

were to be got in New Zealand I might purchase here, consequently I went down to the West Coast and examined every part of it, I then went to Newcastle, and on coming back a fortnight afterwards, I returned to Westport and purchased a large interest in the Koranui mine, because I knew that the harbour would eventually be one of the best in the colony. I may say that I have come to the conclusion that if £50,000 were judiciously spent on the breakwater, we could prevent the loose shingle from coming across the mouth of the harbour, and by so doing, we could have at least 2 or 3 feet more water on the bar; of course I mean that £50,000 would only go towards the cost, and not that it would make the harbour perfect. The shingle is very loose, and if it is allowed to come across from the east, it will block the harbour up at every gale.

Mr. Williams.
1st June, 1882.

116. You know the entrance to the river?—Yes.

117. Do you think that if the eastern wall were carried out, it would have the effect of deepening the channel and the bar?—Yes; once the protection wall is placed there nothing more will be required. I may state that in the course of my travels, I have been to Sunderland and other places, and I believe that for an expenditure of £50,000 Westport could be made a better harbour than Sunderland is. I think it would be better to have a wall on both the eastern and western sides, if possible, though, I believe the eastern wall would be sufficient, if no more could be got.

118. *Mr. Levin.*] How far do you think £50,000 would carry out the wall?—I cannot state the distance exactly. I think the Government should do something to improve this port, if it is only to be regarded as a harbor of refuge.

119. You think that an expenditure of £50,000 ought to procure for you 3 feet more water on the bar?—Yes; more than that. The last time the steamer "Westport" came over the bar, I may say that she drew 12 feet 6 inches of water, and had 350 tons of coal on board, and she never touched the bottom.

120. Did you not make two trips out in one week?—Yes, we took 1,500 tons out from Westport in one month in the one boat. I have paid more than £40,000 a year to Newcastle for coals, and I have no hesitation in saying that, if the work proposed is carried out, we shall in a couple of years put Newcastle coals nearly altogether out of the New Zealand market.

121. *Mr. Fish.*] You think that nearly the whole of the sum you have mentioned (£40,000) would be spent on Westport coal if the work is done?—Yes, I believe that more than two-thirds of that amount would be spent in Westport.

122. *Mr. Macandrew.*] In ordinary weather what depth of water would a vessel require under her keel in order that she might pass safely over?—In calm weather I could come out with safety if I had from 6 to 9 inches under my boat. Of course that could only be when the weather was very fine. In rough weather it would be unwise on the part of any man to come out at all. I may say that at Westport you never get rough weather for more than two or three days at a time.

123. *Mr. Allwright.*] You state that by expending £50,000 you could get a greater depth—viz, 2 or 3 feet of water on the bar?—Yes, the depth of water on the bar varies, but it generally comes back to its usual depth in two or three days.

124. Then you think that by expending this £50,000 you would get 16 feet of water on the bar at spring tides?—Yes; as I told Mr Pharazyn the other day, I have no doubt we should get at least 2 feet more water on the bar.

125. Would 16 feet of water be sufficient for all vessels that trade to the port?—No; it would be sufficient to bring out vessels that would supply local wants only, but for the foreign trade you would require a depth of 26 feet. If you got a good depth I believe vessels would come from Melbourne to Westport for coal. I wish the Committee to understand that trading vessels do not draw 26 feet of water—only those large steamers that are now building, and some running do so.

126. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Of course those vessels would regulate their visits to suit the spring tides?—Yes; and I may say that I do that myself.

127. *Mr. Allwright.*] Can a steamer go over the bar in any weather?—No; it would be madness to attempt to go over in a northerly gale.

128. *Mr. Macandrew.*] In the event of £50,000 being sufficient to produce a greater depth by 2 feet would your Company and the other company interested be inclined to take the matter in hand, provided that the Government made an abatement in the royalty?—Speaking for myself, I can say that I would do so, and I believe the other Companies would do so too.

129. Do you think that if there were an abatement of threepence per ton, on as many tons as would, at the reduced rate, bring in £3,000 per annum, the Companies would, in consideration of that find the money and do the work that is required?—Yes; I think we are unanimous in our opinion that it is necessary we should do all we can. I may inform you that in Newcastle, where there is 22 feet on the bar, vessels are frequently bar-bound for some days, and even at times for a week.

130. Have you seen Sir John Coode's report on the Westport Harbour?—Yes.

131. Do you think the port could be made available for much larger vessels?—Yes; I do think so, and I say that after having carefully studied the matter, our main object is to stop the wash from coming from the north-east.

132. *The Chairman.*] Have you seen the harbour works at Timaru?—Yes.

133. Do you think that a wall similar to that should be constructed?—No; a much less expensive work would do. The stone that would be required is on the spot. In this respect we are more favoured than any other coal port in the colony, and as there will be plenty of labour available in the summer time, owing to the fact that there is less employment for the coal miners, the work could be done more cheaply than under ordinary circumstances. The miners would be very glad to get work on the breakwater during the summer months. When the coal trade is slack in Newcastle, N.S.W., miners that get full work in winter seldom get more than half-time in the summer.

Mr. George.

Mr. J. R. GEORGE, examined.

134. *The Chairman.*] You are Chairman of the Koranui Coal Company?—I am.

135. The Committee would like you to tell them how much your Company has expended in the