

65. *Mr. Whyte.*] Have your estimates of the progressive cost been verified?—Yes: when I made up the accounts in April I was between £1,300 and £1,400 under my estimate—that is, to the good.

66. *Mr. Graham.*] What is your estimate of the selling-value of the plant?—The plant cost us £15,392, exclusive of the freight.

67. Supposing a market were found for it after having taken the breakwater out to the extent of 1,160ft.?—You should easily get £12,000 for it. I do not think it would be dear at the full value, for the purchasers would have the benefit of the freight-charges.

68. *Mr. Whyte.*] Is this plant of the most modern description?—Yes.

69. *Mr. Graham.*] What is your opinion with regard to public feeling in the district: is it to stop the work?—With the exception of about four, I have never heard any one suggesting the stopping of it.

70. *Mr. Ross.*] You said the Government had both plans before them—the present plan and the Stony Point plan—at the same time. That is not quite what Mr. Higginson says. The present plan, it would appear, was approved by the Governor in Council, and some time elapsed before the alternative plan was prepared?—Mr. Higginson got all his information from me. If the Committee will allow me I will read two paragraphs from my report to the Board in October, 1886, which explain the matter: “In October last plans and specifications and a report were submitted to the Government for approval, showing a solid breakwater beginning at the outer beacon and going seaward for 1,800ft., thence curving towards the west for 470ft. further. This pier was connected with the mainland by a light timber viaduct, and was parallel to the natural line of the river, so that the river would sweep along the inner side, removing any silt or sand in the way. A groin was also provided opposite Peel Street to intercept any sand coming from the west; the intention being that this would be ultimately extended into deep water, and to be used for shipping purposes. After these plans were sent down an alternate scheme was prepared. In this case the work began about 30 chains further along the Kaiti Beach, at Stony Point. It shows a concrete root 700ft. long at low-water mark, then runs 1,500ft. seaward in a straight line, from which it curves to the west for 550ft., making a total of 2,050ft., with 25ft. at low water, and if carried to 2,420ft. it intersects the line of the other scheme at 23½ft. at low water. Both these plans were before the Government, and they selected the former, making a slight alteration on the breakwater line at 800ft.” They were both before the Government before the present one was approved.

71. *Mr. Whyte.*] It has been said that this sandspit has been coming forward. Is that so?—There was a sandspit in 1885. Then, some time ago, this spit was washed away, and the bar came in inwards. We have had a lot of heavy weather, and this heavy weather has sent the sand further out than it was six months ago; but the sandspit is nothing like what it was when I went there first.

72. Sand will always make up in heavy gales?—In 12ft. of water it is a recognised fact that waves do not act upon the bottom.

73. As a matter of fact, has the work made the sandspit worse or better?—It has not affected it, practically speaking. It just comes and goes a little. The fact is, there is less sand than there was. [Witness indicated on the map where the sand had backed up.]

74. *Mr. Allen.*] Is there any chance of its going over this work?—No; I do not think there is the slightest prospect of its rising and going over the works.

75. *Mr. Whyte.*] Is the quantity of sand considerable?—Comparatively speaking, it is not.

76. *Mr. Graham.*] With respect to the lighterage of the larger steamers which could not go inside, would not the lighterage be very much facilitated if this work was done?—Yes, if we were only to go out a few hundred feet beyond the present works.

77. The great risk now is crossing the bar. You can avoid that altogether?—Yes: about 350ft. more would take us into 6ft. at low water, and that would be a great convenience.

Mr. A. GRAHAM, M.H.R., examined.

*Mr. Graham:* Mr. Ormond says one great objection of the people on the coast to this work going on is because the original site—that is, the one in the Act of 1884—was not adhered to. The schedule to that Act states the object of the work is the construction of, at, or near, the site reported upon by Sir John Coode. It does not say particularly it is to be Sir John Coode's plan. The whole of the money authorised in this Act of 1884 was obtained when the loan was floated. The Board then set to work and got an Engineer. Sir John Coode's plan was made out from data supplied him; he only spent some two hours in the place. Soundings were taken by the Government at considerable expense, which were supplied to Sir John Coode; but when we got our own Engineer through he commenced to take soundings and make surveys again, it being considered necessary to have this done. I do not think Sir John Coode's plan was supplied with the idea of having it carried out as a work at all. I have no doubt that had Sir John Coode had further data and correct soundings given him, he would have altered his plans entirely. The Board's Engineer found very serious discrepancies in the soundings, and found it absolutely necessary to change the plans. Mr. Higginson refers in several places in his report to this. On page 3 he says, “Upon comparing the soundings taken for Sir John Coode with those more recently taken by the Harbour Engineer I find a considerable difference, denoting either that the sandy bottom is changing or that there had been carelessness in taking them originally.” As to how the site and plan were fixed upon, Mr. Higginson goes into that fully on page 2 of his report, where he says, “Upon the 12th May, 1885, a petition was presented to the Board, signed by two hundred residents, praying that the breakwater might be approached from the lower side of the Turanganui River. On the 13th October, 1885, the Engineer exhibited his sketch of the proposed harbour works to the Board, and was instructed to proceed to Wellington at an early date, for the purpose of obtaining the approval of the Marine Department to the plans. At a meeting of the Board, on the 22nd