CHAPTER VI

HARBOUR FINANCE

The Exchequer loan of £4000 having been repaid in full at Martinmas 1841, the Trustees in 1842 turned their attention to the state of their account with Lord Bute in relation to the £2000 which had been made over to his Lordship 1831. The Statement of Account produced by Lord Bute was based on the £2000 having been used as a sinking fund and brought out the sum of £1306:12:1¼d. as having been advanced by Lord Bute over and above the sum of £2000 and interest accrued on the reducing balance. Notwithstanding that Lord Bute intimated at the time of furnishing the Statement of Account that he was not looking for payment of that sum the Trustees looked a gift horse in the mouth and intimated they did not accept Lord Bute's calculations. The Trustees' interpretation of the Council's agreement with Lord Bute was that Lord Bute was entitled to appropriate to his own use the sum of £2000 made over to him, and in return was to repay the Exchequer loan, only being entitled to relief against the Council and their successors, the Trustees, in the event of more than £4000 having been paid out.

Mutual discharges were eventually granted without any money changing hands.

An interesting fact brought out by the scrutiny of the agreement was that the commencing Capital debt of the Trustees as stated in the 1831 Act was incorrect. The sum stated to be due by Lord Bute to the Trustees in the 1831 Act was £1045:1:-d (£2000 plus compound interest of £645 less payments to date of £1600); a more accurate figure would have been £2645 (£2000 plus compound interest). This perhaps explains why in section XV of the 1831 Act the Capital debt is stated to be £4087:14:5d. whereas in section XXVI the Trustees were authorised to borrow only £4000 inclusive of outstanding debts.

At the end of the first decade of their administration the Trustees must have been a little disappointed with their income and expenditure. Their nett income for the year ended

20th October 1842 was only £72:6:7½d. and they still had a Capital debt of £2367:7:2½d.

After the Accounts were approved the Council assisted the Harbour Trustees in putting their Capital debt on a more secure footing by making available to the Trustees £1600 which the Council had been successful in borrowing at favourable interest rates. This money went a long way to repaying the Trustees' "overdraft" from the Council.

The Accounts for the year ended 20th October 1843 reveal that the Castle Company had by then a strong grip of the Rothesay trade. Five of the eight steamboats which compounded their dues that year were Castle vessels. The other three were the Maid of Bute, the Isle of Bute and the Engineer.

In October 1845 it was reported to a meeting of the Trustees that consideration should be given to widening the north/south section of the west pier and erecting sheds on the Quay for the protection of goods. Plans and specifications for the widening were obtained and the contract was awarded on 1st June 1846 to Mr. William York. The pier was extended to a width of 50 feet and the peripatetic "necessary" was moved to a third site on the opposite side of the pier from its second site all for the sum of £720. The first sheds were not however erected until 1848. There were two. Both were erected on the west pier, one directly opposite the drawbridge, the other slightly further east. They cost £263:13:10d.

There was a change of tenant of the slip from Whitsunday 1848 when Messrs. George and James Burns took entry after a Public Roup at a rent of £20:10:-d. per annum.

The Trustees never had to look for problems. On 11th February 1850 they learned that recent gales had so shaken the west quay that part of it had sunk and become dangerous for passengers thus necessitating the lifting and relaying of part of the causewaying. The harbour committee was of the opinion that from the shake given to the pier something would have to be done to keep it up otherwise there was every possibility that the first gale of strong north, north east or north west wind would bring it down. Perhaps the surprising thing is not that the 1822 quay was about to collapse, but that it had not collapsed long before 1850 considering the lack of any proper foundations. Reports were obtained on the structural condition of the quay. They were depressing. The only way in which the quay could be adequately protected would be to erect a new breastwork outside the existing quay. The Trustees had no choice. Either a new [illegible] or they would not have a pier.

Plans and specifications were obtained and in April the following year a contract was entered into with Mr. [illegible] York. The contract was for taking down about 30 feet of the existing wall at its eastern extremity, building a new sea wall for such a distance as the Trustees wished at a cost of £6 per lineal foot and causewaying the quay at the option of the Trustees. The new sea wall was to have a properly excavated foundation and was to be united to the old wall at its base with concrete and with ties above.

A further complication arose when, in March 1852, it was discovered by Mr. York that old piles along an extensive section of the quay would prevent him from excavating a proper foundation for the new wall adjacent to the old wall. It was accordingly decided to build that part of the new wall *ex adverso* the piles 2½ feet further seawards from the new work already constructed. This involved an extra payment to Mr. York of £150. The resulting step in the front of the quay is clearly visible in the 1865 Ordnance Survey Map of the harbour.

The first wooden fenders to be erected along the north side of the quay were affixed to this new wall.

The final cost of the sea wall is unknown as detailed accounts of the Trustees' intromissions were not recorded in the Minutes beyond 16th October 1851. Up till April 1852 work to the value of £1698:8:3d. had been executed. The final cost was probably in excess of £3000.

Not only salt water gave the Trustees cause to worry. In the Autumn of 1851 the Mill Lade waters from Loch Fad which formerly ran in a northerly direction over the foreshore changed course and started running due east. The seaward end of the Patent Slip was undermined with the result that it became unsafe to take vessels on to it. Messrs. Salmond and Struthers, the then occupiers of the Mills declined to accept responsibility for the water beyond high water mark leaving the Trustees no option but to divert the water back themselves.

The Accounts for the year to 16th October 1851 disclose that seven steamboats compounded their dues for the year: the Inveraray, Cardiff and Craignish Castles, the Petrel, Mary Jane, Merlin and Pioneer. Other frequent visitors that year included the Briton, Dunrobin Castle, Mars, Lady Kelburne, Scotia, Isle of Arran and Dunoon Castle