

Pilot of Manukau, relative to the wreck of H.M.S. 'Orpheus,' transmitted to the Council in its last Session, with the Message No. 18 of his Honor the Superintendent," present to the Council the minutes of evidence taken in prosecution of the enquiry committed to them, and report that they have agreed to the following resolutions :—

1. In the opinion of this Committee, the late Provincial Government, during the period from the year 1858 to the close of the year 1862 inclusively, has shown an earnest desire to improve the Harbour of Manukau, and by providing amply for the wants of the Pilot Establishment, to secure the safety and convenience of vessels at that Port.

2. That in reference to the allegations made by the Pilot, Mr. Wing, which are the subject of the Despatch of his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, no blame can be attached to the late Provincial Government. Reviewing the whole of the evidence taken on the subject of the wreck of H.M.S. "Orpheus," this Committee find nothing to justify Mr. Wing for having made such an allegation as the following :—"I feel it my duty to say that had the late Provincial Government supplied the necessary requirements of the Pilot Station, many valuable lives would in all probability have been saved on that occasion."

3. The "necessary requirements" stated to have been unsupplied, are specified in the evidence of Mr. Wing, as being—1st, Marryatt's Code of Signals, and 2nd, Launching Ways for the Life Boat—and in reference thereto it is resolved that the Committee find that the use of flags for the purpose of making signals at the Manukau Pilot Station was discontinued in the year 1861, at the instance of the Pilot and Harbour Master, Mr. Wing, and a Code of Signals, to be made by means of squares, a ball, and telegraph arms substituted ; that the evidence of the signal man, Hugh Evans, shows that in a period of three years Marryatt's Code, which was kept at the station, had not once been used ; and that, when Mr. Wing, in his letter of date 22nd of January, 1862, reported to the Superintendent that the flags of Marryatt's Code which were at the station had become "rotten," he made no requisition for a new Code, but suggested that,—“If the same is to be replaced with new ones, the New Commercial Code should be adopted ;” and the Committee find that in the Estimate of Expenditure for the Pilot Service of Manukau for the year 1862, which was forwarded to the Superintendent by Mr. Wing on the 22nd January, 1862, no item for the cost of the new Code appears. 2nd, That the state of inefficiency in which the Life Boat was found—without sails or oars, and bottom upwards, in a cave—on the occasion of the wreck of H.M.S. "Orpheus," is, in the opinion of this Committee, proof of highly culpable negligence on the part of the Pilot and Harbour Master, Mr. Wing ; the evidence of the signal man, Hugh Evans, showing that it was in the power of Mr. Wing, with the means at his disposal, always to have kept the Life Boat ready for immediate service ; and the evidence of the late Provincial Treasurer showing that the Government had no reason to believe that the boat was not so kept.

4. That the person who was on duty at the signal station at the time of the wreck of H.M.S. "Orpheus," was not the Signal-man duly appointed by the late Provincial Government ; that the Committee find that the Signal-man, Hugh Evans, received leave of absence from the station for six weeks, about the close of the year 1861, and that a young man, the son of the Pilot, Mr. Wing, was permitted, at the request of Mr. Evans, and with Mr. Wing's consent, to act as substitute for Evans during the term of his leave ; that Evans did not return to the station when his leave expired ; that he informed the Pilot, Mr. Wing, by letter from Otago that it was not his intention to return ; that Mr. Wing did not report this fact to the Provincial Government, but allowed his son to continue to draw pay as acting Signal-man, and that it appears from the evidence of the Provincial Treasurer, that neither the Superintendent of the Province, nor himself (the Treasurer) was aware at the time, at the close of the year 1862, when they ceased respectively to hold office, that the Signal-man, Hugh Evans, was not on duty at the Pilot Station.

WILLIAM C. DALDY,

Chairman.

Provincial Council Chamber,
October 15th, 1863.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE.

TUESDAY, 6TH OCTOBER, 1863.

Members present :

Mr. Daldy,
Mr. J. O'Neill,

Dr. Pollen,
Mr. Ridings.

Mr. Daldy was called to the Chair.

Proceedings and Minutes of Evidence of the Committee of last session read ; also the correspondence transmitted with Message No. 18.

Captain Wing, the Harbour Master and Pilot of Manukau, examined.

Ordered, That Hugh Evans, the Signalman at Manukau, be summoned to attend on Thursday next.

Adjourned to Thursday, at 12 o'clock.