

PAPERS RELATIVE TO RESURVEY

The average consumption of coal, while surveying and buoying, would be about three tons per diem, at about £2 per ton.

The hire of the "Halcyon," clear of expenses, to be £10 per diem.

T. W.

No. 9.

Mr. BALFOUR to the Hon. J. HALL.

Survey, &c., at Manukau.

(No. 402-c.)

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 8th March, 1869.

I have the honor to report that when at Auckland last month, in accordance with instructions, I examined the whole Manukau establishment, making (at the special request of His Honor the Superintendent) a provisional report to the Provincial Government on the whole question of maintenance, a copy of which report I attach:—

I was given to understand that the Provincial Executive were quite alive to the necessity of expending a considerable sum in order to put this harbour on a proper footing, but that there was a great probability that the Provincial Council would refuse to appropriate a sufficient sum for the purpose.

I had hoped that the Government would, ere this, have received some communication on the subject, as every day's delay will add to the cost of the work, by throwing it into a less favourable season, and I should recommend that the Provincial Government be requested to state definitely their intentions with the least possible delay.

In the event of the Provincial Council having refused to appropriate a sufficient sum, it rests with the Colonial Government to take action under the 27th and 28th sections of "The Marine Act, 1867," unless they should decide to close the Manukau Harbour entirely.

I am clearly of opinion that there is no alternative between closing the harbour entirely, that is officially—of course any small local craft might use it without being piloted if the master thought proper—and expending a sum approximating more or less closely to the amount of my estimate.

As to the propriety of adopting either course, I am not prepared to advise. No doubt the present trade of the port is very trifling, and it would be quite easy to work the Auckland mails *via* the East Coast, and the Taranaki mails by small steamers; but if the Manukau were closed, small steamers would require a heavy subsidy to run to Taranaki alone, and I cannot think it would be advisable to close what is after all one of the very best, if not the best harbour on the West Coast of the North Island.

In the event of the Government determining to put the Manukau establishment in order at the expense of the Province, I should recommend that either the Provincial Government, or Captain Burgess, the Chief Harbourmaster, be intrusted with the supervision of the expenditure, as I have no officer there who receives regular pay.

It does not seem strictly my province to make any comment on the salary allowed to the Harbourmaster at Manukau; still, I cannot help remarking that every officer should be allowed sufficient to live upon in some proportion to his position, and £200 a year seems to be very poor pay for a man filling such an important position as Harbourmaster at Manukau.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Postmaster-General,
Wellington.

JAMES M. BALFOUR,
Colonial Marine Engineer.

No. 10.

MEMORANDUM for the Information of His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT of AUCKLAND.

Manukau Harbour, &c.

UNDERSTANDING that it is of moment that my report on Manukau Harbour, &c., should be in the hands of the Executive for consideration during the present Session of the Provincial Council, I shall give the result of my observations, &c., as shortly as possible for their information.

Any more formal report which I may make to the Colonial Government will no doubt be duly forwarded for His Honor's information.

I have examined the signal station on the South Head, the leading beacons there and on the North Head, and the old pilot establishment on the North Head.

The beacons are all in good order, and either of those on the South Head can be adapted as a lighthouse at a small cost.

The traversing ways on the lower beacon of the South Head require to be lengthened a few feet, on account of the Tramere Spit having lengthened.

The signalman's house is in a very incomplete state, not being lined at all; it would require to be lined, and at least one room should be added to it for the pilot's use when he is at the Heads.

A second smaller staff should be erected for signalling to vessels inside (and probably to Onchungo also), so as to diminish the number of signals required on the main staff, and so lessen the danger of mistake.

The pilot's house on the North Head is quite uninhabitable, and it would cost a very considerable sum to put it to rights. Moreover, the pilot and crew should now have accommodation on the South Head, so as to be able to communicate with the signalman, and to assist him on any emergency.

All doors and windows in the old pilot's house could be used again on the South side, as well as a part, at least, of the boarding, so that it would probably cost very little more to erect a new house on the South Head than it would to render the North Head dwelling habitable. Another strong argument in favour of the change to the South side is to be found in the fact that there is a sheltered cove where boats could land or put off in almost any weather, whereas the sea rolls heavily into the landing on the North side.