

It was brought to our notice that some works had been carried out, notably the Rotokohu-Tirohia Drainage Canal, which seemed to us to be more in the nature of drainage of private lands than a public drainage scheme. Possibly it was the intention of the Department to recover the cost from the private landowners under section 16 of the Act, though it seems a little doubtful whether the provisions of that section would extend quite as far as this.

In our report we have suggested that the County and Borough Councils should be levied upon for the amounts considered to be fairly payable by the settlers of the district towards the annual expenses of the scheme, the local authorities to have power to levy a special rate to reimburse themselves for this outlay. If section 108 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act, 1917, would operate to prevent the Hauraki Plains County Council from levying any such rate, it will be necessary to amend that section to provide that it shall not apply to the proposed river-improvement rate.

The lower portion of the Waihou River is within the jurisdiction of the Thames Harbour Board; but it seems to the Commissioners that the body which is to control the rest of the river (say, seventy miles in length) should also control the last few miles at the mouth. There are two wharves in this latter portion of the river, at which, we understand, wharfage dues are collected by the Thames Harbour Board. If the Commissioners' proposal to charge a tonnage rate on all imports to or exports from the river, instead of wharfage, is adopted, it would be advisable to make this change apply to the wharves on the lower reach of the river as well as to those higher up the stream. It is a matter, therefore, for the Government to consider whether the Thames Harbour Board should not be relieved from administering any portion of the Waihou River.

The Borough of Waihi is in financial difficulties at the present time, and if, pending a rearrangement of its finances, it could obtain a temporary loan of £10,000, the Mayor is of opinion that it could tide over its difficulties and would also be able to pay the interest on the loan. The municipal debt at Waihi is comparatively small, due to the inability of the borough to borrow on the security which it is able to offer, but if the Government could see its way to guarantee a loan of £10,000 this difficulty would be overcome.

The Commission promised to submit this matter to the Government for consideration, and now does so accordingly.

Signed on behalf of the Commission.

H. J. H. BLOW, Chairman.

The Hon. Minister of Public Works, Wellington.

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## REPORT.

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To His Excellency the Right Honourable John Rushworth, Viscount Jellicoe, Admiral of the Fleet, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, &c., Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Dominion of New Zealand and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

Your Excellency's Commission, dated the 11th July, 1921, directed us to inquire into and report—

“(1.) As to whether the allocation, under clause (d), subsection (4), of section 17 of the Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers Improvement Act, 1910, of the cost of providing, from the 1st day of April, 1921, the interest and sinking funds on any loans raised for the purpose of carrying out the works authorized by the Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers Improvement Act, 1910, together with the cost of administration and maintenance, is, under existing conditions, fair and equitable, and, if not, what variation should be made in such allocation.