

Hokitika.—A site has been selected for the lighthouse, and drawings and specifications have been prepared. In a short time tenders will be called for construction.

I will conclude this memorandum with a few remarks on the character of the buildings above described, as to materials, &c. After some consideration on this subject, it was determined to use timber not only for the dwellings and stores, but for the towers also, as being cheaper and more easily and expeditiously erected than brickwork or masonry, and at the same time very much less liable to damage by earthquakes, the probable effect of which on such structures should not be lost sight of. To insure durability in the towers, iron-bark timber has been adopted for the main framing; the minor parts of the framing and the outer boarding being of totara. In the dwellings all the piles, ground plates, and weather boarding will be of totara, and the roofing of stout corrugated galvanized iron plates.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary of Customs, Wellington.

JOHN BLACKETT.

APPENDIX B.

CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO CARRIAGE OF PARAFFIN.

No. 1.

Mr. SEED to Mr. FIFE.

Customs Department (Marine Branch),

SIR,—

Wellington, 11th January, 1876.

The question of using mineral oil in all the New Zealand lighthouses is now under consideration; but there is an important objection to its adoption which I consider desirable to draw your attention to—and that is, that principal firms of shipowners trading to this colony (the New Zealand Shipping Company and Messrs. Shaw, Saville, and Co.), refuse to carry your lighthouse oil, except as deck cargo. They allege—1st. That it would be injurious to any other cargo, and especially to the cargoes taken to New Zealand, consisting as they do largely of groceries, to stow the oil in the hold adjoining other goods. 2nd. That the oil is of a highly dangerous nature, and that should the temperature of the hold rise above 100° there would be a constant liability to explosion. With reference to the latter objection, a communication has been sent to the Agent-General to the colony, requesting him to point out to the shipping firms that this oil (according to the Imperial Parliamentary Papers relative to proposals to substitute mineral oil for colza oil in lighthouses) does not flash until a temperature of from 134° to 138° Fahrenheit is reached; but a sufficient time has not elapsed to receive a reply here to this letter. In addition to the fact that this oil has to be carried on deck, it is only received at shippers' risk, and is liable to be thrown overboard in case of bad weather. The rate of freight is double that on colza oil carried in the hold—viz., 8d. as compared with 4d. per gallon; and insurance (to cover risk of jetsam) is charged at the rate of 120/ per cent. Apart from the fact of a shipment of this oil being liable at any time to be thrown overboard, there are comparatively few vessels that it can be carried in, as, under the existing regulations, it cannot be shipped in "passenger" vessels.

I should be glad if you would ascertain and inform me whether the oil in question is required to be carried on deck when shipped to places other than New Zealand, because, if not, it is only reasonable that this objectionable stipulation in reference to shipments to this colony should be removed.

I have, &c.,

The General Manager,

Young's Paraffin Light and Mineral Oil Company (Limited),
69, St. George's Place, Glasgow.

WILLIAM SEED,

Secretary of Customs.

No. 2.

Mr. FIFE to Mr. SEED.

Young's Paraffin Light and Mineral Oil Company (Limited),

General Manager's Office, 13 Dundas Street, Glasgow,
15th March, 1876.

SIR,—

I beg to acknowledge receipt of press copy of your letter of 11th January, *via* Brindisi.

So far as our lighthouse oil injuring the particular cargoes to New Zealand is concerned, I beg to explain that these oils are regularly carried under deck, without extra charge, from Glasgow to Bordeaux, Havre, Bristol, Cardiff, and Swansea, Granton to Norway, Grangemouth to London, Hull, and Newcastle, London to China, Russia, Alexandria, and Cape of Good Hope, and not a single complaint of goods being spoiled has ever been submitted to us.

In regard to the alleged danger of the oil, this is simply absurd. Your letter correctly states the fact; and I should add that the absolute safety of the oil has been one of its great recommendations to all the Governments who have adopted it for their lighthouses.

I believe that the shipping firms which you mention have practically a monopoly of the trade to New Zealand, and are therefore rather in a position to dictate. I trust, however, you will be able to make them amenable to reason, and I will try what can be effected in this way here.

I have, &c.,

Wm. Seed, Esq.,

Secretary of Customs (Marine Branch), Wellington.

JOHN FIFE,

General Manager.