

278. Why was this reopened—was it on account of the deputation coming to see you?—Yes. Two men, whose names I do not remember, came down and pointed out that I was wrong in my opinion about the district, and that it would not be another Oamaru matter, and they gave such good reasons that I thought they were right and I had been wrong.

279. And you resubmitted it to the Board?—I told them that if they put it into writing it would be submitted to the Board.

280. What was put in writing?—I forget now, but the letter is dated the 15th August, 1911, and is as follows: "I am instructed to respectfully ask your Board to reconsider the question of an application for a loan of £78,000 for the Wairoa Harbour Board. The prior application was made in January last, and all the necessary copies of newspapers containing notices *re* special order, &c., were forwarded to your office. Our reason for renewing the application is that we now have a more definite proposal to lay before your Board. (1.) The plans for the proposed improvements are now ready and deposited in the Marine Department, signed by the Governor in Council, and my Board are satisfied that the result of the improved harbour will open up regular communication with the larger ports of the Dominion, whereas under present conditions communication is very erratic and unreliable owing to the continual shifting of the entrance to the river. I am posting a copy of the plans of the proposed works for your perusal. (2.) That the lands in the harbour rating-area will certainly improve in value. It is considered, with the improved harbour and the construction of the Napier-Gisborne Railway, under way, which will connect with this port, that the values in the rating-area will have increased 100 per cent., thus improving the security by that amount. The last valuation of the borough was over 100 per cent. on the previous year. This great increase was accounted for by the steps taken by the Board in taking the poll for harbour-improvements, and which poll was carried by a very large majority. My Board are also prepared to pledge, if necessary, the revenue of the port, about £1,000 per annum, also the foreshore leases, which are at present only producing £50 per annum, but which it is expected will before many years reach £1,000 per annum, due to the reclamation of several acres of foreshore which were vested in this Board during last session. That if your Board have any doubts about the value set forth, that an independent valuer be sent to the district to report on the whole situation. My Board will be glad if you will have this matter put before the Advances Board at the earliest possible opportunity, and will be glad to forward you any particular information which you may require." I impressed on them that I thought it would be a pity if the land was burdened like Oamaru. They pointed out that the railway would come in at the back and improve the land so much that 1d. in the pound would not be so great a burden.

281. *Mr. Pearce.*] Was any one sent to verify those statements? No.

282. *Hon. Mr. Allen.*] Then you approved finally of this loan of £78,000 to Wairoa after having refused it before?—Yes.

283. And you think that a more necessary work than gas or electric light?—Yes, I think it is very serious for a district to be shut out from civilization when they have a lot of produce to get out and have no way of getting it out. My concern first was the security. I did not want another Oamaru business.

284. Then, with regard to the Hokitika Harbour Board, was £25,000 approved for it?—Yes.

285. Was that refused originally?—I am not sure whether it was. There was some delay about it. I think we wanted to have a look at the plans, and it was postponed for that reason. The date of the application was 26th January, 1911.

286. What was that for?—£25,000 for construction and extension of waterworks, harbour training sea-wall seawards.

287. And you authorized £25,000 for that?—Yes.

288. And the Motueka Harbour Board wish to dredge out a lagoon, and applied for a loan of £20,000?—Yes, for the purpose of forming a harbour at or near the entrance to the Moutere Lagoon.

289. Was that declined on the 8th December, 1910?—Yes, it was declined at first.

290. Was it reopened on the 21st December, 1910?—Yes, shortly afterwards. It was submitted for reconsideration under the circumstances.

291. Why was it reopened?—In consequence of some letter received. The letter was dated the 20th December, and reads, "With reference to your letter of the 22nd ultimo and my reply thereto, I have the honour to inform you that the result of the poll of ratepayers for a loan of £20,000 to form a harbour at or near the Moutere Lagoon is gazetted on page 3457 of the *New Zealand Gazette*. I am further forwarding to you under separate cover copies of the *Motueka Star*, in which is published the special order for making a special rate, which was duly confirmed at a special meeting of the Board held on the 30th November, 1910. Should you require any further information on this matter I shall be happy to supply it. In the meantime the Board is anxious to know when the money will be available to enable it to proceed with the new harbour-works."

292. What is there in that letter to justify you in reopening the matter?—I cannot remember the circumstances. Possibly it was declined with hesitation, and afterwards perhaps considered that it should be reopened. It was submitted for reconsideration under the circumstances.

293. What are the circumstances?—I did not know whether the Board was going on with the works and had completed their poll. I really could not say. This is the only record I have. I was of opinion that it was rejected because they asked that the term should be extended to 42½ years.

294. And it was declined on the 8th December and reopened on the 23rd December, and is that letter the only record on the file?—Yes.

295. And are those the only circumstances?—Yes.

296. Do you think those are sufficient to reopen it?—Yes.