

*Waimakariri River Harbour (Kaiapoi).*—The original constitution of this harbour district embraced the districts of the following local authorities: The boroughs of Kaiapoi and Rangiora, and the counties of Rangiora, Eyre, Oxford, Waipara, Amuri, Cheviot, Ashley, and Kowhai.

As the place for shipment and discharge of cargo is the Town of Kaiapoi, which is connected with the general railway system, it is difficult to understand how so wide a district came to be constituted. Owing to the condition of the river-mouth the port had practically been closed for some years. From this and the fact that the port was of no use to the greater part of the district an agitation arose to abolish the district, and at the previous election eight out of ten members were returned with that object in view. This position resulted in the promotion of legislation designed to exclude the districts of all the constituent local authorities except the Borough of Kaiapoi. This proposal was given every support, and, incidentally, the loan authority of the Board was cut down from £90,000 to £15,000.

*Mangonui Harbour District and Awanui Harbour District.*—These Bills proposed to constitute two separate Harbour Board districts, each of small area and adjoining one another, both within the Mongonui County.

The Mangonui Bill proposed to constitute a special local body to deal with Mangonui Wharf alone.

The Awanui Harbour Bill was likewise designed to constitute still another local authority, ostensibly to deal with a wharf to be constructed outside the mouth of the Awanui River to take the place of the wharf within the Awanui River, which at that time was silting up. The total estimated cost was about £11,000, £8,000 of which would be required for road access, a work outside a Harbour Board's but within a county's function.

As the Mongonui County Council had already been vested with the powers of a Harbour Board in respect of Mangonui Wharf, it appeared to the Department that there was no justification for the creation of these two Harbour Boards, the administration expenses of which would absorb any revenues which might be derived from harbour charges and leave nothing for the maintenance of the wharves; but that, on the contrary, the proper course was to extend the county's powers under the Harbours Act to Awanui Harbour.

Neither Bill was passed.

During the past two years the Department, in pursuance of the policy enunciated in last year's report, has become involved with the Gisborne and the Napier Harbour Boards in respect of their harbour-development policies.

In both cases statutory loan authority for the works proposed had been obtained and loan proposals sanctioned by the ratepayers.

*Gisborne.*—A scheme of outer harbour-works, in conformity with the local Act and also in conformity with the general issue submitted to the ratepayers, had been approved for prosecution in terms of the Harbours Act. The Department became aware, however, that the Board contemplated the carrying-out of a minor or inner-harbour scheme which, in the opinion of its professional adviser, was doomed to failure, and which, in any case, was not in accordance with statutory authority, vote of the ratepayers, or plans approved under the Harbours Act. The matter was taken up with the Board with definite result, and prosecution of an approved outer-harbour scheme is now in hand.

*Napier.*—In this case statutory loan authority had been obtained for the prosecution of a scheme of works in what is known as the Inner Harbour. Ratepayers' sanction had also been obtained.

Expenditure already incurred on certain works made it clear that the scheme could not be completed for the balance of loan-money available. Even if the completed scheme of work would successfully achieve the results alleged by its supporters—an extremely doubtful question—it was clear that the prosecution of an incomplete scheme, such as could be carried on within the means available, was simply courting disaster. Local interest in the problem became so intense as to justify departmental intervention. The Marine Engineer made an exhaustive investigation, resulting in the compilation of an invaluable report which discussed the economic and engineering practicability of the Inner Harbour and Breakwater Harbour alternative schemes, and found convincingly in favour of the latter.

The position of the Harbour Board in the matter is extremely complicated and difficult, not only by reason of its statutory limitations to raise loans and prosecute works, but because of the conflict of local opinion. Before determining its further course of action the Board eventually decided to obtain further advice from the Consulting Engineers who previously reported on the alternative schemes, and in fairness to whom, it must be stated, no data whatever was available as to borings when they previously investigated. The present position is that the Board is now awaiting the report of its Consulting Engineers. Meantime the Department has the position well in hand, since no plans of future work which might be undertaken in connection with the Inner Harbour scheme have been approved and the Board cannot proceed without such approval.

*Timaru Harbour.*—This case is in a somewhat different category. The Board proposed to expend something like £400,000 in harbour-works designed to overcome certain difficulties. By the terms of its Constitution Act, dating away back to 1878, the Board is not permitted to enter into any contract for harbour-construction works until the plans therefor have been approved by a special Commission of expert and scientific men.

The Timaru Harbour Constitution Act is the only local Act which contains such a provision—an expression of the wisdom of the men who, in 1878, promoted the Act, and a recognition of the problem of creation of artificial harbours. It is doubtless to their precaution that Timaru Harbour owes its success.