answer.

1788. Did you give any instructions that they should not be made public?—No; I gave no instructions.

1789. Are you aware that everything connected with the Board's operations is now kept from the public?—I gave no instructions; on the contrary, to the best of my recollection, the matter came up when the new Board was first appointed, and I told them to keep up the old system.

1790. How has it happened, then, that the proceedings have never been published?—I have seen them published over and over again in the newspapers. It must be discontinued lately.

1791. Are you aware of the contract that was entered into for building the breakwater?—The present contract? Yes.

1792. Was that contract entered into with the consent of the Board, or were they consulted about it?—I do not think they were consulted, but they gave their final consent, of course; they knew that the plans were prepared.

1793. Silent consent? A meeting of the Board was called?—Yes; the Board considered the tenders, but I do not think they expressed any opinion as to the policy of going on with day-work.

1794. Is it their business to confirm what the Chairman lays before them?—Yes; to a very great extent.

1795. With regard to the contract, are you able to give the particulars of that contract?—I have the specification here.

1796. Is the specification for quarrying stone for the railway handed over to the contractor?—Yes.

1797. All the plant of the Board?—Yes.

1798. Does it provide for any deposit of security for these things?—Yes.

1799. To what extent?—I have not this filled in; I have only the specification here, but I will put it in. You would be able to get it in a copy of the contract. £1,500 I believe it was.

1800. Does that include explosives and tools?—Yes.