

is dependent upon Hokitika, and the fact that great future prosperity is indicated by recent discoveries do you not think it would be penny-wisdom and pound-folly on the part of the colony to withhold a few thousand pounds expenditure in the improvement of the present harbour at Hokitika?—Yes. I think it is a colonial necessity that this harbour should be kept open; and I think that the colony ought to assist in keeping it open, more especially because of the natural difficulties.

144. Are you aware that between Ross and Okarito there are large tracts of open agricultural land?—I have been told so on good authority.

145. And good timber land?—Splendid timber land.

146. Is the Board prepared to raise money itself to assist in doing this work if the colony will also assist?—Yes. The Board is quite prepared to go to the fullest extent of its authorized borrowing powers in view of the Government giving them some assistance.

147. I understand the state of the case is this: The locality says, "We will do all we possibly can in making the harbour a good one if the colony will assist us in the same object"?—Yes. The people themselves are perfectly willing to pay a considerable amount in dues, and to raise money to the fullest extent possible in order to do the work, if the colony will assist, because they recognize that they cannot do it unassisted.

148. The endowments the Board has at present are not immediately valuable?—No; but there is a prospect that they will be worth a good deal.

149. You consider that the opening of the harbour is a cheap and sure way of conducting materially to the prosperity and settlement of the country?—I do. I may say that during the last year Hokitika was one of the few places that showed a large increase in the amount of Customs revenue collected. I think the increase was about 30 per cent. The gold export also increased to a considerable extent.

150. Would the opening of the harbour be immediately reproductive in the sense that it would increase the Customs revenue, increase the population, open up the country, and be conducive to the settlement of it?—I consider it would.

151. Do you consider a railway from Greymouth to Hokitika would be directly reproductive—would it pay working expenses?—I think it would. The experience we have gained in respect to the Greymouth line shows that. The line almost paid before the coal mines were open. I think the line between Hokitika and Greymouth would pay, because it would pass through several centres of population.

152. Would it pay interest on the money expended?—Perhaps not.

153. Do you think it would in a short time?—Yes; there would be a considerable traffic, which does not exist at the present time. Both the coal and the timber trades will increase, and materially assist the railway. I believe it would pay in a very short time.

154. What do you mean by pay?—I believe it would leave a profit over and above working expenses even at the present time.

155. And would pay interest and working expenses shortly?—Yes.

156. Would it also be a public benefit, and conduce to the settlement of the country?—It would.

157. In point of fact, the development of the resources of the country depends upon this: good interior communication, with a good port or ports?—There is no doubt about that.

158. Even when the port is open, are not the arrivals and departures of vessels very precarious. Vessels may be kept out or in by winds, I understand?—Yes; we are always exposed to that. There are natural disadvantages in bar harbours quite sufficient to create obstructions to trade, without allowing those obstructions to exist which might be done away with.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

Mr. E. BARFF to Captain TURNBULL.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 13th October, 1877.

I AM instructed by Hokitika and Greymouth Public Works Committee to request you to supply by telegram any information you can give as to the state of the Port of Hokitika in connection with the proposal to construct harbour works, and generally as to your own opinion with regard to those works. Please reply as soon as convenient, as I am anxious to bring up a report to the House.

E. BARFF.

Captain TURNBULL to Mr. E. BARFF.

(Telegram.)

Hokitika, 13th October, 1877.

No definite plans of harbour works yet decided on, but much required for improving the port and conserving the bars. Will wire further on Monday.

T. TURNBULL.

Captain TURNBULL to Mr. E. BARFF.

(Telegram.)

Hokitika, 15th October, 1877.

I AM fully persuaded that the piling from wharf to North Spit end, and piling round South Spit end from lagoon, also piling from the Maori houses (cross-section number one on map), also near line in cross-section number ten to opposite transit shed, as proposed by the Harbour Board, would be of incalculable good in conserving the river, protecting property, and opening a good channel seaward.

T. TURNBULL.