

REPORT OF MR. BALFOUR.

matter very strongly under the notice of the Government, by whom it has been taken up with the promptitude which it certainly called for. As there seems no necessity for going into the past farther than is requisite to ensure safety at present, I would recommend that the Marine Board be requested to furnish a list of every vessel ever swung by them or under their superintendence with a correct copy of the last card furnished to each vessel; and it would probably be advisable that the attention of the commanders of steamers be called to the circumstances, in order that they may not lean too heavily on their "corrected cards," at least until they have been examined and checked.

As to the future, I would recommend that the cards of all vessels swung in New Zealand—should the operation not be performed by an officer of the Marine Board—should at all events be examined and countersigned by such officer, and a copy kept in a book for the purpose; and it might be advisable that such cards or the copies should be again examined and countersigned by a competent central officer. The knowledge that all these checks existed would go far in itself to render mistakes rare, if not impossible. I have also been able to devise a small instrument, which I have named a "Deviation and Corrected Course Indicator," by the use of which, if either the deviation or the corrected course for any given course be known, it can be converted to the other without possibility of mistake; and I should strongly recommend that a number of these instruments should be printed off on cardboard (the cost would be very trifling) and furnished to the Marine Board for use and sale; for, as they would enable shipmasters to check the accuracy of the corrections made when their vessels were swung, and would also greatly facilitate the taking of the correct bearings of objects at sea, a considerable number would probably be disposed of.

These precautions, and increased care and vigilance on the part of the officers swinging vessels will probably ensure accuracy for the future.

JAMES M. BALFOUR

Wellington, July 18th, 1865.

The Honorable Major Richardson,
Post-master General,
&c., &c., &c.