

FURTHER PAPERS

RELATIVE TO

THE LOSS OF HER MAJESTY'S SHIP

“ ORPHEUS.”

(In Continuation of D.—No. 1.)

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BY COMMAND OF
HIS EXCELLENCY.

AUCKLAND.

1863.

FURTHER PAPERS

RELATING TO

THE LOSS OF H.M.S. "ORPHEUS."

No. 1.

MR. WING TO GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B., AUCKLAND.

Manukau, New Zealand,

27th November, 1862.

SIR,—

I beg most respectfully to bring to Your Excellency's notice, that I have for several months past used all the means that lie in my power, to get the pilot boats and signal mast rigging at Manukau heads put into serviceable repair by the Provincial Government of Auckland, whose duty it is to do so. I am now reduced to one boat which is in a very leaky and unsafe state, being nail sick and otherwise unserviceable, and as I hold my appointment from the General Government of New Zealand, I have thought it my duty to appeal to Your Excellency to cause the matter to be looked into, in order that the wants of the Pilot Service may be supplied as early as possible. Trusting that Your Excellency will not deem the step I have taken as improper,

I have, &c.,

THOMAS WING,

Pilot.

His Excellency Sir George Grey, Governor of New Zealand.

No. 2.

W. GISHORNE, UNDER SECRETARY, AUCKLAND, TO PILOT AND HARBOUR MASTER WING, MANUKAU.

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Auckland, 12th December, 1862.

SIR,—

I am directed by Mr. Domett to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th ultimo, to His Excellency the Governor, representing the defective condition of the Signal Staff, Rigging, and of the Pilot Boat at Manukau Heads, and, in reply, to inform you I have called the attention of His Honor the Superintendent of the Province of Auckland to this subject, with a view to an immediate remedy of the evil complained of.

I have, &c.,

W. GISHORNE,

Under Secretary.

Pilot and Harbour Master Wing, Manukau.

No. 3.

THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Auckland, 11th December, 1862.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a letter of the 27th ultimo, addressed by Captain Wing, the Pilot at the Manukau Heads, to his Excellency the Governor, representing the present

PAPERS RELATING TO THE

defective state of the Signal-mast Rigging at that Station, and the dangerous condition of the sole Boat to which he is reduced.

I have no doubt that your Honor will give your immediate attention to the requirements of the Pilot Station at Manukau, and not allow a continuance of the serious risks to human life and property which a neglect of those requirements will entail.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED DOMETT.

His Honor the Superintendent, Auckland.

No. 4.

THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND, TO THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, AUCKLAND.

Superintendent's Office,
Auckland, 12th December, 1862.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 485, of date 11th instant, covering copy of a letter addressed to His Excellency the Governor by the Pilot of Manukau, Mr. Wing, and to inform you that immediate enquiry will be made respecting the condition of the Manukau Pilot Station.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT GRAHAM,
Superintendent.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Auckland.

No. 5.

THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND, TO THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, AUCKLAND.

Superintendent's Office,
Auckland, 12th February, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward for your information a copy of all the correspondence that has taken place relative to the Manukau Harbor since I took office, December 11th, 1862, by which you will perceive that, immediately upon receipt of your letter of that date, the necessary arrangements were made for obtaining the Buoys from Sydney, and the Harbour Master had been empowered to make every preparation so as to prevent any delay in placing them immediately they arrive, having been authorized by me on the 5th instant to employ four extra men to enable him to survey the Harbour. The necessary authority was also given, at same time, to have the signals put in thorough repair.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT GRAHAM,
Superintendent.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Auckland.

Enclosure 1 to No. 5.

THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND, TO MR. ROBERT GILFILLAN.

Superintendent's Office,
Auckland, 31st December, 1862.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose herewith plans and specifications for Buoys and Moorings, to be placed in the South Channel of the Manukau Harbour, and request that you will obtain them on what you consider the best terms, and as quickly as possible. It is most desirable to land them in the Manukau, to the order of the Harbour-Master; and I think it is possible you will be able to make easy terms with the agent of the I. C. R. M. Steam Company, Captain Hall, as it will greatly benefit that Company. If, however, you find it inconvenient to land them in the Manukau, you must make the best arrangement for landing them in Auckland.

The Government is limited to an expenditure of Six hundred pounds to complete this work, and it will require One hundred and fifty to place them after arrival: therefore, there will only be

Four hundred and Fifty pounds, which must also include freight, insurance, commission and other charges. The Bells could be dispensed with.

Should the amount estimated exceed that sum, you will please communicate with me before you close with anyone.

The Buoys being for the outside of the Harbour, it is of great importance they should be of the best material, and carefully tested before they are shipped.

You will also oblige by furnishing me with a list of prices of Buoys of various sizes, as it is likely that some will be required for the Auckland Harbour.

With reference to the mode of payment, you can advise as to what you consider the most convenient.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT GRAHAM,
Superintendent.

Robert Gilfillan, Esq.

Enclosure 2 to No. 5.

MR. ROBERT GILFILLAN TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge your communication of 31st December. I have called for tenders for the Buoys required for the Manukau Harbour, and have already received two; one at £350, the other at £600. I am, therefore, in hopes of being able to get the Buoys, &c., completed at something under the sum voted for them, and I will take every precaution by testing them carefully to see that they are of the best quality and workmanship, and will further hasten their completion with the least possible delay.

I shall address you by the next opportunity to Auckland with further particulars, and meantime

I have, &c.,

ROBERT GILFILLAN.

His Honor the Superintendent, Province of Auckland.

Enclosure 3 to No. 5.

PILOT AND HARBOUR MASTER, MANUKAU, TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Pilot Station, Manukau,
26th January, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to make application for your Honor's permission to obtain the Articles specified in requisition enclosed, for the purpose therein stated; also permission to employ four extra boatmen for the purpose of manning the life-boat and pilot-boat, to mark and buoy off the South Channel; also to prepare launching ways, moorings, making mooring stones, and putting the signal mast and rigging, and other necessities about the Pilot Station, into serviceable repair.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS WING,

Pilot and Harbour Master.

P.S.—The extra boatmen would be required about three months at the rate of £6 per month, and 20s. per month extra to pilot crew to provide provender and lodging when working away from the Pilot Station.

T. W.

His Honor the Superintendent, Auckland.

No. 6.

THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND, TO HIS EXCELLENCY SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B.

Superintendent's Office,

Auckland, 11th February, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward enclosed copy of a letter, received this morning from the Harbour Master of the Port of Manukau, furnishing a report of the loss of H.M.S. "Orpheus," and the loss of so many valuable lives. It is satisfactory to learn that Captain Renner of the "Wonga Wonga" rendered every assistance and kindness in his power.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT GRAHAM,
Superintendent.

His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B.

PAPERS RELATING TO THE

Enclosure to No. 6.

MR. WING TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Pilot Station, Manukau,
8th February, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the painful duty to report to your Honor that H.M.S.S. "Orpheus," Commodore Burnett, has been totally wrecked on the South Spit at the entrance of the harbour. The Commodore and most of his officers and crew have perished, saving only about sixty-two men out of a crew of two hundred and sixty.

The circumstances, as they came under the notice of myself and the person in charge of the Signal Station (my son), are as follows:—

On Saturday, 7th instant, at about 9 a.m., the ship "Orpheus" was seen steering for the harbour from the westward, distance about 25 miles, and at 10 a.m. the signal at the Pilot Station was put up (Take the Bar), there being more than half-flood and the Bar clear of break, but a heavy rolling sea on the South Spit. At about 1 p.m. the ship was seen steering south of the Entrance, when the Telegraph Arm was put up pointing Northward, to keep the ship in that direction, but no notice appeared to be taken of it. At 1:30 the ship was drawing near danger, and the signals were hauled down and the Telegraph notice put up "Keep the vessel more off shore." This, however, they did not obey, but continued on under all sail and steam; and about 2 o'clock the ship was observed to hang and roll heavily on the South Bank, and shortly afterwards started, and again took the ground on the South Spit, broaching-to with her head northward near deep water, and then all the sails were clewed up.

At this time I was in charge of the "Wonga Wonga," steamer, on the way for sea, and about 3 p.m. rounded Puponga, and when near the South Head observed the ship making sail, but was not aware that the ship was aground, and as I have not been able to obtain signals and other necessities for the Pilot Station, the person in charge could not make me acquainted with the circumstances until I arrived at the Pilot Station, when shortly afterwards we observed the ship fast settling down with her hull under water, rolling heavily. I then manned the Pilot-boat and started for the wreck, and when abreast of the Orwell Shoal saw two boats with crews in them in the breakers on the Shoal. I then waved the Pilot Flag to conduct them out of danger, and when they came alongside the Paymaster, Mr. Amphlett, desired that I would lend him the Pilot-boat to proceed to the "Harrier" for assistance; this I did and took charge of the ship's boats to proceed to the wreck to save life. We then observed the "Wonga Wonga" returning, when I proceeded with the boats to meet her to obtain assistance in getting the boats to the wreck quickly. This Captain Renner did immediately, and at about 5 o'clock the boats, with the Pilot-crew in them to assist, were placed within half a cable's length of the ship's jib-boom under command of a Lieutenant, to pick up the men as they dropped and floated from the wreck. At this time the rollers were breaking over the ship as high as the lower yards, making it extremely dangerous to get near the wreck with common boats; however, a number of lives were saved. At 8 o'clock becoming dark, the "Wonga Wonga" was anchored within about three cables' length of the wreck, and the boats kept plying about the wreck picking up the crew until after midnight, when it became ebb tide and no further chance was left of saving life. I have further to remark that towards 9 o'clock the Mainmast was observed to go over the side, and in about half an hour afterwards no part of the wreck was to be seen excepting that drifting near and about the breakers. The boat under charge of the Pilot-crew continued to follow the drifting wreck and picked up five men much exhausted, and when midway between the wreck and the Pilot Station, they picked up Midshipmen Hunt and Barclay floating on wreck nearly exhausted; and when they landed at the Pilot Station, Nehana, one of the Pilot-crew, carried young Barclay nearly a mile to his house, and then made a fire and supplied their wants by providing food and dry clothes for all. And I also add that every assistance and kindness that could be shown was rendered by Captain Renner and the crew of the "Wonga Wonga." On the following morning at daylight only two stumps of lower-mast with a portion of the ship's frame was to be seen. Weighed anchor and proceeded up the harbour, and when near the Pilot Station saw H.M.S.S. "Avon" coming round Puponga; anchored the "Wonga Wonga" near South Head, when shortly afterwards the "Avon" came alongside with Captain Jenkins, of H.M.S.S. "Miranda," on board, taking all the shipwrecked crew to Onehunga. At 1 p.m. the "Wonga Wonga" weighed anchor for sea, and at 2 o'clock she was clear out through South Channel. In conclusion I must add that 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 this occasion.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS WING,
Pilot and Harbour Master.

His Honor the Superintendent, Auckland.

No. 7.

MR. WING TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Pilot Station, Manukau,
26th February, 1863.

SIR,—

In compliance with your Honor's request, as stated in letter from your office, dated 12th instant, referring to the wreck of H.M.S. "Orpheus," I have to reply as follows, and would

respectfully refer you to letters forwarded by me to the late Superintendent, which will furnish a detailed explanation of the matter, and the grounds upon which I made the statement "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 most probably have been saved on this occasion," in the report I sent to your office, dated 8th instant, and as regards the signals wanting on that occasion, I have to refer you to letter dated 22nd January, 1862.

As regards the authority for my son acting as Signal-man, I have to inform you that he was only acting as a substitute for Mr. Hugh Evans (the appointed Signal-man), during leave of absence, which was approved by letter, bearing date 14th September, 1861, by the late Superintendent, and with respect to the age of the young man acting as Signal-man, I have to inform you he has turned twenty-one years, and any one who knows him can testify as to his intelligence.

I have also to state that the want of boat ways for launching on this melancholy occasion, was a serious deficiency, which prevented the life boat from being brought into service, and this deficiency I have not omitted to bring under the notice of the late Provincial Government repeatedly for years past.

I have, &c.,

His Honor the Superintendent, Auckland.

THOMAS WING,
Pilot and Harbour Master, Manukau.

Enclosure 1 to No. 7.

MR. WING TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Harbor Department,
Manukau, 16th January, 1860.

SIR,—

With reference to your Honor's request that I would furnish you with a statement of improvements which I consider necessary in the Harbor of Manukau, I have the honor to report that the extensive districts penetrated by the numerous arms and creeks of the Manukau, as well as to induce traders from Melbourne and elsewhere to visit the Harbor, the following improvements, in addition to those already effected by your direction, ought to be made with as little delay as possible. The greatest hindrance to the trade of this Harbor, hitherto, has been the high rate of Insurance charged for shipping entering it, which charge would be greatly reduced so soon as the Harbor was properly Buoyed and Beaconsed.

1. Slippery Creek and Papakura Channel, being the outlets from the Coal Districts, require to have the rocky obstructions cleared away, and the Channel Buoyed and Beaconsed, so as to make it available for a larger class of vessels than are at present employed in the navigation.

2. The Mauku and Waiuku Channels, having several sunken dangers, also require to be Buoyed and Beaconsed, in order to their safe navigation.

3. The South Channel at Manukau Heads ought to be Buoyed and Beaconsed, so as to make it available for Steamers. This would be a very great advantage to all classes of vessels entering and leaving the Harbor.

4. I would also suggest that a jetty and Boatways be constructed at the Pilot Station, in order to facilitate the launching of boats which at times is most difficult.

5. The Main Channel leading to Onehunga, from Puponga to Shag Point, requires to be completed with Buoys and Beacons.

6. To make Onehunga Wharf available it requires to be widened and extended for a considerable distance, so as to enable vessels to approach or leave at half-tide, as already reported to your Honor.

7. A Jetty ought to be erected and other improvements made at the Whau Township. Also I would suggest the necessity of erecting Telegraph posts in order to communicate with the Heads, which is often much wanted.

On the whole, I would take the liberty of stating that in my opinion a large expenditure will be required to make such improvements on the Harbor as will be necessary for the well-doing of the place.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS WING,
Harbor Master.

Enclosure 2 to No. 7.

MR. WING TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Pilot Station, Manukau,
30th April, 1862.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report that it is necessary that the Boats, and rigging about the Signal mast and davits be put into serviceable repair before the winter sets in; and that the labour and materials mentioned in requisitions enclosed are required to perform the same.

I have, &c.,

His Honor the Superintendent, Auckland.

THOMAS WING,
Harbour Master and Pilot.

No. 3.—PROVINCE OF AUCKLAND.

REQUISITION FOR THE UNDERMENTIONED ARTICLES FOR THE USE OF PILOT STATION, MANUKAU.

Names of Articles.	Last supply of the same Articles.		Quantities of each Article actually in possession.			Number or Quantity of Articles required (in figures and words at length).	Cost of the Stores applied for.		Purpose for which required, and grounds for making the application.
	Date.	Quantity.	Service-able.	Repair-able.	Unserviceable.		£	s. d.	
Iron Signal Ball Frames	2 (two)	2	10 0	Repairs for Signal Mast and Pilot Boats.
Rings and Hooks (Chain Shrouds)	2 (two) each	0	10 0	
Boat's Stern Band and Rudder Braces	2 (two)	0	5 0	
Repairs to Row-locks and Mast Clamp	12 (twelve)	0	7 0	
Repairs, Picks, Punches, Scrapers, and Grinding Stone Handle	10 (ten)	0	10 0	
Screw Lye Bolts	6 (six)	0	9 0	
Repairs to Boats' Ring-bolts	4 (four)	0	5 0	
Repairing Links to Mooring Chain	6 (six)	0	4 0	
TOTAL ...							5	0 0	

30th April, 1862.

THOMAS WING, Harbor Master and Pilot.

No. 3.—PROVINCE OF AUCKLAND.

REQUISITION FOR THE UNDERMENTIONED ARTICLES FOR THE USE OF PILOT STATION, MANUKAU.

Names of Articles.	Last supply of the same Articles.		Quantities of each Article actually in possession.			Number or Quantity of Articles (in figures and words at length.)	Cost of the Stores applied for.		Purpose for which required, and grounds for making the application.
	Date.	Quantity.	Service-able.	Repair-able.	Unserviceable.		£	s. d.	
Manila Rope	Apr. 1861	1 coil, 2½ inch	3	10 0	Repairs for Signal Mast and Pilot Boats.
Manila Rope	1 coil, 2½ inch	3	0 0	
Europe Rope	1 coil, 2½ inch	3	10 0	
Europe Rope	1 coil, 1½ inch	2	0 0	
Hambro' line	2 skeins, 1½ inch	0	10 0	
Roping Twine	1 lb.	0	5 0	
Stockholm Tar	5 gallons	1	0 0	
Coal Tar	5 gallons	0	12 6	
White Lead	56 lbs., in two tins	1	8 0	
Red Lead	28 lbs.	1	0 0	
Green Paint	7 lbs.	0	7 0	
Blue Paint	14 lbs.	0	7 0	
Putty	10 lbs.	0	5 0	
Paint Oil	5 gallons	1	15 0	
Turps	3 gallons	1	10 0	
Paint Brushes	4 brushes	0	12 0	
Light Canvas	10 yards	0	15 0	
Round Iron (¾)	3 bars round iron	1	10 0	
Connecting Shackles	6 shackles	0	12 0	
Hooks and Thimbles	12 hooks and thimbles	0	18 0	
Double Blocks	6 double 8 in. blocks	3	4 0	
Iron Nails	50 lbs. assorted nails	0	15 0	
Cartage to Onehunga	Cartage	0	15 0	
TOTAL						...	30	0 6	

30th April, 1862.

THOMAS WING, Harbor Master and Pilot.

No. 3.—PROVINCE OF AUCKLAND.

REQUISITION FOR THE UNDERMENTIONED ARTICLES FOR THE USE OF PILOT STATION, MANUKAU.

Names of Articles.	Last supply of the same Article.		Quantities of each Article actually in possession.			Number or Quantity of Articles required.	Cost of the Stores applied for			Purposes for which required, and grounds for making the application.
	Date.	Quantity.	Service-able.	Repair-able.	Unserviceable.		£	s.	d.	
Mangeao Boards	Apr. 1861	...	...	...	...	100 ft. full inch (super)	1	5	0	Repairs for Masts :—
Do. do.	...	...	...	...	...	50 ft. $\frac{3}{4}$ inch do.	0	15	0	New Second Gunwale ... Labour
Kauri do.	...	...	...	...	...	300 ft. $\frac{1}{2}$ & $\frac{3}{8}$ inch do.	2	5	0	Boxing forward and after Mast ... 3 "
Copper Land Nails	...	...	...	...	...	4 lbs. $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch	0	16	0	Fitting Row-lock Plates and Clamps ... 2 "
Do. Timber do.	...	...	...	...	...	4 lbs. $2\frac{1}{4}$ inch	0	16	0	Fastening Knees and Linings ... 3 "
Do. Roves	...	...	...	...	...	2 lbs. assorted	0	8	0	Six new Planks in Bottom ... 4 "
Galvanized Nails	...	...	...	...	...	6 lbs. do.	0	6	0	New Floor Timbers and Crutches ... 4 "
Copper Scarf Tacks	...	...	...	...	...	1 lb. do.	0	5	0	New Lining and Sheets complete ... 6 "
Do. Knee Bolts	...	...	...	...	...	2 doz. 6 & 7 inch	0	10	0	New Bilge Battens, clinch fastened... 1 "
White Hemp	...	...	...	...	...	4 lbs.	0	4	0	New Gunwale Battens, top & bottom
Boat Sail	...	...	...	...	...	About 607 lbs. (say)	7	0	0	Making new Rudder and Fitting ... 1 "
Cartage to Onehunga	...	...	...	...	...	Cartage	0	10	0	Fitting Mast and fixing Stern Band ... 2 "
						30 days' labour, at 12s.	15	0	0	Labour ... 30 days
							18	0	0	
							33	0	0	

30th April, 1862.

THOMAS WING, Harbor Master and Pilot.

Enclosure 3 to No. 7.

MR. WING, HARBOR MASTER, TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Pilot Station, Manukau,
13th September, 1862.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report that application has been made at your Office for permission to obtain labor and materials for the repair of Signal Masts and Pilot Boats since 30th April last, the same now being unfit for efficient service for want of the labor and materials applied for, and I also beg to state that I require the assistance of a carpenter for a month or six weeks to build a Signal house and other necessary repairs and fixings about the Signal Mast, which is absolutely necessary for the proper working of the Station.

I have, &c.,
THOMAS WING,
Harbor Master.

His Honor the Superintendent, Auckland.

Enclosure 4 to No. 7.

MR. WING, HARBOR MASTER, TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Pilot Station, Manukau,
13th September, 1862.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report that the South side of the Channel from Puponga to Cape Horn is now Buoyed and Beacons, the same being painted Red. The buoys are cone shaped and placed in three fathoms low water. The Beacons on the edge of the shoals have from eight to ten feet water near them at the same time of tide. But to make the work more complete it is necessary that eight Can Buoys (less expensive than cone Buoys) should be placed on the North side of the Channel to show the positions of two dangerous ledges of rocks and several sand spits which are covered at half-tide and much in the way in navigating that part, and would recommend the same to be completed as soon as possible.

There are three plain Piles placed on the North side of the Channel, shewing the ends of Sand Spits, between Cape Horn, and Horse Shoe Bight near Shag Point which are to be painted white and kept on the Port hand inwards.

I have also to report that the Beacons formerly placed between Cape Horn and White Bluff have been destroyed by vessels unknown to me getting in contact with them during the night, and as it is necessary to mark off that part of the Channel in accordance with the rest, I would recommend that three Buoys be placed in the room of the Beacons missing, which are less liable to accident.

I have, &c.,
THOMAS WING,
Harbour Master.

His Honor the Superintendent, Auckland.

No. 8.

COPY OF DESPATCH FROM HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, K.G., TO GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B.

NEW ZEALAND.

Downing Street, 28th May, 1863.

No. 70.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch, No. 14, of the 11th of February, forwarding a Report from the Harbor Master at Manukau relative to the wreck of Her Majesty's Ship "Orpheus." The Harbor Master concludes his Report with the following words:—"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 this occasion."

If this statement be correct, the Harbor Master has done his duty in making it, and is highly to be commended for not having been deterred by the fear of censure or resentment on the spot from telling the truth. If, on the contrary, there is any error in the statement, it is only due to the late Provincial Government that it should be cleared up. I regret that it did not occur to you that it would have been desirable that you should ascertain and distinctly report to me what were the particular requirements to which the Harbor Master alludes,—whether they were brought under the notice of the Provincial Government, and if so in what manner, how often, and at what dates,—and

what steps, if any, were taken by that Government in consequence. I must now request that you will supply me with such a Report, furnishing me not only with any opinion at which you may arrive, but also with a precise and full statement of all the facts of the case. When the valuable lives of a large number of Her Majesty's Forces have been lost in an endeavour to serve the Colony by entering one of its Harbors, it is no more than right to inquire what foundation there may be for a statement that the disaster might have been mitigated but for a neglect of the local Authorities to furnish the place with proper requirements.

I have, &c.,

NEWCASTLE.

Governor Sir George Grey, K.C.B.

No. 9.

THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Auckland, 27th August, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a Despatch, No. 70, dated the 28th May last, which has been received by His Excellency the Governor from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, referring to charges made by Captain Wing, the Pilot at Manukau, on the occasion of the wreck of H.M.S. "Orpheus," against the late Provincial Government of Auckland for neglect of the Pilot Station at that place, and consequent responsibility for loss of life.

I am given to understand that the letter in which Captain Wing made the charges, addressed as it was to your Honor, and communicated by you to the General Government, was laid by your Honor before the Provincial Council, and became the subject of enquiry by a Select Committee of that body.

May I request your Honor to be good enough to furnish me with copies of the evidence taken before that Committee, and of their Report, in order that they may be transmitted to the Secretary of State.

As the subject of this correspondence is one directly implicating the Government of your Honor's predecessor, I think it right to forward to him copies of it.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED DOMETT.

His Honor the Superintendent, Auckland.

No. 10.

THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY TO MR. JOHN WILLIAMSON.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Auckland, 27th August, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose copies of correspondence relative to the condition of the Manukau Pilot Station at the time of the wreck of H.M.S., "Orpheus."

As part of the Despatch of the Secretary of State for the Colonies alludes to a statement of Captain Wing, the Pilot at Manukau, implicating your Government when you held the office of Superintendent of the Province of Auckland, I think it right to forward for your information copies of those letters.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED DOMETT.

John Williamson, Esq., M.G.A.

No. 11.

THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND, TO THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Superintendent's Office,
Auckland, 31st August, 1863.

SIR,—

In compliance with the request contained in your letter of date 27th instant, I have the honor to forward herewith copies of the evidence taken before the Committee of the Pro-

vincial Council appointed to enquire as to the efficiency of the Manukau Pilot Department at the time of the loss of H.M.S. "Orpheus," and to inform you that the Committee in question made no report.

I have, &c.,
ROBERT GRAHAM,
Superintendent.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary.

Enclosure to No. 11.

MANUKAU PILOT STATION COMMITTEE,

APPOINTED 12TH MARCH, 1863.

MEMBERS :—

Mr. Bateman	Mr. Rattray
Mr. Daldy	Mr. Skeen
Mr. King	Dr. Pollen (Mover).

On motion of Dr. Pollen, Resolved, That Message No. 18 of his Honor the Superintendent be referred to a Select Committee, to consist of Mr. Daldy, Mr. King, Mr. Rattray, Mr. Skeen, and the Mover, with instructions to inquire and report generally as to the efficiency of the Pilot Department of the Harbour of Manukau, and specially in relation to the conduct of that Department on the occasion of the wreck of H.M.S.S. "Orpheus."

PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEE.

Friday, March 13th, 1863.

Committee met pursuant to notice.

Present :—

Mr. Bateman	Mr. Rattray
Mr. Daldy	Mr. Skeen
Mr. King	Dr. Pollen (Mover).

On motion of Mr. Daldy, Dr. Pollen took the Chair.

Mr. Daldy produced correspondence, &c., relative to the Manukau Harbour and Pilot Station, of which the letters numbered as follows were read :—

No. 93.....	16th January, 1860.....	(Captain Wing)
No. 884	30th April, 1862.....	do.
No. 1670.....	13th September, 1862.....	do.
No. 1671.....	do. do.	do.
No. 480.....	26th February, 1863	do.

Moved by Mr. Daldy that a letter be written to Captain Wing, requesting him to attend the Committee, with his boat's crew, on the first occasion of his visiting Onehunga, and that Captain Wing be requested to report himself at the Superintendent's Office. Also a letter to Mr. Evans, late Signalmán at the Manukau Pilot Station.

Committee adjourned to Tuesday, 17th instant, at 12 o'clock.

WILLIAM C. DALDY,
Chairman.

Monday, 23rd March, 1863.

Committee met pursuant to adjournment.

Present :—

Mr. Bateman	Mr. King
Mr. Rattray	Mr. Daldy (in Chair).

Minutes of former meeting read and confirmed.

Mr. Evans in attendance, and examined.

To Chairman : I left the Pilot Station in the Manukau when the Pilotage Fees were stopped. I acted as Second Pilot ; no one ever told me I was not to act as such.

When I left I had leave of absence for six weeks. I acted as Signal-man. I went to Otago, and was longer away than I expected. When I came back I did not report myself. I had no communication with the Harbour Master, or any one connected with the Government. My pay was £7 a month, and I thought it too little to support my wife and family.

I never told Captain Wing that I did not intend returning to my situation.

I was never told by any one that I was not required. I never got any pay from the time of asking leave. I left my situation on the 14th of the month, but was never paid for that portion of the month.

To Mr. Bateman : Mr. Wing's son acted in my absence. Mr. Wing wrote a note for me to convey to the Superintendent, asking leave for Mr. Wing's son to act in my absence. The Superintendent gave me a sealed letter to Mr. Wing in reply. I don't know the contents of that letter.

I thought the Station was quite safe in the hands of Mr. Wing's son, as he had acted as Signal-man previously. I think he was quite competent to act as Signal-man. I never heard any complaint against him. My only reason for leaving, was that I considered £7 a month too little to support my wife and family. I had no other reason for leaving. I was in the situation seven years. No accident occurred in my time.

To Chairman : The new Signals were not in use when I left. The old Signals were in very bad order ; they were all tattered ; I had to patch them almost every day.

There were no danger Signals arranged between me and the Pilot. I could not have told him if a vessel was in danger outside when he was coming down the harbour. We had not Maryatt's Signals.

To Mr. King : My name is Evans. I have been a sailor twelve years. I served my time in a coasting vessel off Wales. I arrived in this Colony about ten years ago. I was never accustomed to act as Signal-man until I went to the Manukau. I was at sea all the time from leaving home until I went to the Manukau. I was Coxswain in the boat with Captain Lewis, and appointed Signal-man after he left. I complained to Mr. Wing that the Signals were in bad order. I thought there was a necessity for having Signals in the event of Mr. Wing's absence, and I told him so several times. There was no arrangement between the Harbor Master and me in case any vessel was in danger. I used to get all the pilotage fees of the vessels I piloted. Mr. Wing's son had charge of the Pilot Station when I left.

My pay averaged between £10 and £11 per month when I had the pilotage, including salary.

I don't remember having ever made any complaint to Captain Wing, or any other person connected with the Government.

After I went to Otago, I got Mr. Graham to write that I would not return to the situation, for I was not contented with the low rate of wages I had been getting. I never received any answer to that letter. I never received any notification that I was not to go back, nor heard of any one being appointed in my place.

I never gave any intimation when I left that I would not return again. I thought my services were not again required.

To Chairman : I have been on the South Head of the Manukau one hundred times. If I had to plant a Flagstaff at the Manukau Heads, I would plant it on the South Head, because its signals would be much better seen than they are at present in consequence of a much higher hill being at the back of the present Signal Station.

To Mr. Rattray : The life boat was never used in my time.

No accident occurred during the time I was there.

I think the Head is too far distant from the boat.

To Chairman : I have often had great difficulty in getting to Signal Station during high tides, often up to the middle in water.

To Mr. Bateman : I never heard any complaint of incompetency against young Mr. Wing. I think him quite competent.

Witness stated, in reply to Captain Wing, that he had never made any arrangement with any one about receiving the fourteen days' pay.

Mr. Evans was thanked for his attendance and withdrew.

On motion of Mr. King, ordered that in consequence of the absence of the Chairman, it is desirable to adjourn until Captain Wing reports himself to Mr. O'Rorke, which he was requested to do on the earliest possible occasion.

No. 12.

MR. JOHN WILLIAMSON TO THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Auckland, September 10th, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 504 ultimo, covering copies of correspondence, and to beg that you will accept my thanks for forwarding the documents to me.

A copy of the Manukau Pilot's letter to the Superintendent, of date 8th February, 1863, was forwarded to me at that time by his Honor, when I requested that Captain Wing's statement, relating to the alleged neglect on the part of the late Provincial Government in failing to supply the necessary requirements of the Pilot Station, might be submitted to enquiry by the Provincial Council then in Session.

A Select Committee of the Council was, as I was informed, appointed to enquire into the circumstances connected with the wreck of H.M.S. "Orpheus," but failed to make a report in consequence of the non-attendance of the Pilot of Manukau, Captain Wing, at any of the meetings to which he was summoned.

I am advised that in the Session of the Council which now approaches the necessary measures will be taken to secure the attendance of witnesses and bring the enquiry to a close. As soon as I can obtain a copy of the minutes of the evidence and of the Report of the Committee, those documents shall be forwarded for the information of his Excellency the Governor.

Meantime I content myself with assuring you that I know of no grounds upon which the assertion of Captain Wing, that the Provincial Government (during my term of office) neglected to provide—so far as votes of the Provincial Council enabled them—for the "necessary requirements" of the Port of Manukau, can be sustained.

I have, &c.,

J. WILLIAMSON.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Auckland.

No. 13.

THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Auckland, 12th September, 1863.

SIR,—

In my letter No. 343, of the 27th ultimo, transmitting to your Honor a Despatch from the Secretary of State, on the subject of a statement of the Pilot at Manukau, on the occasion of the wreck of H. M. S. "Orpheus," I informed your Honor that I had sent a copy of the correspondence to your Honor's predecessor, whose conduct, so far as related to the maintenance of the Pilot Station at Manukau, the statement referred to, impugned.

Mr. Williamson's reply, a copy of which I enclose, attributes the failure of any report from the Select Committee of the Provincial Council, which was appointed last Session to enquire into this subject, to the non-attendance of the Pilot at Manukau at any of the meetings to which he was summoned. Without venturing any opinion on this point, I have only to request, in order that the instructions of the Secretary of State may be effectually carried out, that your Government will be good enough to take such steps as may ensure a thorough investigation into Captain Wing's original charges, which, I understand from Mr. Williamson, will be again brought before a Select Committee of the Provincial Council at its approaching Session.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED DOMETT.

His Honor the Superintendent, Auckland.

No. 14.

THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND, TO THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Superintendent's Office, Auckland,

12th October, 1863.

SIR,—

Referring to your letter No. 362, of date 12th September ultimo, I have the honor to forward herewith copy of a letter addressed to me by the Harbour Master of Manukau, under date 26th September, ultimo, on the subject of his attendance before a Committee of the Provincial Council, from which you learn that Mr. Williamson has been misinformed on that point.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT GRAHAM,
Superintendent.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Auckland.

Enclosure to No. 14.

MR. WING TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Pilot Station, Manukau,

26th September, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Honor's letter, dated 18th instant, with copy of letter attached from the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, under date 12th instant,

referring to charges brought by me against the late Provincial Government, and your Honor's request that I should appear before a Committee of the Provincial Council in connection with the matter referred to, will be attended to when invited to do so.

As regards your Honor's predecessor's statement, in letter above noted, that he attributes the failure of any report from the Select Committee of the Provincial Council, which was appointed last Session to enquire into this subject, to the non-attendance of the Pilot of Manukau at any of the meetings to which he was summoned, to this charge I have to reply that the late Superintendent is in error, and that I did, with the pilot crew, attend on the days that I was summoned, which was attended with considerable expense to myself and boat's crew, and as proof of my attendance on the occasion, I will refer you to Mr. O'Rorke (Clerk of Provincial Council), and Captain Daldy (Provincial Treasurer), also, I can add that on my second attendance I met Dr. Pollen, a member of the same Council and the mover for the enquiry, and told him that I was then waiting to answer any questions he might have to put to me on the question of the summons before mentioned.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS WING,
Pilot and Harbour Master.

His Honor the Superintendent, Auckland.

No. 15.

COPY OF DESPATCH FROM HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, K.G., TO GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B., AUCKLAND.

NEW ZEALAND.

No. 72.

Downing Street,

26th June, 1863.

SIR,—

With reference to my Despatch, No. 70, of the 28th ultimo, I have the honor to transmit for your information the copy of a letter from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, enclosing extracts from the minutes of proceedings at a Court Martial, held at Portsmouth, to enquire into the particulars of the loss of Her Majesty's Ship "Orpheus," and calling attention to the discrepancy which exists between the statement advanced by the Harbour Master at Manukau, respecting the signals made to the "Orpheus," and the evidence which was elicited by the Court Martial.

I have, &c.,

Governor Sir G. GREY, K.C.B.

NEWCASTLE.

Enclosure to No. 15.

LORD C. PAGET TO T. F. ELLIOT, ESQ.

Admiralty, 2nd June, 1863.

SIR,—

I have received and laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 1st instant, with the report of the Harbour Master at Manukau, New Zealand, relative to the wreck of H.M.S. "Orpheus;" also copy of a Despatch which the Duke of Newcastle has addressed to the Governor of New Zealand, calling for a more precise and complete report on the statement, that if the late Provincial Government had supplied the necessary requirements of the Pilot Station, many valuable lives would, in all probability, have been saved on the occasion.

My Lords request you will state to the Duke of Newcastle that they have already, in their letter of the 1st instant, expressed their opinion of the deficiencies pointed out as existing at the Manukau Heads, and that it is unnecessary to enter further into this subject.

But, as they observe that the statements made by the Harbour Master, respecting the signals made to the "Orpheus," and the attention paid to them by that ship, are at variance with the statements made at the Court Martial, I am directed to enclose, herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, extracts from the evidence given on that occasion.

I have, &c.,

C. PAGET.

T. F. Elliot, Esq.

EXTRACTS from Minutes of Proceedings at a Court Martial, held on board H.M.S. "Victory," at Portsmouth, on the 27th April, 1863, to enquire into particulars of the loss of H.M.S. Ship "Orpheus," on the bar of Manukau Harbour, New Zealand, on the 7th February, 1863.

Extract from Evidence of Mr. E. A. Amphlett, Paymaster, late H.M.S. "Orpheus":—

"The Commodore then ordered me to come on the Bridge; he called the Master and examined the Chart. He made a remark."

By the Court:—Have you ever gone in without being directed by signals from the Signal Post, at every stage of your progress?

Answer:—I have some difficulty in answering the question. On one occasion, when I went in the "Niger," with the Governor on board, I understood there was no Pilot on the station to direct the signals, which circumstance makes me think the Master of the "Niger" trusted to his bearings.

Question:—Had the remark made to you by the Commodore, as you have stated, anything to do with the position of the ship?

A.—The remark was made after examining the Chart. He said, "You see, Mr. Amphlett, that the correct bearings are on."

Q.—From your knowledge of the Bar should you have supposed that the position pointed out by Commodore Burnett was right for crossing in safety, if it had not shifted since the last time you were there?

A.—Yes.

By the Court:—State to the Court the conversation that passed between you and the Master on the forenoon of the day the "Orpheus" was lost.

A.—I was walking the Quarter Deck with the Master. I remarked what an extraordinary looking place we were approaching. He agreed with me, it was most extraordinary in the appearance of the Breakers, and I asked him if he had the new Chart. He said—"Oh, yes. I have got Veitch's Sailing Directions." "Oh," I said, "that's all right,"—he was the master of the "Niger."

The Witness here stated:—The Hydrographic Notice produced is Veitch's Sailing Directions. It was pasted in our Sailing Directions on board the "Orpheus."

Extract from evidence of Lieutenant D. D. Yonge, H.M.S. "Orpheus":—

"I saw the Commander and Master on the Bridge, evidently steering by signal as being made from the shore."

By the Court:—Were they apparently steering by signal from the Pilot Station at that time?

A.—Yes.

Evidence of William Oliert, Signalman of Her Majesty's late ship "Orpheus."

Examined by Judge Advocate:—Were you Signalman on board H.M. late ship "Orpheus" on the morning of the 7th February last?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Did you receive any signal from the Pilot Station at Paratutai on that morning?

A.—Yes.

Q.—What was it?

A.—Take the Bar,—signal—two squares of the Yard Arm.

Q.—Did you report that signal to any one, if so, who?

A.—To Mr. Mallock, the Signal Officer.

Q.—Did he answer the signal?

A.—Yes.

By the Court:—When was the signal made?

A.—Soon after seven Bells (or 11.30 a.m.).

Q.—Did they displace the signal after you answered it?

A.—Not for some time.

Q.—Was any other signal made after that?

A.—Yes.

Q.—State what?

A.—North Arm with Semaphore raised.

Q.—What did that indicate?

A.—Keep more to Port.

Q.—To whom did you report that?

A.—The Signal Officer.

Q.—Name?

A.—Mr. Mallock.

Q.—Was it reported to the Commodore?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Was any alteration made in the ship's course in consequence?

A.—Yes, the Master gave orders to Starboard the helm.

Q.—Did the ship answer her helm and go off to Port?

- A.—Yes.
- Q.—How long was that before she touched the first time?
- A.—I should say about a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes.
- Q.—Did you answer that signal?
- A.—Yes.
- Q.—Did they take it down after you answered it?
- A.—No, not immediately.
- Q.—Was the ship's head going off as long as the signal was kept up?
- A.—Yes.
- Q.—Was the helm righted before the signal was taken down or after?
- A.—As soon as it was reported the signal was dropped.
- Q.—How did you answer those signals?
- A.—By hauling down the ensign and hoisting it again.
- Q.—Do you know if the Commodore, or the Commander, or the Master were sufficiently acquainted with those signals to know what was indicated before you reported it?
- A.—No, he looked at the book every time it was reported.
- Q.—Who looked at the book?
- A.—The Master.
- Q.—Had he a book in his hand?
- A.—Yes.
- Q.—Independent of yours?
- A.—I had none.
- Q.—What interval elapsed between the signal being made "Steer more to Port" and the order being given to Starboard the helm?
- A.—It could not be scarcely a minute.
- Q.—Did she answer her helm quickly or strongly?
- A.—Quickly.
- Q.—Was there any other signal made after that of "Steer more to Port?"
- A.—Yes, one.
- Q.—What was it?
- A.—Both arms of the Semaphore raised.
- Q.—What did that indicate?
- A.—Dangerous,—stand off.
- Q.—How long was that before the ship struck.
- A.—It could not have been two minutes. We did not have time to answer the signal.
- Q.—Was any order given in consequence of that signal.
- A.—Yes. Take the Starboard Topmast Studding Sail and Top-Gallant Sails and Royals in.
- Q.—Was that the first time the ship struck or the second?
- A.—The first.
- Q.—What interval had elapsed?
- A.—It could not have been above two or three minutes.
- Q.—Were all the orders attended to and all the duties performed without hesitation or confusion after the ship struck?
- A.—The same as at other times.
- Q.—When the signal was made to take the bar was any flag hoisted?
- A.—No.
- Q.—Is there a yard besides the Semaphore?
- A.—Yes, on the same signal staff.
- Q.—What is the signal to keep at sea?
- A.—Both arms of the Semaphore raised.
- Q.—Were you on the Bridge when the ship struck?
- A.—No.
- Q.—Where were you?
- A.—Aft. Going to haul down the ensign to answer the signal.
- Q.—Did you after the ship struck observe the Ninepin Rock?
- A.—Yes.
- Q.—State what its position was with respect to the Pilot Station.
- A.—A little open.
- Q.—How much open, taking the breadth of the rock?
- A.—I can't say the distance, it was open and that's all.
- Q.—Was the Ninepin Rock to the right or left of the Pilot Station?
- A.—From us to the right.
- Q.—Do you think there could have been any delay from the time of the signals being hoisted dangerous—"stand off," and its being seen on board the "Orpheus?"
- A.—No.
- Q.—What soundings did you hear called the last time the ship struck?
- A.—I can't say. I did not take notice.
- Q.—How long was it after the ship struck before you hoisted the Ensign Union down?
- A.—It might have been ten minutes or a quarter of an hour.
- Q.—Where was it hoisted.
- A.—At the Peak.

- Q.—Since the wreck have you had any communication with the Pilot Station on shore ?
 A.—No.
 Q.—As you had no book by which to make out the meaning of the signals, how did you know that both arms of the telegraph being up at one time signified " Danger,"—" Keep to Sea ?"
 A.—By asking the Signal Officer.
 Q.—During your acquaintance with that signal post was any Ball or Flag from Marryatt's Code used in making any of the signals ?
 A.—No.
 By the Prisoner :—State to the Court the orders the Commodore gave to Mr. Mallock and yourself in my hearing on the Bridge about 11.30 on that morning.
 A.—That neither of us was to be off deck, one to be on the Bridge and the other to answer the signals.
 Q.—Did he say no more ?
 A.—He told me to keep a good look out on the staff and report everything immediately.
 Q.—Was not the seeing the danger signal, and the ship striking, instantaneous ?
 A.—I was aft from the Bridge to the signal haul-yard.
 Q.—Had you time to dip the ensign ?
 A.—No.
 Q.—Did you see the signal " take the Bar " hauled down, if so at what time ?
 A.—Yes. I can't say to a minute but it was soon after twelve.
 Q.—Is not the signal " take the Bar " kept up all the time they are telegraphing to you to steer North or South ?
 A.—No.
 Q.—After the ship's company took to the rigging was there any signal flying from the staff that you could see with your naked eye ?
 A.—I did not take notice of the staff after we took to the rigging.

- Extract from the Evidence of Lieutenant Hall, Her Majesty's late ship "Orpheus."
 By the Court :—Is there any doubt about the signal from the shore having been misinterpreted or misunderstood on board the "Orpheus ?"
 A.—Certainly not.
 Q.—Is the Court to understand that the signal made from the station was for the ship to cross the Bar ?
 A.—Yes.
 Q.—From the communication you have had from Mr. Wing since the wreck are you of opinion that there was any delay in making the signal " dangerous," owing to Mr. Wing's absence and his son being in charge ?
 A.—I think the people in charge of the Signal Station should not have allowed us to skirt the reef as they called it, without making the " dangerous " signal. In my opinion we had not time to put a turn of the helm either one way before we struck.
 Q.—Do you mean by that, after the danger signal was made ?
 A.—Yes.

No. 16.

THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
 Auckland, 10th September, 1863.

SIR,—

With reference to former correspondence on the subject, I have the honor to transmit to you the copy of a Despatch with its enclosure, noted in the margin, respecting the wreck of H.M.S., "Orpheus" and to request that your Honor will be good enough to direct the Harbour Master at Manukau to report upon the discrepancy alluded to by his Grace the Duke of Newcastle.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED DOMETT.

His Honor the Superintendent Auckland.

No. 17.

THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND, TO THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Superintendent's Office,
 Auckland, 12th October, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward herewith copy of a report drawn up by the Harbour Master

of Manukau relative to the apparent discrepancy referred to in your letter No. 360 of date 10th September.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT GRAHAM,
Superintendent.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Auckland.

Enclosure to No. 17.

MR. WING TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, AUCKLAND.

Manukau Pilot Station,
29th September, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Honorable the Colonial Secretary's letter of the 10th instant, through your Honor's office of 14th instant, with correspondence attached from His Grace the Duke of Newcastle to His Excellency the Governor Sir George Grey, requesting an explanation from the Harbour Master of Manukau respecting the discrepancies alluded to therein in connection with the Court Martial held at Portsmouth to enquire into the particulars of the loss of Her Majesty's Ship "Orpheus;" and in compliance with your Honor's request, as directed by the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, I have now to report upon the discrepancies alluded to as follows :—

In the first place, my being from the Pilot Station in charge of the "Wonga Wonga," I can only state such information as was obtainable from those who were at the Pilot Station (my two sons and one of the boat's crew), and they distinctly assert that the position of the "Orpheus" at the time referred to by Mr. Amphlett (Paymaster) was South Eastward of the directions given in the New Zealand Pilot for crossing the bar, and as regards the bar having shifted since Mr. Amphlett was last there in the "Niger" it is but trifling, the deepest water on the bar only varying one quarter of a point in the bearing to the Eastward since that time, and had the "Orpheus" been steered in accordance with Mr. Veitch's (Master of the "Niger,") sailing directions, which, I believe, are the same as given in the Manukau Harbour Regulations, I have every reason to believe that she would have come into the Harbour safely, at that time of the tide (shortly after high water), leaving at least five fathoms water on the Bar, deepening quickly to seven and eight fathoms. With reference to the evidence given by Lieutenant Yonge that he saw the Commander, and the Master evidently steering by signals as made from the shore, I have to reply that it is unexplainable by us, as no attention was paid to the Telegraph Arm, which was pointed to the N.W. a full hour to guide them in that direction.

Respecting the evidence of William Oliert, Signalman of H.M. late Ship "Orpheus," I have to state that the first signal (Take the Bar) was made at 10 a.m., instead of 11.30, as stated in the evidence, and when the "Orpheus" was seen steering to the eastward of the bearings for crossing the Bar (about 1 o'clock) the N.W. Telegraph arm was put up, and kept there until the warning signal was made, and not dropped as stated in evidence. The ship still stood to the eastward, leaving an offing of three or four miles from the shoals, until Puponga must have been well open of Paratutae, when the "Orpheus" was observed to keep away for the breakers on the outer middle heads, and kept steaming in that direction. The Telegraph Signal (Keep the Vessel more Off Shore) was then put up, and the signal (Take the Bar) was taken down. Even this alteration of the signals was not attended to by those on board the "Orpheus," and the ship was allowed to stand on under all sail and steam till she struck the ground, being fully twenty minutes after the warning signal was made to warn them off shore. As regards Lieutenant Hill's evidence, that he thought the people in charge of the Signal Station should not have allowed them to skirt the reef, as they called it, so long without making the danger signal, in his opinion they had not time to put a turn of the helm either way, before she struck: to the above-cited evidence of Lieutenant Hill, I can only reply by referring to the statements already made by me respecting the signals which were made at the Signal Station on the occasion.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS WING,
Pilot and Harbour Master.

No. 18.

COPY OF DESPATCH FROM HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, K.G., TO GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B.

NEW ZEALAND.

No. 28.

Downing Street,
26th October, 1863.

SIR,—

I communicated to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your Despatch, No. 27, of the 28th of February, enclosing Copies of the Inquisition and Informations concerning the death of

John Pascoe, one of the Crew of Her Majesty's late ship "Orpheus," and I transmit for your information a copy of the letter which has been received in reply.

I request that you will lose no time in calling the attention of your Responsible Advisers to the arrangements suggested by their Lordships as those which would appear to them, with their present information, to be most urgently required to prevent the recurrence of such a calamity.

I shall not enter upon a consideration of the causes which led to the loss of the "Orpheus," but it is, I am sure, unnecessary for me to impress upon you, and upon your Ministers, that it is the duty of the local Government to take care that no measures are neglected which may tend to ensure the safety of vessels when entering the harbour of the Colony, and I trust that immediate steps will be taken for carrying into effect the recommendations of their Lordships, if no unforeseen objections of a local character exist to their adoption.

You will observe that the Lords Commissioners have offered to instruct a Surveying Officer, who is about to be ordered to New Zealand, to afford your Government all the assistance in his power in devising measures for the security of vessels entering the Manukau Inlet. You will, I am sure, readily avail yourself of this Officer's advice.

I have, &c.,

NEWCASTLE.

Governor Sir George Grey, K.C.B.

Enclosure to No. 18.

LORD C. PAGET TO SIR F. ROGERS.

Admiralty, 1st June, 1863.

SIR,—

I have laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 23rd ult., with copy of a Despatch from the Governor of New Zealand, enclosing copies of Inquisition and Information concerning the death of John Pascoe, one of the Crew of Her Majesty's late Ship "Orpheus."

My Lords having, in addition to the above papers, had under their consideration the various reports received by them from Captain Jenkins, of the "Miranda," relative to the loss of the "Orpheus," and the circumstances detailed in the minutes of the Court Martial held at Portsmouth on the surviving officers and men, do not propose to discuss the causes of the loss of the "Orpheus" further than may be necessary to prevent the recurrence of so fearful a catastrophe. They will rather confine themselves to bringing under the notice of the Duke of Newcastle those measures which, from the evidence before them, they believe to be required to ensure, as far as practicable, the safety of vessels entering the Manukau, in the hope that His Grace will urge their early adoption upon the Colonial Government of New Zealand.

My Lords believe that no written directions and no Chart, however accurate the Survey may have been made, can enable vessels to pass in safety through a narrow channel, in which the banks are liable to continual alteration. The directions given in 1853 were necessarily altered in 1861, and the amended directions are now no longer to be depended upon.

Nothing, therefore, but the constant presence of local pilots, intimately acquainted with the channels and with the ever varying position of the banks, and an efficient code of signals to be made from the Pilot Station, can give the security necessary for the free use of this large inlet.

My Lords regret to find that in the above stated essentials the Pilot Station at Manukau Heads has been lamentably deficient, and they cannot but fear that the loss of the "Orpheus" may, in a great degree, be attributed to that deficiency.

The establishment at Manukau Heads at the time of the wreck of the "Orpheus" consisted of one pilot, Mr. Wing, assisted by his son, Mr. E. Wing.

The Signal-man, Mr. H. Evans, although on the establishment, had not attended at the Station for seventeen months, owing, it is stated, to the insufficiency of his pay; and his place had been supplied by the Pilot's son, mentioned above, a young man of about twenty-one years of age, who does not appear to have held any regular appointment or any certificate as pilot.

On the 7th February the Pilot, Mr. Thomas Wing, had left the station to take the "Wonga Wonga" out by the South Channel, and the sole charge and responsibility of directing vessels approaching the harbour was thus left to his young and inexperienced son. Another son is mentioned as having also been at the station, but his age is not mentioned, and he was not examined at the inquest.

It was further proved that there were no flags at the station, and that even the means of making signals according to the insufficient local code were not complete.

Under these circumstances the "Orpheus" approached the entrance, and about 11.30 the signal was made to her "to take the bar."

It must at this time have been high water, and before the ship entered the narrows the tide must have fallen considerably.

As the "Orpheus" neared the banks the signal was made "to keep more to the northward," and it was proved by the Signal-man at the Court Martial that this signal was instantly answered and obeyed.

At last when the ship was already among the shoals, and but two short minutes before she struck, the signal was made to "keep more off shore."

It was shewn at the Court Martial, and further evidence has since been received at the Admiralty, that the marks given in the directions of 1861 were correctly on at the time the Ship struck.

My Lords are therefore led irresistibly to the conclusion that the signals made to the "Orpheus" were injudicious, and that had a more efficient Pilot establishment existed at Manukau Heads, the ship might have been preserved from wreck.

To prevent a recurrence of such a calamity, my Lords would offer the following suggestions for the consideration of the Colonial Government, viz:—

1st. That the Signal Station should never be left without an experienced Pilot, fully competent to direct the approach of the vessels to the Bar, and to guide them through the channels by proper signals.

2nd. That the Station should be provided with a complete set of Signal Flags and Books, and with an efficient Boat and a Clock; also that the Code of Local Signals should be revised.

3rd. That on the approach of a vessel the state of the tide and the depth of water on the Bar should be indicated by proper signals, to be provided in the revised code; and that the Pilot should further make the signal to take the Bar or stand off, as might appear to him advisable.

4th. That the Pilots at the Station should take every opportunity of examining the position of the Banks and the depth of water and direction of the Channel.

5th. It is understood that money has been voted for providing Buoys for marking the South Channel. My Lords have not the means of judging whether it will be possible to keep these Buoys in their places in face of the heavy seas and strong tides to which they will be exposed.

6th. My Lords conclude that the trade of the Manukau would not be sufficient to support the expense of a small steamer; otherwise they would recommend that one should be attached to the Pilot Station, both to enable the Pilot to board vessels outside the Bar and to make himself acquainted from time to time with the depth of water in the Channels.

Some measures, such as these now suggested, appear to my Lords to be urgently required; but without more local knowledge it would be difficult to define them accurately.

Their Lordships propose to order one of the Surveying Officers on the Australian Station to proceed immediately to New Zealand to examine the present state of the Channels leading into the Manukau, and to report to what extent they are available for ships of heavy draught of water, and how far they may be safely used; and my Lords will gladly direct him to afford to the Colonial Government all the assistance in his power in devising measures for ensuring, as far as practicable, the safety of vessels entering the Inlet.

The enclosures in the Despatch of the Governor of New Zealand are herewith returned, agreeably with your request.

I have, &c.,

C. PAGET.

Sir F. Rogers, Bart.

No. 19.

GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B., TO COMMODORE SIR W. WISEMAN, BART.

Government House,
Auckland, 21st October, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose the copy of a Despatch I have received from His Grace the Duke of Newcastle in reference to the wreck of H.M.S. "Orpheus," and enclosing a letter from the Lords of the Admiralty, suggesting measures which ought to be taken to prevent the recurrence of such a calamity.

In order that the recommendations of their Lordships may be carried out without delay, I should feel much obliged to you if you would cause a report to be made to the Colonial Government as to what particular signals it would be most desirable to adopt at Manukau Heads, and would furnish any other information on this subject you may consider necessary.

I have, &c.,

G. GREY.

Commodore Sir W. Wiseman, Bart.

LOSS OF H. M. S. "ORPHEUS."

21 D.—No. 1A.

No. 20.

COPY OF DESPATCH FROM HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, K.G., TO GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B.,

NEW ZEALAND.

No. 77.

Downing Street,
18th August, 1863.

SIR,—

I communicated to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty a copy of your Despatch No. 22, of the 24th February, mentioning the names of four Natives who had distinguished themselves by their successful exertions to save life on the occasion of the loss of H.M.S. "Orpheus," and I have now the pleasure of transmitting to you the accompanying Honorary Bronze Medals which the Committee of the Royal Humane Society, to whom application was made in pursuance of your suggestion, have awarded to these Natives.

In forwarding the Medals to this Department, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have expressed a wish that the presentation of them to the Natives for whom they are intended may be accompanied by the expression of their Lordships' thanks for their gallant conduct on this occasion,

I have, &c.,

NEWCASTLE.

Governor Sir George Grey, K.C.B.
