

injury to trade which had been caused by the blocking up of the entrance to the port—to the extent of preventing the entrance or exit of vessels, and to endeavour to obtain a grant of money for harbour improvements. The evidence of Mr. Virtue shows that during the recent blocking of the Hokitika channel, there were fourteen vessels with 4,000 tons of cargo in the roadstead, and that the result had been great losses in trade, and a rise in the price of provisions. The evidence shows the Hokitika Harbour Board have an endowment of 30,000 acres of land, which is at present returning no revenue to the Board; but that the sum of £10,000 might be raised, giving the land as security for the debt. It also shows that the engineering survey recently made was carried out by Mr. Campbell, who was recommended by Dr. Hector, and that competitive plans for harbour works were invited by the Board. Since the return of Mr. Virtue to Hokitika, he has communicated with the Committee by telegram, stating that about thirty plans, accompanied by estimates and costs, had been sent in; that the cost of the works would be £30,000 or £40,000; and that the plans would be sent by the first steamer to Wellington. It may here be stated that the Hokitika Harbour Board propose to leave it entirely in the hands of the Government and their Engineering department to decide what plan of works shall be adopted.

The Hon. Mr. Bonar gave evidence before the Committee, and supplied a large amount of information as to the periodical blockades of the Port of Hokitika, the prejudicial effect thereby produced in trade generally, and the necessity of assistance being given from colonial funds for the construction of works inside the harbour.

I am directed by the Committee to recommend as follows:—

1. That it is desirable that the colony should assist in improving the Harbour of Hokitika.
2. That the plan of such improvements be approved by the General Government on the advice of their own professional officers.
3. That the cost of such improvements should not exceed the sum of £40,000.
4. That the colony should provide a sum of £25,000 towards the construction of the harbour works, on condition that the Harbour Board supply the sum of £15,000.

In reply to a telegram from the Chairman of the Committee, the Chairman of the Hokitika Harbour Board has stated that the Board pledge themselves to raise the sum of £15,000 towards the construction of the harbour improvement works, should the sum of £25,000 be given from colonial funds.

The evidence taken before the Committee, together with telegrams from the Chairman of the Hokitika Harbour Board and the Harbourmaster of Westland, are attached hereto.

EDMUND BARFF,  
Chairman.

22nd October, 1877.

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

FRIDAY, 7TH SEPTEMBER, 1877.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

PRESENT:

Mr. Barff,  
Sir R. Douglas,  
Hon. Mr. Gisborne,

Mr. Sheehan,  
Mr. Woolcock.

The order of reference of 5th September having been read,

On the motion of Mr. Sheehan,

*Resolved*, that Mr. Barff be appointed Chairman.

On the motion of Mr. Sheehan,

*Resolved*, That the Chairman be requested to move in the House, That a message be sent to the Legislative Council, requesting the Council to give leave to the Hon. Mr. Bonar to attend and give evidence before the Committee.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. Gisborne,

*Resolved*, That Mr. D. W. Virtue be requested to attend the next meeting of the Committee.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. Gisborne,

*Resolved*, That the Chairman see Mr. Carruthers, with a view of getting any preliminary information he may deem necessary relative to the railway from Greymouth to Hokitika.

The Committee then adjourned.

TUESDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 1877.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

PRESENT:

Mr. Barff in the chair.

Sir R. Douglas,  
Hon. Mr. Gisborne,

Mr. Sheehan,  
Mr. Woolcock.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

Order of reference, dated 10th September, read.

Mr. D. W. Virtue attended the Committee and gave evidence. (*Vide Minutes of Evidence.*)

The Committee then adjourned until Wednesday, the 12th instant, at 10.30 a.m.