

*Mr. George.*  
19th June, 1882.

development of its lease?—About £32,000 up to the present time, and by the time we have done, we shall have expended about £35,000.

136. When do you expect to begin your operations?—In a week or two.

137. What do you calculate will be your output?—At present not a great deal, but the works are laid for putting out 500 tons per day.

138. You know that the object of this Committee is to ascertain by what means, if any, the harbour can be deepened. Now, suppose that the Government did not see their way to expend money on the improvements we refer to, do you think your Company would, in consideration of an abatement of the royalty, take the work in hand?—I could not give an answer to that question at once, but I should say that the Company would do all they possibly could in the matter.

139. Suppose that £100,000 were expended by the Government on the work, would your Company and the others which are interested be prepared to pay interest on the amount out of the royalties that they would receive?—I think there would not be much difficulty in that respect. I do not think our Company would object to assist in guaranteeing the interest, and I would do all I could to promote any arrangement of that sort.

140. *Mr. Macandrew.*] You say you have already expended £32,000?—Yes; about that.

141. And by means of that expenditure you expect to be able to bring out about 500 tons of coal a day?—Yes.

142. Do you think that £50,000, laid out judiciously, would give you 16 feet of water on the bar?—Yes; speaking roughly, I should think it would. Speaking as an engineer, I think that the expenditure of £50,000 would secure a depth of 16 feet on the bar at spring tides, provided it was expended on the northern breakwater, which would be carried out to a certain distance across the flat between the river and the bar, on Sir J. Coode's plan.

143. Then should there be any difficulty about the Government finding the money to carry out this wall to a certain distance, you think your Company and the others interested will be inclined to co-operate to do the work themselves, to find the money and have control of the work, &c., in consideration of an abatement of the royalty?—I think we should be prepared to do something in that direction, but it is a rather large question to answer at once.

144. Do you think the money would be expended more judiciously by a Company than by the Government?—I think it would be better that the Government should carry out the work themselves.

145. *The Chairman.*] Do you know the wall they are erecting now?—Yes; I saw the beginning of the work when I was down there.

146. *Mr. Macandrew.*] In the event of the two companies combining to find the money, do you think it would be better for the Government to expend the money—or, rather, that it should be expended under their direction?—No; I think the Government had better find the money and do the work, for, if the Companies found the money they would like to spend it.

147. In the event of its taking that shape, I suppose there would be no difficulty in so arranging the matter that the companies shall not have a monopoly of a absolute control over the harbour?—I presume that if the Companies make this breakwater, and deepen the harbour, an arrangement would be come to by which they would obtain a portion of the wharfage dues.

148. Could you not make it a free port?—I do not think that could be done.

149. Do you think that if large vessels could get in, each of the two Companies could deliver 500 tons of coal per day to them?—Yes.

CAPTAIN JAMES LEYS examined.

*Captain Leys.*

150. *The Chairman.*] You have been trading to the Buller River for the last 15 or 16 years?—Yes.

151. Do you know what prevailing winds affect the bar in its shifting movements?—For the last seven years I have been constantly trading to Westport from Wanganui, and, as far as I know, the weather does not affect the bar to any great extent, because it is very much sheltered by the Steeples. During the seven years I have been trading there, the bar has not shifted half a mile. It is not so much the prevailing wind and sea that affect it, as the blind channel in the North Spit. That is what causes the obstruction, it divides the channel and makes the bar shallow.

152. Do you know the training-wall that the Government are erecting now?—Yes.

153. Do you think that if that wall were continued as far as is shown on that chart, it would have the effect of deepening the bar?—Yes, I think it would give at least 1 or 2 feet more in depth. At one time they put in a few bags to deepen the bar, and even then there was an increased depth.

154. *Mr. Allwright.*] What is the depth of your vessel when she is loaded?—About 7 feet 6 inches. I never have found any difficulty in getting in.

155. What is the depth of water on the bar at ordinary tide?—10 or 11 feet, and at spring tide 14 or 15 feet. I may say that Westport is a sort of "harbour of refuge," as other boats going to Greymouth have to go in there in order to find out the state of the bar at the last named place, before they venture onwards. They are afraid to go on without going into Westport to ascertain the state of the bar at Greymouth. The Buller Bar is a far better one to take than the Grey.

WEDNESDAY, 21ST JUNE, 1882. (Mr. MUNRO in the Chair.)

Mr. W. N. BLAIR, Engineer in Charge, Middle Island, examined.

*Mr. Blair.*  
21st June, 1882.

156. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Blair, will you state what are the works at present being carried on at Westport by the Government?—Yes; a portion of the eastern training-wall, according to Sir John Coode's plan is being gone on with, but instead of commencing at the inner end of the wall near the coal staiths, we only commence at the beach and go on outwards. Then, in order to get to the proper line it is