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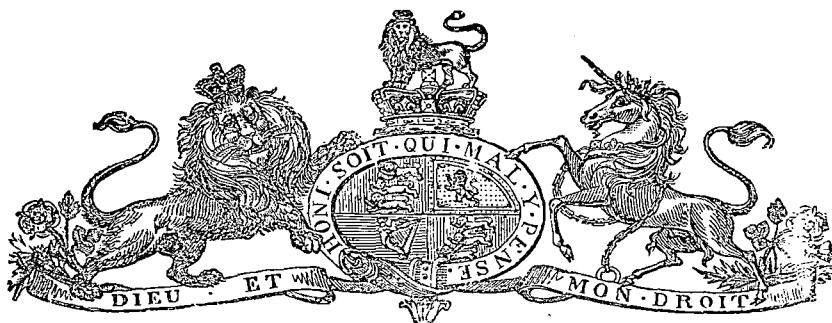
1891.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

THE LAWDER HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT
BILL (PRIVATE) :

REPORT FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE, WITH MINUTES
OF THE PROCEEDINGS, EVIDENCE, AND APPENDICES.

Brought up by Mr. Lewis, September 10, 1891, and ordered by the House of
Assembly to be printed.



SELECT COMMITTEE appointed, on the 31st July, to inquire into "A Bill to enable Arthur William Lawder to construct and maintain a navigable Channel from the Entrance of Macquarie Harbour, on the West Coast of Tasmania, to the Entrance of Long Bay, in the vicinity of the Town of Strahan: and to construct and maintain Breakwaters, Tidal Walls, Lighthouses, Buoys, Wharfs, Tramways, and other Works in Macquarie Harbour aforesaid; and to control and manage the said Channel and other Works."

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

MR. GILL.
MR. HIDDLESTONE.
MR. MACKENZIE.
MR. M'CALL.

MR. SIDEBOTTOM.
MR. S. J. SUTTON.
MR. FEATHERSTONE. (*Mover.*)

DAYS OF MEETING.

Tuesday, 11th August; Wednesday, 12th August; Friday, 14th August; Tuesday, 18th August; Wednesday, 2nd September; Friday, 4th September; Wednesday, 9th September.

WITNESSES EXAMINED.

Mr. T. A. Reynolds, Contractor, Mount Zeehan; Mr. M. R. Jones, Civil Engineer, Hobart; Mr. George Beedham, Solicitor; Mr. R. Rex, Merchant; Mr. A. W. Lawder, Civil Engineer; Mr. Henry Chesterman, Merchant; Mr. Fredk. Back, Manager Government Railways.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 1891.

The Committee met at 2 P.M.

Present.—Mr. Gill, Mr. Hiddlestone, Mr. Mackenzie, Mr. Sidebottom, Mr. S. J. Sutton, and Mr. Featherstone.

Mr. Featherstone was unanimously voted to the Chair.

The Chairman laid upon the Table the Petition praying for permission to bring in the Bill. (Appendix A.)

Ordered, That the following witnesses be summoned to appear before the Committee and give evidence on Wednesday, the 12th instant, at 2 P.M.:—Mr. T. A. Reynolds, Elizabeth-street; Mr. M. R. Jones, *Hadley's Hotel*; Mr. George Beedham; Mr. Robert Rex, Franklin Wharf; Mr. A. W. Lawder, *Hadley's Hotel*.

Resolved, That Mr. A. W. Lawder be allowed to appear and address the Committee in support of the Preamble of the Bill, to examine witnesses, and give his own evidence thereon.

The Committee adjourned at 2.40 P.M. until 2 P.M. on Wednesday, the 12th inst.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 1891.

The Committee met at 2.15 P.M.

Present.—Mr. Gill, Mr. Sidebottom, Mr. Hiddlestone, Mr. S. J. Sutton, Mr. M'Call, and Mr. Featherstone (Chairman).

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. A. W. Lawder was admitted, and addressed the Committee in support of the Preamble of the Bill.

Mr. A. W. Lawder laid the following documents on the Table—

No. 1.—Approximate Estimates of Cost of Proposed Improvements to Macquarie Harbour (*see Evidence, p. 1.*)

No. 2.—Plan attached to Mr. C. Napier Bell's Report, April 1890, Macquarie Harbour.

No. 3.—Plan of Entrance to Macquarie Harbour (attached to Mr. C. Napier Bell's Report, April, 1891.

Mr. Lawder was then examined, and placed the following written evidence before the Committee.

Mr. Lawder was then further examined.

Mr. R. R. Rex was called in and examined.

Mr. Rex withdrew.

Mr. George Beedham was called in and examined.

Mr. Beedham withdrew.

Mr. T. A. Reynolds, contractor and steamship proprietor, was called in and examined.

Mr. Reynolds withdrew.

The Committee adjourned at 4 P.M. until 2 P.M. on Friday, the 14th instant.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 1891.

The Committee met at 2·10 P.M.

Present—Mr. Gill, Mr. Sidebottom, Mr. Conway, and Mr. Featherstone (Chairman).

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. Lawder was admitted.

Mr. Henry Chesterman, merchant, was called in and examined.

Mr. Chesterman withdrew.

Mr. Frederick Back, Manager of the Government Railways, was called in and examined.

Mr. Back withdrew.

Mr. M. R. Jones was examined.

Mr. M. R. Jones withdrew.

Ordered, That Captain E. Miles be summoned to attend and give evidence before the Committee at 2 P.M. on Tuesday, the 18th instant.

The Committee adjourned at 3·45 P.M. until 2 P.M. on Tuesday, the 18th instant.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 1891.

No quorum at 2 o'clock.

At 8.40 P.M. the Committee met, leave having been granted by the House.

Present.—Mr. Sidebottom, Mr. Gill, Mr. S. J. Sutton, Mr. M'Call, and Mr. Featherstone (Chairman).

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. R. J. Lucas, Solicitor, was called in and examined.

Mr. Lucas withdrew.

Mr. W. T. H. Brown, Conservator of Forests and Master Mariner, was called in and examined.

Mr. Brown withdrew.

The Preamble was then considered and agreed to.

The attendance of Captain E. Miles was excused on the plea of urgent private business.

The Committee then adjourned until a period to be hereafter decided on by the Chairman.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1891.

The Committee met at 3·15 P.M.

Present.—Mr. Gill, Mr. Hiddlestone, Mr. S. J. Sutton, and Mr. Featherstone.

Mr. Featherstone tabled newspaper correspondence *re* Tolls proposed in Lawder Harbour Bill. (Appendix B.)

At 3·20 P.M. the Committee adjourned until 2·15 P.M. on Friday, 4th instant.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1891.

The Committee met at 2·15 P.M.

Present—Mr. Sidebottom, Mr. Hiddlestone, Mr. Gill, Mr. S. J. Sutton, and Mr. Featherstone (Chairman).

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. W. T. H. Brown, Conservator of Forests and Master Mariner, was called in and examined.

Mr. Brown withdrew.

The Preamble was considered and agreed to.

V

Clauses 1 to 20 read and agreed to.

Clause 21 read, and amended by adding the following words—" Provided that such tolls, dues, and charges shall at all times be subject to revision and reduction by the Governor in Council immediately a net return of 15 per cent. in any one year is given on the amount of expenditure" (Mr. Featherstone), and agreed to.

Clauses 22 to 37 read and agreed to.

Clause 38 amended in line 16 by inserting the words "as to the revision of a reduction of tolls, dues, and charges" after the word "compensation"; in line 7 by inserting the words "and of such tolls, dues, and charges" after the word "compensation," and agreed to.

Clauses 39 to 50 agreed to.

Schedule amended and agreed to.

The Committee adjourned at 3:45 P.M. until Wednesday, the 9th instant, at 11 A.M.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1891.

The Committee met at 2:35 P.M.

Present—Mr. Gill, Mr. S. J. Sutton, Mr. Sidebottom, and Mr. Featherstone (Chairman).

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. Lawder, Civil Engineer and Petitioner, was called in and examined, and tabled extracts from *Mercury re Macquarie Harbour Entrance*. (Appendix C.)

Mr. Lawder withdrew.

The Chairman tabled a letter from Mr. G. D. Gibson. (Appendix D.)

A letter was read from Captain Miles expressing his regret at having been unable to obey the summons of the Committee, and stating his willingness to attend when again called on.

The Draft Report was tabled and agreed to.

Resolved that the Chairman present the Report, as agreed to, to the House.

The Committee adjourned *sine die*.

R E P O R T.

YOUR Committee, having taken evidence in support of the allegations contained in the Preamble of the Bill, have the honor to report that the said Preamble has been proved to their satisfaction.

Your Committee having agreed that the Preamble should stand part of the Bill, then entered upon the consideration of the several Clauses and the Schedule.

Your Committee recommend the following amendments :—

In Clause 21, by adding the Proviso :—“ Provided that such dues and charges shall at all times be subject to revision and reduction by the Governor in Council immediately a net return of Fifteen per cent. in any one year is given on the amount of expenditure.”

In Clause 38, line 16, by inserting the words “ or as to the revision of, or reduction of, tolls, dues, and charges” after the word “ compensation,” and by inserting the words “ tolls, dues, and charges” after the word “ compensation” in line 17.

In the Schedule—

By inserting the words—“ Live stock not to be considered as cargo. All live stock or passengers carried in vessels over Two hundred tons register be admitted free,” after the word “ Port.”

By striking out the words—

“ Pilot Dues.

Sailing Vessels	6 <i>d.</i> per ton register.
Steam Vessels	4 <i>d.</i> per ton register.

But no Vessel shall pay more than £15.

Light Dues.

3*d.* per ton register.

But no Vessel shall pay more than £25, or £150 for six months consecutively ;”

and by inserting the words :—

“ Pilot Dues and Light Dues.

All Fees for Pilot and Light Dues to be fixed from time to time by the Consolidated Marine Board.”

Your Committee recommend the Bill as amended to the favourable consideration of your Honorable House.

C. E. FEATHERSTONE, *Chairman.*

Committee Room, 9th September, 1891.

EVIDENCE,

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 1891.

ARTHUR WILLIAM LAWDER, *called and examined.*

1. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Arthur William Lawder.
2. What are you? I am a civil engineer.
3. What are your qualifications? I am a Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers and a Fellow of the Geological Society of London.
4. Will you explain the Bill now before the Committee? I have prepared a statement, which I will read. It is as follows:—

Necessity for opening Harbour.

The small vessels now in use cross the bar under considerable risks and are often injured, and can only cross it during favourable weather. They cannot cross it at night, and have to wait for daylight. They have often to run in for shelter during bad weather between either Melbourne or Hobart and Macquarie, causing considerable delay and inconvenience. They can only be safely loaded with 20 to 30 tons of ores or bullion, and it would require a very large fleet of them to convey 200,000 tons of ore, &c., which may reasonably be taken as the output after, say, two years' working—say 80 vessels—which cannot be berthed without heavy outlay both in Hobart and Strahan. They cannot carry coke; large steam and sailing vessels are necessary. They have to pay high rates of insurance; they are most uncomfortable for passengers. The freights by small vessels are much higher than by large vessels.

Two petitions, signed by most of the inhabitants of Zeehan and Strahan, lately presented to His Excellency the Governor of Tasmania, set forth the necessity for the work, and pray that it may be carried out by *such agency as will secure its completion most rapidly.*

Cost of the Work.

The cost of the work will be as follows:—

Details—	£	£
Two breakwaters, aggregating 11,220 feet in length, at average £12 10s. per r.f.	140,250	
Training walls, say	20,000	
Dredging, including first cost of dredge permanently required	30,000	
Bridge, &c.	12,500	
Rails, plant, cranes, buildings, &c. after resale	20,000	
Permanent buildings	5000	
Buoys, marks, lighting, &c.....	5000	
	232,750	
Contingent expenses, at 5 per cent., say	11,637
TOTAL.....	...	£244,387

Cost of Maintenance per Annum.

Dredging, lighting, maintenance of buoys, repairs to breakwaters, staff, direction and subordinate establishment	£25,000
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Profits to Company.

Capital assumed (taking all risks)	£500,000
Gross income, on an average of 3s. 4d. per ton on 250,000 tons annually=£45,000, which, deducting cost of maintenance, &c. leaves £20,000, or four per cent. per annum.	

Benefits.

1. The rapid opening up of the mineral fields to the markets of the world—(a) permitting large consignments of ore and bullion to be exported; (b) coke to be imported, also iron ore and food and other supplies in large quantities.
2. Cheap fares and freights and comfortable travelling.
3. The prevention of a block to export traffic at Strahan.
4. The facility afforded to the railway from Zeehan to Strahan and its branches to convey large exports by the prevention of a block, and, consequently, increasing their profits.
5. It is expected that the work will be sufficiently advanced within 12 months after its commencement to admit of vessels of 800 tons passing over the bar, and vessels of 1500 tons within two years from the same date, improvements taking place steadily as the works proceed, and more safety secured for vessels.
6. Assume annually 200,000 tons of payable ore to be turned out when the mines are in fair work; with profits (net) of £5 per ton, this will yield one million sterling in annual dividends to shareholders.
7. Corresponding increase in population and commerce, to the benefit of the Colony.
8. A large increase in labour and payments for the same, also to the benefit of the Colony.
9. A large saving in freightage of ore and supplies in comparison with both the projected railway from Zeehan to Emu Bay and that from Zeehan to Hobart.*

* Cost per rail as compared with harbour:—

By Waratah to Emu Bay, at 9d. per ton mile for 100 miles, £3 15s. per ton; at 4d. per ton mile, £1 13s. 4d.

By Zeehan to Hobart, at 9d. per ton mile for 190 miles, £7 2s. 6d. per ton; at 4d. per ton mile, £3 3s. 4d.

By Strahan and Macquarie Harbour, at 9d. per ton mile for 30 miles rail, including 5s. per ton toll, £1 7s. 6d. per ton; at 4d. per ton rail (including toll), 15s.

The net saving effected by opening the harbour route will be, as compared with the Waratah route at 9d. per ton mile, £2 7s. 6d. per ton, or on 200,000 tons annually, £475,000; at 4d. per ton mile, 18s. 4d. per ton, or £183,333. As compared with the railway to Hobart, the net saving, at 9d. per ton mile, will be £5 15s. per ton, or, on 200,000 tons, £1,150,000 annually; at 4d. per ton mile, £483,333 annually.

[Lawder Harbour Works.]

10. The line from Zeehan to Waratah will take about 4 years to construct, and that to Hobart about 8 years, and neither can be of benefit *until opened throughout*.

11. The harbour works are to be constructed without extra burden on the taxpayer. They cost the country nothing, and no risk of failure, and only those using them, and to whom they save money, pay moderately for the convenience afforded; and the owners of the valuable mines and properties on the fields who will use the convenience will be well able to afford the small charges.

12. The Government can, at the expiry of 21 years, purchase the property as a going concern at 25 times the net profits (or 4 per cent. capitalized). Thus they will either take over a paying concern upon the security of which they can raise the purchase money without drawing upon the state funds or the taxpayer; or they will obtain it for nothing if it does not pay profits.

Objections.

To those who object to the opening of the Harbour in fear of all of the trade going to Melbourne, the enormous benefits to the Colony set forth above should be sufficient reply, and proves how insignificant their contention is by comparison; but their fear is groundless, as will be shown. Melbourne is about 316 miles from Strahan, and the passage is beset with dangerous reefs and currents; on the other hand, Hobart is only 210 miles, with no dangerous currents, and for about 54 miles of this distance there is smooth water (D'Entrecasteaux Channel). Hobart is the much superior port, and large ocean steamers come there willingly for fruit, and will assuredly come for ore and bullion as soon as a steady demand for such freight sets in. But this is not the only advantage to be gained by the Colony by this route, and also by the mineral fields on the west coast, inasmuch as we have very valuable coal fields on the south coast (the Sandfly, Southport, and Recherche), all in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, which must now be developed, and which will provide good coke for smelting works, and coal for west coast consumption, and these valuable requirements will form full return cargoes for the vessels in the trade. Thus a very important and considerable local enterprise will be developed, which up to this time has been almost forgotten.

There are some who object, on merely sentimental grounds, to what they call "giving away a Harbour." This is not accurate, for until it is opened it cannot be looked upon as an important harbour. Again, it will be only leased for 21 years; and of this several years will be required to carry out the work of opening it up. It will be governed by regulations sanctioned by the Government, and be kept in proper order under its superintendence. This case is, however, of special nature and necessity, and to keep it closed for merely the idea expressed above, when the great benefits shown above are considered, would be to sacrifice the field, and through it the prosperity of the Colony. There are many precedents, but it will be sufficient to mention the concessions granted to a syndicate for the construction of a harbour at Largs Bay, Adelaide, S.A., and the East Coast Coal and Harbour Works, Tasmania.

Tolls.

It is evident that these must be sufficient to induce private enterprise to subscribe the capital required, otherwise the concessions will be of no value.

Compared with the minimum freightage rates to be charged upon the Government railway from Zeehan to Strahan—viz., 9d. per ton mile—the charge for 30 miles of railway will be £1 2s. 6d., as against the maximum toll for the harbour of 5s. per ton. The expenditure upon the railway will be perhaps £150,000, while the harbour will cost £250,000 at least. The railway will also charge for passengers and live stock, which the Harbour Company will not make any charge for. The maintenance of the harbour will cost over 50 per cent. of the income, while the maintenance of the railway should be about 20 per cent. at these rates. Reduce even the railway rates to 4d. per ton mile, and it will be found that, with the same comparative expenditure, the harbour tolls are very small indeed.

It must also be remembered that railway concessions have been granted allowing charges similar to those on the Government line to be made, and in one case (Zeehan-Dundas Railway), on an expenditure of only about £25,000 the rate for the through distance of about seven miles will exceed the maximum toll asked for in this Bill for an expenditure of at least a quarter of a million pounds.

The tolls asked for are regulated so as to favour particularly the local trade by small vessels under 200 tons register. It is well known that these vessels often carry more than double their registered tonnage, so that it will fall very lightly indeed upon them, and they will for this obtain the advantage of perfect safety in entering the harbour at all times during the 24 hours, and in any weather.

In taking the average toll upon which to assume a datum for the estimate of income, I have estimated that 100,000 tons will be conveyed by these vessels; and assuming this, with some allowance for the extra tonnage they will carry, and the full toll upon vessels of over 200 tons, I find the average toll will be 3s. only. It will not be possible to raise the capital for this work upon a less average than this, and the tolls entered in the Schedule cannot be in any way reduced.

Urgency.

The urgency for this important work is clear, for the following reasons:—

1. The rapid development of the mines certain to follow the completion of the railway between Zeehan and Strahan, and its branches to Dundas and Mt. Read, and the block of traffic which must take place at Strahan.
2. This being the only available outlet for the products of the mines for several years to come, and the natural and cheapest one for all time.
3. The rapid development of the mines means the quick return of profits, and the end to the large unremunerative drain upon the shareholders, which is even now plainly felt; general prosperity instead of a tight money market; and a corresponding advance in the position of the Colony.
4. The urgent necessity for this work is set forth in the Petitions from the inhabitants of the West Coast to His Excellency the Governor presented recently.
5. Unless the work is taken in hand at once, more valuable time must be lost; heavy mining calls must continue to be made, and consequently much poverty caused to the poorer shareholders. Due consideration should, therefore, be given to this most vital point in any decision on this subject.

Agency.

The Ministers having up to date declared that the Government will not undertake the work, there only remains two other agencies—viz., Harbour Trust (or Marine Board) and a private company.

A Harbour Trust means the appointment of a Board of Trustees selected from residents, who must be well-paid, and who should be capable of understanding the duties required. It is evident that in this case, with no present income from the Port, such a Trust must be either endowed or secured by Government. Their borrowing powers must be limited. It is evident that the members of the Trust could not be bound to expedite the work.

Private enterprise can be so bound, and this Bill provides for it. It also provides that after a reasonable time allowed for forming a Company the sum of £5000 must be deposited as *bona fides*, to be forfeited if not begun within a given time.

A. W. LAWDER, M.I.C.E., F.G.S.

Hobart, 12th August, 1891.

5. *By Dr. McCall.*—You propose imposing these tolls some time before the work is finished? Yes, when £50,000 has been expended. I am willing to provide that a certain amount of work shall be done which will prove serviceable to vessels. It would be unfair to the Company to allow vessels to go through free until the work was finished, because there is no certainty as to the completion of a big work like that, and, at the same time, it would be unfair to demand tolls if no service had been rendered to vessels.

6. Would you be willing to amend that part of the Bill to provide that the tolls should be chargeable upon certain results being reached? I am willing to amend it in any way which may be fair. It rests with the Minister to certify to that expenditure, and he would not certify to it unless it was beneficial.

7. *By Mr. Sidebottom.*—Do you think that a width of 500 feet in the channel would be necessary? It would make it very secure, and I wish to have it wide enough to allow vessels to pass in and out at night with freedom.

8. What width did Mr. Napier Bell provide for? I don't think he mentions any width.

9. What was his estimate? £149,236.

10. He proposes the same depth as you do? Yes.

11. And you estimate that it will cost a quarter of a million? Yes. Mr. Napier Bell made a mistake in the length of the breakwaters that would be required. He states in his report that the bar is 4000 feet from Entrance Island, yet he puts down one of his breakwaters at two thousand and odd feet. I do not consider that he has allowed sufficient. As a professional man I would not enter into a work of this kind without ample funds, and a quarter of a million is not a pound too much.

12. Do you think Mr. Napier Bell's estimate would be exceeded? Yes.

13. How much coke is used for smelting a ton of ore? Roughly speaking, about one ton to every three of ore.

14. *By Mr. Gill.*—Is there not a better entrance to be got by cutting through the neck? I have not seen it. It might be done by an adequate expenditure, but would not be as cheap as my proposal. There is a good deal to be done in doctoring up the northern spit, from which sand is constantly being blown into the channel, and for which Mr. Napier Bell has not provided; thus it may be necessary to keep the dredge constantly going.

ROBERT RICHMOND REX, *called and examined.*

15. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Robert Richmond Rex.

16. You are a member of the Marine Board? Yes.

17. What is your opinion of the proposal for opening up this harbour? It will be the means of taking a great deal of trade to the West Coast. It is said that it will injure Hobart and other parts, but I do not see it in that light. Vessels will be able to go in there, load up and go straight away, while other vessels will be employed in taking coal and coke there. It will have the effect of improving business all round.

18. Do you think the opening of the harbour will do Hobart good, or otherwise? I think it will do Hobart a great deal of good, and will be an advantage to the Colony generally. It will be the means of getting a tremendous lot of ore away quickly. We have a lot of ships which come in here, discharge cargo, and then go away in ballast to Newcastle to look for a freight. If this harbour is opened, those vessels can load here with ore and take it straight away. It will bring a lot of private capital into the Colony, a thing we cannot do without.

19. Do you think the West Coast trade could be done better by large steamers? Certainly so.

20. Could the coke be carried to the field by small vessels? No; it would want large vessels. It takes up a lot of room, and is very light.

21. Would the opening of the harbour have any effect upon our southern coalfields? Yes, the greater part of it would go to the West Coast.

22. Do you think we could compete with the Newcastle coal by sending our coal away? No; the Newcastle coal is too good for steam purposes. The only chance for our coal is to use it within the Colony.

23. Do you think that these silver-fields would take a great deal of our coal? Yes, they would.

24. The development of our coal-fields would do a great deal for the trade of Hobart? Certainly.

25. Do you think that water carriage to and from Macquarie Harbour would be cheaper than carriage by rail? Water carriage is always much the cheapest.

26. You think the opening of this harbour would materially benefit the Colony generally? Yes, that is my opinion.

27. If the trade to Macquarie Harbour is maintained by small vessels, do you think the wharfage accommodation would be sufficient? They would have to build a lot of new wharves, and where they are to put them I do not know. With large vessels there would not be any need of such a large amount of accommodation. Large vessels would be loaded by steam, and would be soon away.

28. How much Tasmanian experience have you had? Ever since I was born. I have been connected with the ship chandlery business on the wharf for over 30 years.

29. If the trade to the West Coast is continued by small vessels it would require a large outlay for wharfage accommodation? Yes, very large. I cannot say exactly how much would be required.

30. *By Mr. Gill.*—Could the Marine Board undertake this work? I am sorry to say they could not.

31. Could a local Harbour Trust do it? No, I do not think so.

32. *By Mr. Sutton.*—Would you prefer to see it done by a local authority? Yes, if they had the funds to do it.

33. *By Mr. Hiddlestone.*—Do you know if our Southern coal will coke? I cannot say.

34. *By Mr. Gill.*—Are you in favour of this work being done by private enterprise? Yes.

35. *By Mr. Sutton.*—Why? If the Government did the work the Colony would have to go into debt for it. It is too risky a scheme for the expenditure of public money.

36. *By Mr. Lawder.*—Do you know the cost of the new jetty which has been constructed in front of the Marine Board Office? I forget it; but the addition to the New Wharf will cost £10,000. That will be about 450 feet in length.

37. A wharf that size would accommodate two small vessels on each side? Yes.

38. And to accommodate 40 would necessitate an expenditure of £100,000? Yes; but I don't know where room would be found for them.

39. To wharf them at Strahan would cost the same amount? Yes, perhaps more.

GEORGE BEEDHAM, *called and examined.*

40. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? George Beedham.

41. What are you? I am a Solicitor of the Supreme Court.

42. Have you any interests on the West Coast? I am one of the largest owners of mineral interests there.

43. Do you know Macquarie Harbour? Yes, I have been there eight or nine times, in all weathers.

44. You believe in the future of the West Coast mines? Yes, very much.

45. Do you think these mines can be properly developed until Macquarie Harbour is deepened? No; my opinion is that it will be an utter impossibility for any large result to come from that field until the means of communication are improved. I am a director in a great many mining companies there, and we are curtailing our expenses very much, because, under the present means of communication, it is impossible to utilise the ore. I think it hardly likely that there will be any smelters on the fields, either at Zeehan or Dundas; they must be either at Strahan or Hobart, and in that case there must be means of sending coke and taking ore away.

46. Do you think that the opening of the Harbour is a work of urgency? Yes; no large amount of capital will come here unless a large quantity of ore can be got away.

47. Many people in the Colony are shareholders in the West Coast? Yes.

48. Is not the drain upon their pockets very large at present? Yes, and keeps their capital from other enterprises.

49. Has any mine there paid a dividend, with the exception of the Silver Queen? No.

50. And no money has come out for that put in the mines? No, it is all tied up.

51. What will happen if the development of the field is hindered much longer? Money will stop coming into the Colony.

52. Do you trace the failure of the V.D.L. Bank to the West Coast? Partly only; they advanced more than their deposits.

53. Do you think the failure would have happened if the mines had been paying dividends? I do not think so.

54. If the field is still further retarded, will it not mean a sacrifice of shareholders' interests? Yes, it will make the field always small, where otherwise it would be a magnificent one.

55. Do you think the opening of the Harbour would benefit the Colony? Yes; the trade would never filter through Melbourne, but there would be direct communication with the Old Country. It means dividends or no dividends.

56. Do you think the mining companies you are interested in would pay the tolls asked for? Yes, very readily; they would be very much the gainers.

57. *By Mr. Gill.*—Do you think this work should be undertaken by the Government? No, it is too risky a concern for the Government to touch. It would be an unwise thing for the Government to saddle the Colony with a larger rate per head than it pays at present.

58. You would not be in favour of the work being done by a Harbour Trust? No, it would be worse than the Government doing it directly.

59. *By Mr. Lawder.*—Is there anyone on the West Coast who knows anything about Harbour Trusts? I think there are very few.

60. *By Mr. Hiddlestone.*—If it will pay a syndicate would it not pay the Government? There is a difference. If the Government did the work and it failed the cost would be saddled on the country for ever; while with a private syndicate the loss would only fall on a few individuals. The profit derived would not be a sufficient set-off against the risk the Government would have to incur, considering the great cost of the work and the smallness of our community. A Harbour Trust could never borrow the money required unless guaranteed by the Government.

61. *By the Chairman.*—Would it be to the interest of a highly paid Government official or Commissioner to carry out the work as quickly as possible? I am afraid it is too patent that it would not.

THOMAS AUGUSTUS REYNOLDS, *called and examined.*

62. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Thomas Augustus Reynolds.
63. You are a contractor and builder? Yes.
64. At present you have the contract for the Zeehan-Strahan Railway? Yes.
65. You are also a steamboat proprietor? Yes.
66. Do you know Macquarie Harbour? Yes.
67. What do you think of it in its present state? It is only suitable at present for small vessels drawing up to nine feet of water. At times a vessel drawing nine feet six inches can get over the bar, but that is not once in a month.
68. Do you think the deepening of the harbour is necessary for the development of the silver fields? If the fields are to be a success it is a work that will have to be done in time. I do not see any immediate hurry.
69. Do you think it will be necessary as soon as the railway is completed? No, the trade does not justify it as yet.
70. It would not justify an expenditure of Government money? No. The present means of communication will do all that is required for the next two years, though the work will have to be done in the course of time as the field expands. It is a very risky kind of work.
71. Do you think the Government should undertake it? Not as yet, and in the present state of things. If the work is undertaken at all the Government is the proper party to do it.
72. If the mines failed would there be any necessity for the work? There is nothing but the mines to justify the work. If the mines turn out well the field will be better than the Broken Hill, because there is such an extent of ground and so many companies to work it. I have not the slightest anticipation of any failure.
73. Looking at the question from a mining point of view alone, do you think the work should be done by the Government or by private enterprise? I should prefer the Government, as I think the people of Tasmania should stand the chance of winning or losing preferably to anyone else.
74. This work will be of great benefit to the country? If the mines develop, of course it will have to be done. I believe the mines will finally justify the Government in making a breakwater at Trial Harbour, as well as a branch railway there.
75. If the mines do not turn out well, do you think it is fair that the ratepayers should bear the cost of opening the harbour? Yes, I do.
76. Would it not be better to have the work done by private enterprise, provided it is hedged round with proper conditions? It is too early for the Government to undertake the work, or accept conditions in the dark from any outside people.
77. *By Mr. Gill.*—Do you think the Government were more justified in making a railway than in doing this work? Yes, the railway is justifiable. As far as the West Coast is concerned, it is, geologically speaking, a growing coast; and if the present conditions in the harbour are interfered with it may tend to fill it up.
78. *By the Chairman.*—Don't you think a dredge would cope with all difficulties? It would do so now.
79. *By Mr. Gill.*—Would it be safe to take a vessel filled with dead weight, such as ore, over the bar? You could construct a vessel of 300 or 400 tons to go over that bar, but is impossible for ordinary large vessels to go in. The time for them, however, has not come yet.
80. *By the Chairman.*—How long will it be before that time comes? If the mines keep opening as they have during the last eighteen months, you will know in two or three years whether the work will be required or not.
81. How long will it take to do the work? About two or three years. It would be possible to do it in two years.
82. Do you think there has been an advance in the rate of wages during the last 18 months? Yes, to the extent of about 2s. in the £1 per man.
83. *By Mr. Sutton.*—What sort of a harbour is Trial Harbour? It is not a harbour at all—it is simply a mouth in the ocean.
84. If the bar at Macquarie Harbour is dredged will it not do for some time? Yes.
85. Could it be deepened to allow vessels drawing 11 feet to come in without risk? I do not know. A heavy gale might fill it up again.
86. *By Mr. Mackenzie.*—Have you not sufficient confidence in the district to advocate the Government undertaking this work? I do not think the Government would be justified in laying out such a large sum of money until the fields are more developed.
87. If the bar was deepened to 11 feet would it be sufficient for present purposes? For the next 12 months, at all events.
88. What would a vessel of 1500 tons draw? From 12 to 15 feet.
89. Do you think that the tolls are fair? No, I think they are so high that the price of provisions and everything in the district would be raised unduly. It would mean ruination to trade.
90. What is the freight at present from Hobart to Strahan? In round numbers, about £1 per ton.

91. Is there plenty of water for the "Bellinger"? Yes, she was built expressly for a bar trade. She is about 180 tons.

92. What size is the "Koonya"? She is smaller, but is built deeper.

93. *By Mr. Lander.*—You are the owner of some of these small vessels? Yes.

94. Would not larger vessels cheapen the freight? I consider the tolls are too heavy on vessels of any size. I think freight will be cheapened.

95. Do you not think the increase in the field will be very great when all the small mines are opened up? The field is not opened sufficiently to say with any certainty what it will be. The progress will be greater as the means of communication improve, but I think the present vessels will carry on all the trade there is likely be for the next few years, in which time the Government will have had an opportunity of deciding whether the work is justifiable or not.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 1891.

HENRY CHESTERMAN, *called and examined.*

96. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Henry Chesterman.

97. What are you? I am a merchant in Hobart.

98. You have also been a shipowner for many years? Yes.

99. Have you ever been in Macquarie Harbour? No, I have not.

100. In your opinion would it be expedient to deepen the entrance to Macquarie Harbour? There is no doubt about it.

101. Do you think it would benefit the port of Hobart? Yes, I think so.

102. Would it also benefit the trade of Launceston and the North-west Coast Ports? I think it would benefit the whole island.

103. Supposing the work was commenced now, have you any idea how long it would take to complete the deepening of the harbour? It would take a couple of years to complete it from my knowledge of the charts. It would be a very risky work.

104. Freights at present are £1 a ton from Hobart to Macquarie Harbour: do you think that this work would cheapen freights when it is done? They should be taken there for from 10s. to 12s. 6d. per ton. I am only paying 12s. 6d. per ton to Sydney.

105. Would it be as much to Strahan as to Sydney? It would not make much difference.

106. You think the opening of the harbour should reduce the freight one-half? Yes.

107. Have you seen the schedule of tolls? They appear large.

108. Do you notice the cheaper rate to vessels under 200 tons register? Yes, 2s. per ton. One of our ketches would carry 50 tons, and the toll on her would thus be £5.

109. What would her registered tonnage be? 30 tons.

110. What would be the burden of that vessel? Our ketches in that trade would carry from 45 to 50 tons of dead weight.

111. You would then have to pay £3 as toll? Yes.

112. What is the freight charged by these small vessels? From 10s. to 12s. 6d. per ton for measurement equivalent to weight. A vessel of 50 tons burden would make about £35 for the trip.

113. Would freights be reduced if this harbour was opened? Not for that class of vessels; but the insurance would be affected.

114. Would you sooner pay £3 as toll, and have the port opened, than pay nothing and have the port as it is? It would be justifiable to pay that, as vessels would be safer and insurance would be affected.

115. You would not consider that toll too high? I must qualify my answer, in regard to the nature of the merchandise carried. It would be too high on a bulky and cheap article like timber or coal, but on general merchandise it would not be felt, on account of its general distribution.

116. You don't consider, then, that the toll is excessive? No, not to vessels discharging the whole of their cargoes there, and considering the expedition in getting in and out of the harbour and the manner in which the insurance would be affected.

117. Do you know anything of the coal deposits on the southern coast? There are extensive coal measures to the south and west of Hobart.

118. Of what quality? Of various qualities; some very good indeed.

119. Do you think that the opening of this harbour would lead to the development of the coal deposits? It would no doubt be an *entrepôt* for our coal. Coal measures have been discovered in the neighbourhood of Strahan.

120. You are a large property-holder? Yes.

121. As a general taxpayer, do you think that this is a work that ought to be undertaken by the Government? I do not know. I rather think that if it was done by outside capital it would be an advantage, as it would be done with greater despatch than if undertaken by the Government.

122. If you were told that the work would cost a quarter of a million, would your opinion be strengthened? Yes, because there would be a great deal of risk attached to the work. On the one hand we are not risking our own money, and on the other hand we would be:

123. *By Mr. Sutton.*—Would the opening of the harbour materially benefit Hobart? Yes.

124. Why? It would facilitate shipping work all round, and make Hobart a resort for large ocean steamers.

125. *By Mr. Lawder.*—Do you think that at the end of two years the trade to Strahan and the West Coast will have enormously increased? Yes, it would go on accelerating. Judging by the increase of trade to Port Pirie and other South Australian ports consequent upon the development of Broken Hill, I should say the increase would be very great.

126. Therefore, the commencement of this work is an urgent necessity? Yes, assuming that the field will develop according to its present prospects.

127. You mean that the prosperity of the colony would necessitate a large coasting service? Yes, there will be a great extent of country there to be supplied.

128. *By the Chairman.*—Would not 40 small steamers of 100 tons take up at least six times the wharfage room of one large one of 4000 tons? Yes.

129. *By Mr. Lawder.*—And in view of that fact don't you think that the trade to Macquarie Harbour will be done better by large vessels than by small ones? Decidedly so.

130. And the Government would have to lay out a larger amount in making wharfage for small vessels than would be required for larger ones? Yes, but the work for large vessels would have to be of a much heavier character.

131. *By the Chairman.*—Have you got enough wharfage in Hobart for large vessels? Yes.

FREDERICK BACK *called and examined.*

132. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Frederick Back.

133. You are General Manager of the Tasmanian Government Railways? Yes.

134. When is the Strahan-Zeehan Railway likely to be open for traffic? I am not a prophet, and so cannot say.

135. Can you give us any idea? Not the remotest. I would not hazard an opinion about a matter I know so little of.

136. Have you any idea of its carrying capacity? That is governed by means of discharging and receiving goods and cargo.

137. Supposing everything was complete? Assuming that the means were all perfect, that line would carry from ten to twelve hundred tons a day, or, say, an average of 6000 tons a week. That is the maximum that we can work up to, and that will be reduced by want of appliances or accommodation we have.

138. Could a traffic of that kind be maintained with the harbour in its present condition—only small vessels being allowed to enter? If you tell me the berthing capacity and tonnage, I could tell you. There are only two or three small vessels at present running there, and if you want to take away 1000 tons a day you must have large vessels or else a number of small ones.

139. Which would you prefer? I would prefer the large vessels, as they would cheapen freight, as well as being more quickly loaded and discharged.

140. In the interests of the Colony, what do you think of the proposal to deepen the harbour entrance? It will be a necessity if the mines are to come to anything. If the depth of water on the bar is increased to 16 or 20 feet the traffic can be worked to greater advantage and at less expense.

141. Then, you think this work is a necessary one? Yes, for the reasons I have stated.

142. Have you had any experience in harbour works? Yes, a good many years.

143. Do you think they are risky works to spend money on? It depends upon the nature of the work. I do not know Macquarie Harbour well enough to give an opinion about it.

144. You have no knowledge of what this particular work will cost? No.

145. We are told that it will cost quarter of a million. Assuming that it will cost that, would you, as a general taxpayer, consider that it should be done by public money or by private enterprise? That is a question I am not prepared to answer on the spur of the moment.

146. If it could be shown that this work would pay, would you recommend that the Government do it? Yes.

147. But unless that can be shown you would not recommend that the Government undertake it? No, certainly not, unless it paid the Government directly or indirectly. I could not give any opinion unless I have some certain data to go upon.

148. *By Mr. Lawder.*—With reference to the wharfage required to accommodate these vessels, don't you think it would cost less to supply wharfage for large vessels than for small ones carrying the same aggregate of tonnage? It depends whether you have wharves or simply quays. The large vessels would occupy less wharfage than the smaller ones carrying the same aggregate tonnage of cargo.

149. *By Mr. Sutton.*—Do you know Emu Bay? Yes.
150. Is it likely to be a suitable outlet for the ore, as it is within the bounds of probability that it will be connected by railway with Strahan? The breakwater would have to be increased.
151. It could be done? Yes.
152. *By Mr. Sidebottom.*—Have you seen Sir Napier Bell's estimate of the Macquarie Harbour works? Yes.
153. If it costs £250,000, how much per annum will it take to keep it in order? I can give you the figures connected with the Lyttelton Harbour works and the Timaru Breakwater, the traffic of both of which I had charge of. The former cost in round numbers £15,000 a year for working expenses, but there was a good deal of dredging to be done.
154. *By Mr. Lawder.*—There were no breakwaters there—would not the work be worse at Macquarie Harbour? There are breakwaters. Harbour works might exist for 20 years and a phenomenal storm might upset it all.
155. What was the cost of dredging the Lyttelton Harbour? The average cost for 8 years was 6*d.* per cubic yard.
156. *By Mr. Sidebottom.*—What kind of dredges did you use? Various kinds.
157. *By Mr. Gill.*—Is not the West Coast a very dangerous one? I have never been there.
158. Would not there be a risk in putting up works of this kind in the ocean? There is always a risk in harbour works.
159. Is it not a risky work for the Government to undertake? There is no difference in the risk whoever undertakes it.
160. Is a Harbour Trust the proper body to undertake this work? I have some knowledge of Harbour Trusts, and have found them work very well. It depends, of course, on the manner in which the trust is brought into existence. If you start an impecunious body to do a large work of course they will fail from want of funds.
161. Do you think it would be judicious to put this work in the hands of such gentlemen as would be found at Strahan? I do not know anyone at Strahan. A Harbour Trust is composed of different classes of people, like a Marine Board.
162. Are you aware that a deputation waited upon the Minister of Lands and Works urging that this work should be left to a Harbour Trust? No, it is necessary that wharves should be found by some means or there will be a complete stoppage of trade.
163. *By Mr. Lawder.*—Do you think it should be done at once? It should be put in hand concurrently with the construction of the railway. If you make a railway to bring goods to a port, and have no means of taking them away, there will be a block. The Government have satisfied themselves there is a sufficient traffic to justify a Railway, and assuming that it equals one-fourth of what I have stated as the maximum traffic, we should not be running a month before the traffic would be congested. Very few can realise what the difficulty of shipping in large quantities really is. Even with the large area of berthage we had in Lyttelton Harbour we used to get congested occasionally, and with the appliances we had there we were able with one ship to take out 1500 tons of cargo, and put in 1700 tons, in something like 36 hours.

MONTAGUE RHYS JONES, *called and examined.*

164. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Montague Rhys Jones.
165. What are you? I am a Civil Engineer and Contractor.
166. Have you had experience in Harbour Works? Yes, I have been employed on the Briton Ferry Harbour in connection with the Great Western Railway in England, and on the Newcastle Breakwater in New South Wales.
167. Have you considered Mr. Napier Bell's scheme for improving Macquarie Harbour from an engineering point of view? Yes.
168. What is your opinion? I think the scheme will be effectual, but it will require certain modifications.
169. Do you think it could be carried out for his estimate? Most certainly not. During the last 18 months wages have increased 33 per cent. 18 months or 2 years ago you could get men at 6*s.* per day, while now you cannot get them at 9*s.* per day. In harbour works you have to pay men a great deal more than in other works, and that adds considerably to the cost. I have also taken out rough quantities of the stone necessary for the breakwaters from Mr. Bell's plans, and I find that 450,000 tons will be required. I do not think the stone could be put in under 6*s.* per ton, and that will raise the price of the breakwaters alone to £135,000.
170. What is the bar composed of? Mr. Lawder showed me some of the borings taken; it is certainly composed of indurated sand, and gets very hard indeed as you go down.
171. When the breakwaters are constructed, do you think the scour will be of sufficient force to remove the bar? No, it will require special treatment. It will partially remove the loose sand, but to deepen it to 18 or 20 feet it will have to be dredged.
172. Have you roughly estimated the cost of this work? Yes, on Mr. Bell's data, which is very imperfect, it comes to about £200,000.

173. Are estimates for harbour works often exceeded? Decidedly so.

174. Can you give any instances? The New South Wales Harbours and Rivers Department never form an accurate estimate. The works at Woolongong cost 500 per cent. over the original estimates, and the Newcastle Harbour Works greatly exceeded the estimates. They had to come to the House for supplementary votes on many occasions.

175. Have you carried out public works in Tasmania? Yes, the Green Ponds Railway. I carried out most of the City Sewerage Works in Sydney.

176. What is your opinion as to the cost of carrying out public works in Tasmania? I think the cost is greater here than in the other colonies. There is not the skilled labour here as in New South Wales and Victoria.

177. Have you ever known a Government hand over a harbour to a company? Yes, there is Largs Bay at Adelaide, where concessions were granted to Miss Cornwall, and the Illawarra Harbour in New South Wales.

178. In your opinion, is the Government justified in handing over Macquarie Harbour to a private company? Yes, on account of the tentative character of the field and the urgency of these works. Private companies carry out works of this kind quicker than the Government would do them, and I think they work them on better commercial lines.

179. Do you consider this work a requisite one? Most certainly.

180. If the mineral resources failed, it would operate prejudicially upon this harbour and railway? Yes, there is nothing but the mineral resources to keep this harbour going.

181. What do you think of the tolls? Taking the risk into consideration, I do not think that the tolls are too high. I make that remark on the assumption that the field is only in embryo at present. We cannot tell what the developments will be a few years hence.

182. The amount of the tolls in a work like this depends to a certain extent on the amount of traffic? In a large measure I should think they would.

183. Do you think that if the concession is granted, and the field goes on developing, a reduction will be made in these tolls in the course of time? Yes, I think so. I would qualify that by saying that when men go into a speculation of this kind it is only right that they should have the benefit of anything that is to be got out of it.

184. Did you notice a letter in *The Mercury* this morning signed "E. T. Miles?" Yes. I think the biggest monopolists on the coast at present are Messrs. Miles and Reynolds. They have placed the greatest limit that they can on their charges for freight, £1 a ton, and they dare not exceed that.

185. *By Mr. Sutton.*—Do you think that that is a high price? Most decidedly.

186. *By the Chairman.*—Mr. Miles' steamers carry 130 tons? Yes.

187. So he gets £130 for each trip? Probably, yes.

188. And if this harbour is opened, would it reduce the freight? Yes. Seven and sixpence a ton is a very fair freight from Hobart to Macquarie Harbour; 10s. would be very liberal.

189. That reduction in freight would reduce Mr. Miles' receipts to £65? Yes.

190. What would be the tolls upon one of his vessels? It would be £10. The freight would be reduced by £65, while the tolls would only be £10.

191. So that there would be an actual saving to the shipper of £55? Yes.

192. *By Mr. Lawder.*—Besides dredging the bar, would not the success of the work depend largely upon the utilization of all natural advantages in the construction of the breakwaters? Yes, decidedly.

193. So a measure of this character would have to be most carefully considered, so that natural means would assist the work, and should be put before the best authority on the subject, Sir John Coode? Yes.

194. Without such careful consideration, the work should not be undertaken by anyone? It would be most unwise to do so.

195. *By Mr. Sidebottom.*—Is it not usual, where profits exceed a certain percentage, that charges are reduced? I never heard of it in any works of this kind, but I believe there are companies run on a principle of that sort. Considering the risky nature of the work, the tolls in this case should not be reduced.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 1891.

RICHARD JAMES LUCAS, *called and examined.*

196. *By Mr. Lawder.*—What is your name? Richard James Lucas.

197. You are a Solicitor? Yes.

198. Do you think that the proposed work of deepening the entrance to Macquarie Harbour is a necessary one? I do, most certainly.

199. For what reasons do you consider the work urgent? Because I see no possibility of the Government undertaking the work in the next three or four years, and the trade there will grow so rapidly that no fleet of small steamers will ever be able to do it, nor could they do it safely.

[Lawder Harbour Bill.]

200. Do you think that the tolls it is proposed to charge are high in view of the benefits conferred? I have seen the scale of charges, and they seem to be extremely reasonable as compared with other charges by land.

201. By which agency can this work be quickest carried out—the Government, a Harbour Trust, or a private syndicate? I do not see how a Harbour Trust can do the work unless the Government is at the back of it, and they might as well do it themselves, and I cannot see how the Government can do it for the next three or four years, because I don't know where the money is to come from. I prefer that the work should be done by a private syndicate, because they would do it in one-third of the time that it would take the Government to do it.

202. Do you think that this work would affect the trade of Hobart? Enormously, I should say, and very beneficially. It will very much reduce the rates of freight.

203. Do you think, in view of the fact that ore can be carried cheaper by water than by land, that the proposed work will affect the railways projected from Hobart and Waratah to Zeehan? Of course it would, but I do not think that ore would ever be carried by land, on account of the high freights. It can be carried by water at one-third of the land freight.

204. What traffic would these railways have? Passenger traffic, light goods, and live stock.

205. Do you think that the opening of this harbour would increase the traffic in those particular lines? Whatever develops the trade between Hobart and Zeehan must necessarily develop the trade and passenger traffic on the railways.

206. Do you think it would be advisable to push on the work of opening the harbour in view of creating traffic which would pay the railways? There is no doubt about it. It is of the highest importance to the Colony generally to have the work done without loss of time.

207. Any retardment of the development of the West Coast will materially affect the traffic upon these lines? Yes, very largely.

208. Are you acquainted with some of the southern coalfields? Yes.

209. Do you think that the development of the West Coast in the manner proposed would assist in developing these coalfields? Yes, because it will cheapen the freights. There will be a large traffic from the Sandfly especially.

210. Do you think that by developing these coalfields the long looked-for Huon railway will be promoted? I do not see how they will have any effect upon it, except in regard to passenger traffic. The coal mines there will always have excellent water carriage.

211. *By Mr. Sutton.*—Do you know the quality of the Sandfly coal? Yes, it is both anthracite and bituminous, and the best I have seen in the Colony. There are five seams in all. One is pure anthracite, one is semi-bituminous, and the other three are bituminous. We had it tested in the Melbourne Gas Works, and the manager said it was better coal for his purposes than the Newcastle. If we could give it to him at the price he was paying for New South Wales coal he said he would take from 80,000 to 100,000 tons a year. We found that some of it coked excellently.

212. *By the Chairman.*—What is the shipping-port for Sandfly? North West Bay.

213. What is the depth of water there? Any depth you like. I went out with Mr. Lawder, and found 24 feet of water 300 feet from the shore. It is a splendid harbour.

214. And if Macquarie Harbour is opened as proposed large vessels could trade between North West Bay and Strahan? Yes, without the slightest difficulty.

215. Would not the sending of coke to Macquarie Harbour be a very important item in the trade? Yes. We have a supply of splendid fireclay there, and the making of firebricks is expected to be a source of considerable profit, as they are essential in the construction of furnaces. I have been over the bar at Macquarie Harbour four times, and every time we bumped. I looked over the side and saw the bottom, and I think there will be an enormous risk run in deepening that harbour. The bar is right open to the westerly swell which comes in even during a perfect calm. I should be very sorry to undertake the work on account of the risk, and I should be sorry to see the Government undertake it when a private syndicate can be got to do it. One storm may wash away the work of years. You could not safely go in to do the work at less than half a million.

216. *By the Chairman.*—Do you think the work could be done by a Harbour Trust? The Government would have to be at the back of the Trust, which would be inadvisable.

217. Do you think, in the interests of the Colony, that the work could be better done by the Government than by a private syndicate? No, I think it is to the interests of the Colony to have the thing done at the risk of private capital. As a rule, I am averse to placing a public highway in the hands of a syndicate unless the interests of the Colony are properly protected.

WILLIAM THOMAS HENRY BROWN, *called and examined.*

218. *By Mr. Lawder.*—What is your name? William Thomas Henry Brown.

219. You are Conservator of Forests for Tasmania? Yes.

220. Do you know the vicinity of Macquarie Harbour? Yes, I have been there ten times.

221. What is the state of the weather at times there? It is very bad during westerly and north-westerly weather. Very high seas come in on the bar.

222. Such as to be a source of danger at times? Yes.
223. Do you consider that the Government should carry out the work of deepening the Harbour entrance? No, I do not.
224. Would you approve of its being done by private enterprise? If it is considered necessary the work should be done, most decidedly.
225. You don't think that the money should be raised by taxation in the Colony? No, I do not.
226. Do you think that private enterprise would carry out the work quicker than the Government would? It would be the quickest way to do it.
227. You have had a considerable marine experience? Yes, of twenty-five years.
228. You consider that the bar is dangerous at certain times from the heavy seas? Yes, I do. I should like to add that in my opinion the work is almost impracticable, and that is the reason why I think the Government should not undertake the work when private enterprise can be found to risk the money. I consider the work almost an experiment. Phenomenal gales may arise and wash the work away as fast as it is constructed.
229. *By Mr. Sidebottom.*—Have you ever sailed into any harbours constructed by private enterprise? No, I have not.
230. *By Mr. Lawder.*—Considering the risk, do you regard the charges as exorbitantly high? No, I do not think so.
231. *By Mr. Gill.*—And the freights will be lower? Yes.
232. *By the Chairman.*—More would be paid in freight than would be paid in charges? The freights will be affected to a material extent.
233. *By Mr. Gill.*—It would be much lower than it is now? Yes, it would.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1891.

ARTHUR WILLIAM LAWDER, *recalled, made the following statement:—*

I would like to submit to the Committee, with reference to the tolls, that I have put them as low as I possibly can. If you wish to get a certain capital, as I do, in London, you must have a proportionate basis upon which to ask for it. If you compare the charges I ask for with those to be charged upon the Government railway Strahan to Zeehan, you will see that in the latter case they will charge 22s. 6d. per ton for thirty miles upon an expenditure of £150,000. Assuming the same mileage, I am asking for about three farthings a ton per mile on a quarter of a million, if passengers and live stock are included. I can very easily reduce the tolls on goods if you let me charge for passengers and live stock. The reason for putting a smaller rate on the local vessels is to specially favour a local trade. Some people think they ought to be exempt altogether, as they can get in and out without danger, but anyone who knows the West Coast knows that they cannot do so. Lately, on one occasion, the *Banks Peninsula* was detained for eighteen hours and ten minutes inside the bar trying to get out, and, upon her return trip, was detained for seventeen hours outside the bar trying to get in. I am informed upon the best authority that there are often mishaps of a similar nature that are never made public. There is another point that I wish to bring before your notice, and that is the question of a Marine Board at Strahan. I think that a Marine Board is necessary for Strahan itself, because the harbour there will require an expenditure upon it of £50,000 within a few years to enable the shipping to load and unload. A Marine Board can manage that, but that is a separate matter from the line of communication from the Heads to Strahan, which is what I propose to construct at a cost of £250,000. I would be quite willing to make the toll 2s. a ton upon the actual cargo conveyed in the case of small vessels, instead of upon the registered tonnage, if required, but the latter will save delay, as each vessel's registered tonnage would be known as she passed in and out, whereas, in the other case, it would involve stoppage of the vessel for the inspection of her manifest. In regard to pilotage and light dues, I am willing that they should be subject to approval by the Consolidated Marine Board.

FRIDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 1891.

WILLIAM THOMAS HENRY BROWN, *called in and examined.*

234. *By the Chairman.*—As a nautical man, will you explain to the Committee the difference between tonnage register, tonnage burthen, gross tonnage, and nett tonnage? Tonnage register is the measurement of a ship ascertained by the method described in "The Merchant Shipping Act." Tonnage burthen is the actual carrying capacity of the vessel. Gross tonnage applies to steamers, and would be the measurement of the ship including bunker, engine, and boiler space. Nett tonnage would be the nett tonnage of the vessel exclusive of her bunker, boiler, and engine space.

235. Is there any rule by which these various terms are applied? I know of no rule.

236. Looking at the schedule of the various tonnages of Captain Miles' steamers as published, how is it that one, the *Banks Peninsula*, varies so much from the others in the proportion of register tonnage and gross tonnage? The *Banks Peninsula*, I am informed, is measured by a new rule of the Board of Trade, which allows certain percentages off each indicated horse-power; the *Banks Peninsula* being of a high horse-power, fares best in having her register tonnage materially reduced under the new mode of measuring steamers. I desire to state that all my connections with the sea have been with sailing vessels, and I have never heard them described as other than of so many tons register or tons burthen. The terms nett and gross, I am given to understand, applies to steamers, and I was not aware of the fact till I made enquiry respecting the question (No. 3) put to me.

APPENDIX A.

To the Honorable the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly.

The humble Petition of Arthur William Lawder, of Hobart, in Tasmania, Consulting Engineer, Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London,

SHOWETH :

1. That within three months previously to the presentation hereof, notice of the intention of your Petitioner to apply for a Private Act of Parliament was published, as is by the Standing Rules and Orders of your Honorable House prescribed, as follows ; that is to say,—

In the *Hobart Gazette*, on the second, ninth, sixteenth, and twenty-third days of June now last past ;
In the *Mercury*, being a public newspaper published in Hobart, on the first, eighth, fifteenth, and twenty-second days of June now last past ;

In the *Tasmanian News*, being a public newspaper published in Hobart, on the second, ninth, sixteenth, and twenty-third days of June now last past ;

In the *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, being a public newspaper published in the District affected by the Bill, on the tenth and seventeenth days of June last past, and on the tenth and thirteenth days of July instant ;

which said notice contains a true statement of the general objects of the said Bill as hereinafter mentioned.

2. The general objects of the Bill are :—

To enable your Petitioner to construct and maintain a navigable channel for vessels of not less than fifteen hundred tons burthen, commencing at and extending from the entrance to Macquarie Harbour on the West Coast of Tasmania to the entrance to Long Bay in the vicinity of the Town of Strahan, in Tasmania.

To construct and maintain all such Breakwaters, Walls, Tidal Walls, Lighthouses, Buoys, Tramways, Wharves, Jetties, and such Works of what nature or kind soever, to counteract the effect of wind, ocean, or tidal currents, and any works whatsoever in connection with the construction and maintenance of the said channel and works or any of them.

To provide for the levy of Tolls and Charges on all vessels of every description using the said channel or other works.

To provide for the incorporation of the Lands Clauses Act with the said Bill, and otherwise for the acquisition of any such lands as may be required for the purposes of such works or any of them.

To provide for the sale of the rights of your Petitioner in the said channel, and for the sale of the aforesaid works, or any of them, to any person, company, corporation, or local authority, and for the sale and exclusive rights of your Petitioner to and in respect of the said channel or works, or any of them, in the meantime and during such period as may be authorised, and for the tolls or charges to be made in respect thereof, and for the effectual regulation of the said channel and other works.

To provide for the regulation, maintenance, and protection of the said channel and other works, and the making of by-laws and rules in relation thereto, and for the infliction of penalties upon persons infringing the provisions of the said Bill, by-laws, and rules.

The said Bill will also contain all clauses usual in Bills of a like nature or deemed proper for enabling your Petitioner to carry out the said works and undertakings.

Your Petitioner therefore humbly prays for leave to introduce the said Bill.

And your Petitioner will ever pray, &c.

Dated this twenty-first day of July, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one.

A. W. LAWDER.

APPENDIX B.

NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENCE *IN RE* TOLLS PROPOSED IN LAWDER HARBOUR BILL.[Capt. Miles, in *Mercury*, August 15.]

SIR,

I TRUST the members of both Houses of the Legislature will pause and reflect before passing into law what appears to be the wildest scheme for enriching the few at the expense of the many ever placed before a deliberative Assembly for their serious consideration. I refer to the Lawder Harbour Works Bill.

I have not had an opportunity of perusing this Bill until this evening, otherwise I should have raised my feeble voice before in an endeavour to prevent a gross injustice being done to the residents of the West Coast.

I am aware that while Parliament is in session your space for correspondence is limited. I shall, therefore, not criticise the clauses of the Bill, many of which are delightfully "bald and vague," but confine myself to what appears to contain the pith of the whole thing, viz., the schedule. This is condensed into eight lines. Why? Because the framers of the Bill dare not make it sufficiently clear for the ordinary mind to comprehend. The Main Line Railway contract was finality itself compared with this Bill.

The schedule recites that certain dues are payable "by owners of all vessels on each occasion of a vessel entering or leaving the port." Does this mean that tolls are to be demanded twice on one trip, both inward and outward?

Tolls.—"Vessels under 200 tons register, 2s. per ton register." On what? The gross or nett tonnage. "Vessels over 200 tons register 5s. per ton of cargo landed or loaded within the port." Does this mean 5s. per ton on the ship's inward cargo and 5s. per ton on her outward cargo—a maximum rate of 10s. per ton on her carrying capacity? If not, what does it mean?

Pilot Dues.—"Sailing vessels 6d. per ton register, steamers 4d. per ton." Is this charge payable both inward and outward? And whether on the gross or nett tonnage? And will a vessel be compelled to pay pilotage that does not require, or has the services of a pilot?

Light Dues.—"On all vessels 3d. per ton register." The same questions as to pilot dues also apply here.

On the whole I think the schedule of the Lawder Harbour Works Bill will pass muster as the most ambiguous, unintelligible document ever placed before Parliament. But there is "method in the madness" of the framers of this schedule. I am not simple enough to suppose that the gentlemen who framed this Bill did not know what they were doing. There was, no doubt, an object in view, and if the taxpayers of the West Coast once get in the grasp of this monopoly, they will then understand the object.

It is amusing to hear the projector talk of the benefits to be conferred on the West Coast by his scheme. I will give you a few illustrations of the benefits:—All food consumers on the West Coast will be taxed to the tune of 5s. per ton on all they eat and drink. Mining companies will pay a tax of 5s. per ton on all machinery, plant, and tools. Every ton of ore that leaves Strahan, every ton of wood or coal that is landed, every ton of limestone that comes from the Gordon to Strahan for smelting purposes, will all pay the toll of 5s. per ton. Bricks would pay 15s. per 1000, and hardwood timber 1s. 3d. per 100 ft. super. And all this is done to benefit the West Coast.

These tolls, monstrous as they are, might probably be tolerated if the revenue derived therefrom went to the credit of the public account, but it comes out of the pocket of the taxpayer, and goes into the purse of the monopolist.

The tax on shipping would be prohibitive, and I challenge the authors of the scheme to find a precedent in any part of the world. Our firm's small vessels alone represent in round figures 1000 tons inward and 1000 tons outward per week at 2s. per ton; our toll would be £200 per week, or something over £10,000 per annum, for the privilege of doing what we are now doing free. A large vessel going to Strahan with 1000 tons cargo, and loading outward 1000 tons ore, would pay £580 per trip in tolls.

I could go on multiplying examples, but I fear I am trespassing too much on your space. The above will be sufficient to show the taxpayers of the West Coast that this grand scheme is not likely to benefit them, but, on the contrary, will be a constant source of expense and annoyance.

I am strongly in favour of opening the harbour, but as the work will be a benefit to the whole colony, the colony, and not a part of it should provide the funds.

Yours, &c.

EDWARD T. MILES.

Old Wharf, August 12.

[Mr. Lawder in reply to Capt. Miles: *Mercury*, August 18.]

THE MACQUARIE HARBOUR BILL.

SIR,

My attention has been drawn to a letter on the above subject, signed "Edward T. Miles," which appeared in your columns yesterday, and I have to thank Captain Miles for giving me an opportunity of learning so much of the views of Messrs. Reynolds and Co., and reviewing them publicly, and I trust your readers will, in this connection, refer first to Captain Miles' letter.

As Captain Miles appears not to understand the term "register," as applied to shipping, I would inform him that both in England and amongst large English mercantile communities all over the world the term tons register means the net carrying capacity by measurement of 40 cubic feet per ton, after deducting machinery and other space set apart for working the vessel, and for her crew, &c., as registered at Lloyd's, and with the Board of Trade in England.

To make this more plain to Captain Miles, I here give particulars of the vessels now trading to the West Coast (owned, I believe, by T. A. Reynolds and Co.) as obtained from the Custom House register:—

Name.	Gross Tonnage.	Net Tonnage.	Published Tonnage.
<i>Bellinger</i>	224·86	133 78-100ths.	287
<i>Banks Peninsula</i>	171·22	34 11-100ths.	277
<i>Bowra</i>	205·26	139 58-100ths.	—

With this knowledge the schedule to the Bill is clear to the ordinary understanding. The 5s. per ton of cargo upon vessels of over 200 tons register means that it is to be charged upon both inward and outward cargoes, but only on such cargoes or portions thereof as are "loaded or landed" within the port. The pilotage and light dues are similar to those levied by the Marine Boards in Hobart and Launceston, as Captain Miles should be aware, and will be subject to the Marine Board regulations of the colony. It is only a fair corollary that those who are made responsible for the construction and maintenance of these important works should have the safe conduct of the vessels using them.

To any fair critic it is plainly evident that the low charge for small vessels was designed to favour a local colonial trade to Hobart and other ports, and to show you the practical incidence of this charge, you will observe from the above table that the *Banks Peninsula* is 34 tons register. Two shillings per ton upon this will be £3 8s. But as she is said to carry 277 tons (and it is a known fact that all vessels can carry very much more than their registered tonnage, more particularly of lead ore), which would run about 10 cubic feet to the ton, she would have to pay, when running a full cargo, not more than 3d. per ton (if her published capacity be not incorrect.) This, however, is so absurdly small that I prefer to take a more liberal average over Messrs. Reynolds' whole fleet. When trade develops full cargoes are likely to be the rule, but making every reasonable allowance for their not being so they are certainly not likely to have to pay more than 1s. per ton, and this charge cannot be called high when compared with the advantages gained by the absolute safety in entering and leaving the harbour, and is a small contribution towards paying interest on the uncertain cost of the undertaking.

At present vessels repeatedly bump upon the bar and injure or lose propellers, and there are certain risks to property and life, and they cannot without reckless risk enter the harbour upon an ordinary dark night. Insurance offices demand enhanced rates. These will be sufficient to show the advantages these small vessels will gain for the small tolls they will pay. They are to be congratulated in having had such an unusually fine winter this year, and in having so far escaped serious accident.

There is nothing in the bill to induce the belief that tolls will be charged upon vessels plying inside the harbour, nor is it at all so intended. The tolls are only payable by vessels "entering or leaving the port," *i.e.*, the entrance to Macquarie Harbour.

Now let us analyse the scheme. Its cost will not be under £250,000. If it is to be done by private enterprise, a fair return must be made for the great cost and risk undertaken. This fair return can, under the present outlook, only be gained upon the rates of toll entered in the bill. These rates, it must be remembered, are *maxima*, and the scheme being a commercial one they are subject to reduction to ensure an increase in trade if found to retard it, particularly when there will be railway competition. And, taking the average rate over the aggregate trade, it will be found to be less than 3s. per ton, and much under that for some time until the larger ships can enter. If Captain Miles wants a precedent let him refer to one very near at hand, the Largs Bay Harbour Works at Adelaide, in which dues from 3s. to 5s. per ton were freely sanctioned by the South Australian Government to induce private enterprise to undertake it, although a cheaper and easier work than this.

But there can be no question that the opening of this harbour will largely reduce freights both to and from Strahan. Instead of £1 per ton now paid to, and stringently demanded by Reynolds and Co. (and be remembered this is charged by them both for cargo loaded to, or landed from Hobart) which is just double the freight between Hobart and Melbourne, it is highly probable that freight will be reduced to 5s. per ton. But even allowing 7s. 6d. per ton to obtain, this, with the maximum toll added, will save the people of the West Coast and the shippers in Hobart a net 7s. 6d. per ton. This is, I think, conclusive evidence of only one of the benefits conferred by opening the Harbour.

Let us contrast this benefit with the present practical monopoly enjoyed by this one firm, and which is likely to continue so long as the railway to Zeehan remains in their hands, and the harbour work be not carried out. They are practically masters of the situation, and naturally do not like it disturbed, and to judge by the tone of Captain Miles' letter, they must feel this keenly.

I am urging the construction of this important work in the same spirit that prompted me to press it as a necessary Government work 18 months ago, and it was only upon receiving positive and repeated assurances during the present year that Government would not carry it out that I took the project in hand myself.

Why should the progress of the West Coast be retarded to the benefit of a few people—as it has been long enough—when it can be pushed ahead rapidly by commendable private enterprise; when, instead of a constant drain upon the pockets of the shareholders in the West Coast mines, who, in trying to open up

their claims, and comply with the mining regulations, have to pay enormous rates of freight and carriage for food, material, and even the carriage of labour; and when, instead of scarce money and bank failures, we should be enjoying large dividends and have plenty of money in the colony from both mines and commerce?

I am aware that it is the opinion of Messrs. Reynolds that the harbour should not be commenced for two years, and that it should then be undertaken by the Government. I shall not, however, comment upon this opinion at present, nor make any comparison between Government and private enterprise, as exemplified both in these colonies and elsewhere, although I may do so later on.

In writing the above I have abstained from noticing the language and tone of Captain Miles' remarks, as I make allowance for his resentment to a measure which he thinks will affect his interests.

But I would remark that "He adopts abuse who lacks argument," and it would have been better had Captain Miles adopted a less hectoring tone, and not imputed unworthy motives towards one with whom he may hold a difference of opinion, but with whom such tactics have little effect.

Apologising for thus trespassing upon your space, I will only add that the Bills now before Parliament, and I have every hope, in the interests of the colony, the West Coast, and my own, that it will be secured a fair hearing.

Yours, &c.,

A. W. LAWDER, *M. Inst. C.E., F.G.S.*

Hobart, August 15.

[Montague Rhys Jones in reply to Capt. Miles: *Mercury*, August 21, 1891.]

STRAHAN HARBOUR.

SIR,

CAPTAIN E. T. Miles' letter, criticising the Schedule of Tolls in connection with the Lawder Harbour Bill, is very misleading, and I must ask you to permit me, on behalf of private enterprise, and as an opponent of monopoly, to put the facts of the case without colour before the public.

Item 1.—"Vessels 200 tons register, 2s. per ton register." For the information of Captain Miles, allow me to state that "register" means the legalised registered net tonnage of a ship, and having made this preliminary explanation, I proceed to state that the aggregate registered tonnage of Captain Miles' fleet amounts to 348 tons, and every time that tonnage enters the Harbour under this Act the charge would be £34 16s. Now, the carrying capacity of these boats amounts to more than double the registered tonnage, the aggregate gross tonnage amounting to 601 tons, hence, Captain Miles would pay the Harbour Company, at the very highest, 1s. per ton for a safe and well lighted harbour, that can be entered with safety during the darkest night without risk, to say nothing of promoting a reliable and regular service, with a reduced insurance premium. It practically means, that Messrs. Reynolds & Co., who charge £1 per ton for freight between Hobart, would only pay, at most, 5 per cent. for these advantages. There is no charge for passengers or live stock, the toll being simply on the registered carrying capacity of the vessel. For the sake of bringing the argument home to those, who, from the lofty height of Captain Miles' intellectuality, are designated persons of "ordinary mind." I will take one of his boats as an example, the Banks Peninsula, with a registered tonnage of only 34 tons, and a gross tonnage of 171½ tons. Although this boat has a carrying capacity five times in excess of its register, the charge for entering the Harbour would only be £3 8s., and possibly the owner would have a manifest worth to them over £200.

Item 2.—"Vessels of over 200 tons, 5s. per ton of cargo." Captain Miles has drawn a harrowing picture of the poor consumers on the Coast being "taxed to the tune of 5s. per ton on all they eat and drink." This looks well on paper, and the consumer for the moment begins to think that he really is a machine capable of absorbing so many tons of food; and here, let me emphatically state that 5s. per ton is a very reasonable charge, and for this reason: It would be insanity to capitalize a company for this work for a less sum than half a million, having in view the risk attached to the undertaking. To pay an interest of 10 per cent. on this amount, £50,000 would have to be earned, and I have no hesitation in saying that the working expenses alone will come to another £25,000 per annum. The dredging account alone will be enormous. To do this requires an income of £75,000, which represents an average tonnage at 3s. per ton, or 500,000 tons yearly. Let it not be forgotten that a plethora of small craft like the Banks Peninsula, with a gross tonnage of 170 will be constantly passing in and out of the Harbour for £3 8s. Would 10 per cent., I ask of any financial man, be too large a return for capital put into the Macquarie Harbour scheme, depending entirely on a potentiality too difficult to hazard an opinion upon up to the present?

Having reduced, I hope, the argument to some intelligibility, let me point out what the opening up of this Harbour means to Messrs. Reynolds & Co., and especially to one of the firm who is attempting, so unsuccessfully, the patriotic *role* of the anti-monopolist. Will Captain Miles deny that he is not a West Coast monopolist? Is he not a shipowner, a storekeeper, a railway contractor, and a railway proprietor for the time being? Does he not charge 20s. per ton for freight between Hobart and Strahan? and I challenge him to say, that by fixing this rate, he has not just come within the limit of public endurance. The freight between Hobart and Melbourne is 10s. per ton, and this I unhesitatingly affirm, that directly the bar is removed, and vessels of 1000 tons can get in, freights will drop from 20s. to 12s. 6d. per ton, including the harbour tolls, and it cannot be brought home to the public more forcibly than by paraphrasing Captain Miles with the remark that, if Mr. Lawder's Bill does not pass the Legislature, "all consumers on the West Coast will be taxed to the tune of 7s. 6d. on all they eat and drink; mining companies will pay a tax of 7s. 6d. per ton on all machinery, plant, and tools; every ton of ore that leaves Strahan, every ton of wood or coal that is landed, &c., &c., will continue to pay the tax of 7s. 6d. per ton to Messrs. Reynolds and Co."

Simultaneously with the publication of this letter I expect to see the report of an indignation meeting at Strahan, convened in Hobart by advertisement, and signed by M. T. E. (curious these are Captain Miles'

initials reversed) calling upon the modern Esau of Strahan to resist the making over of their birthright for a mess of pottage, and if one is not entirely mistaken, the outcome of that meeting will be an apt illustration of the dog licking the hand of the vivisectionist. I have unbounded admiration for Captain Miles' energy, but he cannot play fast and loose with natural law; he must correspond with the altered conditions, or go to the wall in the struggle for existence.

Miller's Chambers, August 15.

Yours, &c.

MONTAGUE RHYS JONES.

APPENDIX C.

STRAHAN HARBOUR.

Hobart, 10th August, 1891.

SIR, WITH reference to the above subject, I venture to submit the following remarks, presuming on my somewhat extensive knowledge of the resources and requirements of the West Coast.

In the first place, I think that the extent and probable permanency of the great silver-lead deposits of the Zeehan and Dundas Districts may now be considered as satisfactorily demonstrated in the eyes of all capable of forming a reliable opinion on the subject. This being the case, it must necessarily follow that with the gradual development of the various mines there will be a large and increasing output of ore, as well as a vast demand for machinery, supplies, and stores of all sorts. Now, the only seaport available which is at all serviceable to these fields is that of Strahan, in Macquarie Harbour, from which communication with both the south and north coasts of Tasmania, the Australian continent, Great Britain, and all parts of the world can be maintained, provided the entrance to the harbour was so improved as to admit of vessels of adequate tonnage. The exports will consist principally of ore and bullion, while the imports will include provisions of all kinds, live stock, machinery, sawn timber, iron, coke, &c.; and the trade, which is already comparatively large, will undoubtedly expand a hundredfold within the next twelve months. The port of Strahan is the natural inlet and outlet for the great bulk of the heavy traffic, and therefore the improvement of the entrance to this valuable haven is a work which imperatively demands immediate attention. At present only steamers of very small size can negotiate the crossing of the bar outside the heads at the entrance to the harbour, but much of the material that will have to be conveyed inwards and outwards is of such a kind as to be quite unsuitable to form loading for little steamers. The specific gravity of ore and bullion is on the one hand too great, while, on the other, that of coke is too light, to compose an entire cargo, so that consequently the proportion of each which each one of the small craft can carry will be very little. I consider that the port will be found to be a very valuable feeder for the Strahan-Zeehan railway and all the other lines either in course of construction or which are proposed to be constructed for the use of the West Coast silver field, and these various railways will, on the other hand, be reciprocally beneficial to the shipping trade.

It is not my intention to go into figures, because these must necessarily be based on purely hypothetical grounds. I would simply, as an illustration, point to the enormous traffic which is being, and has for the last two years, been conducted on the Silvertown tramway in connection with the mines of Broken Hill, the South Australian railways, and the harbours of Port Pirie and Port Adelaide.

After twelve months' residence on the Zeehan-Dundas silver field I have no hesitation in saying that the ratio in which the developments of its mineral resources have increased far exceeds the most sanguine expectation I had formed on my first arrival. This is more especially so in the case of the mines in the Zeehan District. The locality of Dundas will most undoubtedly follow, although greater time will be required. For the benefit of the whole the construction of an extensive system of light railways is required, but the scheme will be incomplete unless the necessary improvements in the harbour of Macquarie and the port of Strahan are carried out. That these should be set about immediately, or at least with as little delay as possible, is imperative, not only for the direct benefit of the West Coast, but of Tasmania generally; as although lines of railway affording direct communication with Hobart and Launceston, as well as with the north coast, have been proposed and are in course of survey, still it will be several years before any of these can be completed.

As regards the entrance to the harbour, considerable improvements could be effected in the course of one year, although perhaps two years will be required for their completion. In any case the great bulk of heavy traffic must go by sea, whether to Hobart, Launceston, the Australian continent, or elsewhere, as it stands to reason that water carriage will be much cheaper than carriage by land. The railways, as I have said, will do their important part, especially as regards light and quick transit, but they only form items in the great scheme for the development of the mineral resources of the Island. The question, then, resolves itself into one of determining the best and most speedy method of securing the desired end. We have already been assured, on the authority of Mr. Napier Bell, C.E., that the work is perfectly feasible from an engineering point of view, and other civil engineers of high reputation also concur. On behalf, therefore, of the mining interests of the West Coast, I have no hesitation in saying that whatever scheme can be demonstrated as likely to be the most speedy and most effectual will be the most acceptable and the most serviceable.

There are, I understand, three proposals that have been made—viz., that the Government undertake the work; that the execution of same be vested in Trustees; or that it be left to a public company to carry out. Your august Committee will no doubt consider the facts of the case carefully, and in their wisdom frame their recommendation accordingly; but may I be allowed to ask whether the Government is in a position to undertake a costly work of this description at once? and if so, could they guarantee it expeditiously? In the event of the execution of the work being entrusted to Harbour Commissioners, from whence would the funds be derived? and can it be shown that the working of the Trust would not prove costly and cumbersome? If private enterprise is prepared to assume the responsibility of such an undertaking, and execute same under Government supervision, giving sufficient guarantees, and being bound down by suitable regulations and restrictions as regards execution, maintenance, tolls, &c., would not this be the most expeditious and economical means of getting the work carried out, especially should the Government have the right of purchase at the expiry of such period as may be prescribed?

I think I may safely say that the one desire of the residents of the West Coast and all interested therein is to see the work done, and done as quickly as possible, so long as care is taken that no oppressive monopoly be created.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

GEO. D. GIBSON.

To the Chairman of the Select Committee.

APPENDIX D.

RE MACQUARIE HARBOUR ENTRANCE.

[*Mercury*, 24th August, 1891.]

The s.s. *Banks Peninsula* arrived alongside the wharf at 1:30 o'clock this morning. She left Strahan on Saturday at noon, and proceeded down the harbour, the wind blowing from the N.W. a heavy gale with fierce squalls. Arrived at the Heads at 1 p.m., but owing to the heavy sea on the bar, came to anchor. On Sunday the wind shifted to W.S.W., the sea on bar subsiding. At 6:50 a.m. got under weigh, crossed the bar at 7:10, and rounded the S.W. Cape at 4:45 p.m. Entered the Derwent at 12:30 this morning, and arrived alongside the wharf as stated above. The captain reports having experienced strong S.W. winds and squally, with heavy cross sea down the coast.

[*Mercury*, Monday, 7th September, 1891.]

Devon, s.s., left Strahan at 3:15 p.m. Friday; passed Cape Sorell at 5 p.m., and Low Rocky Point at 10:20 a.m. same day; rounded South West Cape at 2:30 a.m. Saturday; passed Recherche at 6:45 a.m.; entered the river at 10:30 a.m., arriving at the wharf at 11:40 a.m. Met with a strong gale from the north-west and high seas to South West Cape, with heavy rain squalls; afterwards fresh north and west winds to arrival. The *Devon* passed the *Yolla*, s.s., lying inside Macquarie Heads, windbound.

Bowra, s.s., left Strahan at 4 p.m. on Friday last, and owing to the bad weather and heavy sea on the bar, anchored at Macquarie Heads. Left at 7:30 a.m. next day for Hobart. Rounded South West Cape at 9:45 p.m. same day, arriving here at 9:50 a.m. yesterday. Experienced strong southerly winds and heavy weather, with showers, to Recherche; thence light southerly winds and thick weather to arrival.

Banks Peninsula, on return trip from Hobart to Strahan, was detained outside Macquarie Bar from 3 p.m. on 25th August to 8 a.m. on 26th August, 1891, after making several attempts to enter. This information was not published, but was positively affirmed by Messrs. Bath (contractors) and Reunick (civil engineer), who were passengers on board.

APPENDIX E.

To the Honorable the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly.

The humble Petition of Ship-owners, Coal Field Proprietors, and persons largely interested in promoting trade in the West Coast of Tasmania,

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

That the question of constructing a Port at Macquarie Harbour suitable for vessels up to 1500 tons being now before your Honorable House, we pray that it may receive favourable consideration, for the following important reasons:—

1. It is impossible now for ordinary vessels of over 200 tons register to cross the bar in its present state; and vessels of under that tonnage suffer damage and delay in crossing it.
2. It is evident that such vessels are quite unsuitable and insufficient for the expansion of trade that is bound to follow on the opening of the Zeehan-Strahan Railway; and that a serious block to traffic and hindrance to mining development must ensue.
3. That a large amount of coal and coke will be required for smelting ores upon the field at a very early date, which require large vessels for their conveyance; and until such vessels can get to Strahan, smelting upon the field must be hindered, and all poorer ores which will not bear cost of shipment must be set aside. This is likely to cause the shutting up of many mines which otherwise would be able to yield fair dividends.
4. That there are several valuable Coal Fields on the South Coast on the route between Hobart and Strahan which are certain to be worked and developed so soon as the demands of the West Coast can be supplied with facility by larger vessels; and thus a new and most important industry will be created close to the Capital, which must result in considerable prosperity and in the large employment of labour.

For these important reasons we respectfully pray that your Honorable House will adopt such measures as are best calculated to open the Harbour without further delay.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

Dated at Hobart, this 24th day of August, 1891.

C. J. Barclay, Banker, Hobart.

J. Mitchell, Solicitor, 101, Macquarie-st., Hobart.

F. Bond, Hobart.

Charles E. Hogg, Director Broken Hill Smelting Works, Hobart.

R. J. Lucas, Solicitor, Shareholder of Sandfly Coal Company, Stone Buildings, Hobart.

Robert R. Rex, Shipchandler, Hobart.

John Macfarlane, Merchant, Hobart.

Edward H. Butler, Solicitor, Hobart.

W. C. Grubb, Merchant, Hobart.

H. Chesterman, Merchant, Hobart.

G. Beedham, Solicitor, Hobart.

D. Barclay, Banker, Hobart.

Cecil Allport, Solicitor, Hobart.

H. Hadley, Proprietor, Hobart.

Bayley & Walch, Sharebrokers, Hobart.

Matthew Seal, Hobart.

Calder, Bowden & Co., Newspaper Proprietors, Zeehan.

A. Thomson, Bank Manager, Hobart.	T. R. Brownell, Liverpool-street, Hobart.
C. M. Tenison, Bank Manager, Hobart.	Thos. Lloyd Hood, Hobart and Zeehan.
Thomas Eyre, Shareholder, Sandfly, Hobart.	Fred. Grant, Elizabeth-street, Hobart.
Richard Crosby, Sharebroker, Hobart.	B. H. Pascoe, Elizabeth-street, Hobart.
A. G. Webster, Merchant, Hobart.	Wm. Ferguson, Merchant, Hobart.
M. W. Simmons, Solicitor, Hobart.	H. Cook, Merchant, Hobart.
Arthur R. Pontifex, Millowner, Strahan.	Henry Cane, Marine Insurance Manager, Hobart.
H. Nickolls, Commission Agent, Hobart.	Wm. J. Watchorn, Merchant, Hobart.
Walch & Sons, Booksellers, Hobart.	Davidson & Brown, Ironfounders, Hobart.
C. M. Maxwell, Manager Derwent and Tamar Company, Hobart.	W. Belbin, Shipowner, Hobart.
J. Bidencope, Merchant, Hobart.	J. E. Cottier, Merchant, Hobart.
L. Susman & Co., Murray-street, Hobart.	John Baily, Merchant, Hobart.
Alfred J. Taylor, Public Library, Hobart.	Thos. Westbrook, Auctioneer, Hobart.
Robert Walker & Co., Emporium, Hobart.	W. A. Weymouth, Insurance Secretary, Hobart.
A. E. Brownell, Liverpool-street, Hobart.	H. K. Fysh, Merchant, Hobart.