

not engaged in coasting only, 2d. per ton. Our port charges are—for vessels plying within the port, or engaged in coasting only, 3d. per ton quarterly; for vessels not plying within the harbour, and not engaged in coasting only, 1d. per ton; vessels from beyond the Australian Colonies, 4d. per ton.

249. *The Chairman.*] How many of these charges do you put into operation?—The whole of these charges.

250. The £2,000 it will cost you extra upon spending the £40,000 is to be raised by extra charges on the shipping?—No; I do not say that. I say we shall have a surplus this year which will be sufficient to meet that, so that we will not have to make any extra charges this year.

251. That is not an answer to my question. How are you going to get £2,000 more by the extension of this work?—I can only say that these port charges can be increased up to 1s. 3d., and the wharfages can be increased and doubled if necessary. The wharfage-rate of 2s. 6d. could be made 5s. if necessary.

252. *Mr. Tanner.*] I think the contention is that the extension of this wharf will save the cost of lighterage. If you put on these heavy charges, will they not amount to more than the present rate of lighterage?—No; less, I think. There would be a saving, I reckon, of 2s. 6d. per ton.

253. *Mr. Ross.*] 162,879 is the tonnage of vessels which visit your port: that includes all the large steamers?—Yes.

254. If these works are carried out as proposed, will not the large steamers which at present call run past your port, because all the goods will be brought by smaller steamers to your port?—We do not anticipate that at all.

*Mr. Graham:* I may point out that the rate on these steamers is only a half-yearly one, and, although the tonnage of these steamers is very large in the aggregate, it does not bring in much revenue. There would not be very much increase if the present rate were doubled.

255. *Mr. Allen.*] Do you only expect to get £1,500 from the whole of your charges?—No: that is in addition to what we get now.

256. *Mr. Ross.*] How can you reasonably expect that the Union Company will send their larger steamers, with the increased dues, when the smaller vessels can do the trade?—There is a passenger-traffic.

257. *The Chairman.*] Do you charge dues now on large boats like the "Mararoa," for instance?—Yes: 1d. per ton.

258. I cannot believe that this tonnage is stated correctly at 154,000?—The rate is not charged on that. As a matter of fact this is how the charge is made: The Union Company have a certain number of boats which trade regularly with the port, and these boats pay once in every six months. In this telegram from the Collector of Customs the aggregate includes the tonnage on every visit.

259. That is misleading the Committee?—That is called the tonnage of the port.

260. The Committee want to know what you can charge upon for your revenue? We want you to tell us how you are going to make up this £2,000 of extra revenue?—I expect to have to increase the wharfage, and I have a margin in the port dues between 3d. and 1d., and 1s. 3d.

261. Can you tell us what amount of tonnage is included in this £600 which appears as revenue from port charges in the estimates for 1888?—I cannot tell you. I have not got the information with me.

262. Under what section of your by-laws are you now collecting for the Board?—Under section 4. The Collector of Customs verifies this in his telegram.

*Mr. Graham:* I might suggest to the Committee that a simple way of getting at it would be this: Mr. Bourke says they have power to raise the rates. The present port charges are 3d. and 1d. Supposing these charges were double, they would bring in another £600. Then, as to the wharfage-dues, supposing an extra 2s. per ton were put on, the revenue from this source alone would be £2,000. There you have £2,600. These are the items from which, Mr. Bourke says, they look for the increase of revenue. As to the question of lighterage, the present rate of lighterage is 5s., which would be saved; so that, if 2s. extra were put on the wharfage-dues, there would still be a saving of 3s. per ton on the total cost of landing goods.

263. *The Chairman.*] What sum did you obtain for your debentures?—£204,107 5s., £4,107 5s. of that sum being premium.

264. What was stated in the prospectus? Have you got a copy?—Yes. [Prospectus read by witness.]

265. There is nothing stated in the prospectus with regard to any rate arising from the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act: that was not offered as a security?—No.

266. You tell the financial public at Home you have a right to raise a rate of 2d. on town property and 1d. on country property. How do you make that out?—Under the Act, I take it, we have a right to levy that rate.

267. Have the Board taken any legal opinion on the question?—Yes, several.

268. How many opinions have you had?—I think two.

269. What was the purport of either of them?—There was a difference of opinion. One considered 3d. and 1d. the maximum rate, and the other 1d. and 2d.

270. What solicitors gave these opinions?—I cannot remember this moment.

271. Were they practising in Gisborne?—Yes, I think so.

272. You made a positive statement to the bondholders at Home which may prove erroneous, and about which, in any case, there is very grave doubt?—There was no doubt at the time.

273. What amount have you raised from rates arising from the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act?—On Crown lands, £285 4s. 1d. per annum, and on Native lands, £499 5s. 10d.

274. How long have you raised those rates?—This amount was received as rates for 1887. That is the only rate we have received from these lands.

275. How do these rates come to be handed to you at all? Where did the rates from the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act go to previously?—It is under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act we received these rates.