

13. The Harbour Board in the year 1885 commenced its operations by making a railway and acquiring quarries, and doing other preliminary works.

14. In the year 1886 the Board commenced to construct the western breakwater, and in 1888 commenced the eastern breakwater. In the year 1890 the training-walls were commenced, and by the 7th May, 1892, both breakwaters had been completed to the points required by Sir John Coode's design.

15. In the year 1887 complaints of extravagance had been made against the Board (see Chairman's annual report for 1887), and Mr. James Colvin, the then Chairman, reported that he had effected considerable saving in working-expenses.

16. No evidence has been given of extravagance or bad management prior to 1898 other than is shown by the Chairman's statement in his report for the year 1887 above mentioned.

17. Up to the year 1891 an account was kept of the cost of the construction of the breakwaters, and calculations were made of the cost per lineal foot. Since that date no account or calculation has been exhibited by which such cost may be easily ascertained.

18. In 1901 the special coal rate mentioned in section 12 of the Westport Harbour Board Act, 1884, was struck, and produced £1,457 1s. This rate ought to have been struck at the end of 1889, but the Board neglected to move the Governor to bring the rate into force, with the result that for a period of at least eleven years all coal shipped from Westport escaped the payment of this due. In 1889, and again in 1902, the Audit Office had drawn the attention of the Government to this breach of the Act of Parliament.

19. In the Board's balance-sheets from the year 1902 the said sum of £350,000 mentioned in clause 9 above, and the three sums of £50,000 mentioned in clause 12 hereof, appear as consolidated into one loan of £500,000.

20. The present Secretary and Treasurer to the Board, Mr. Charles N. Greenland, has been in its employment in that capacity practically from the commencement of the Board's operations. The first Engineer to the Board was Mr. C. Napier Bell. In 1887 he was succeeded by the Public Works Department's District Engineer, Mr. F. W. Martin, who held office for about two years, and was followed by Mr. J. A. Wilson, previously the Resident Engineer at Westport for the Public Works Department. In 1893 Mr. T. H. Rawson was appointed as Engineer, and in 1898 Mr. R. A. Young succeeded him, and still holds the office, though absent on leave.

21. In 1902 the Board began to consider the question of forming a tidal basin.

22. No work of any consequence had been done on the breakwaters since 1894, until in the year 1900 the raising of the eastern breakwater from half-tide level was commenced, which work was completed in 1906. Work was then resumed on the extension of the eastern breakwater.

23. In 1906 a floating basin was commenced on the eastern side of the river.

24. In 1907 two accounts appear in the balance-sheets—viz., "Cape Foulwind Railway Reserve, £633 1s. 9d."; and "Harbour expenses, £3,245 18s. 4d." The account "Cape Foulwind Railway Reserve" includes, if not wholly comprises, moneys expended in the purchase and laying-out of a recreation and sports ground at Cape Foulwind. The account "Harbour expenses" includes work carried out in forming a river wall and an esplanade in the Town of Westport. In 1908 and subsequent years the accounts for "Cape Foulwind Railway Reserve" and "Harbour expenses" still appear in the balance-sheets.

25. In 1908 the Board took steps to raise a further sum of £200,000 on the security of its endowments for the purpose of continuing each breakwater for a distance of 600 ft. at an estimated cost of £101,500, and the purchase of two dredges at £40,000 each, leaving a balance of £18,500 for contingencies; and this money was borrowed in the following year.

26. In 1909 the Board, out of moneys derived from this loan, purchased a suction dredge, the "Eileen Ward."

27. The Board's balance-sheets are made up to the 31st December in each year, and we have had these supplemented by a statement from the Secretary of the Board bringing the details of the receipts and expenditure down to the 31st March, 1913. The following statement shows the Board's receipts derived from revenue and loan. It has not been reconciled with the statement prepared for us by the Audit Department, from which it differs to an extent so slight as to be negligible for the purpose of this inquiry:—