

The next difficulty arose when the Board attempted to take over the various Pilot Establishments. The Act provides that the Chief Marine Board shall regulate the duties and conduct of all Pilots within the Colony, fix the Pilotage rates within the limits specified in the Schedule, and out of these funds to fix the remuneration to be paid to Pilots, and to settle how Pilot Establishments are to be upheld and maintained. The difficulty here is that the highest dues which the Board can impose as Pilot dues will not nearly pay the expenses of the existing Pilot Establishments, and the Board has at its disposal no funds from which it can make up the difference. At present, although Pilots are appointed by the Governor, they are paid by the Provincial Governments out of funds appropriated by the Provincial Councils for that purpose. The advantage of this system is that there is a local authority on the spot under the control of which the Pilots are brought, inasmuch as they are dependent on that authority for their salaries, for their boats and other appurtenances. The necessity of such a local authority is recognized by the Marine Board Act, which in Section 14 gives authority to any local Board to suspend any Pilot from acting as such for a Port within its jurisdiction, provided a report of every such suspension and the cause thereof be reported to the Chief Marine Board, whose decision shall be final. The Government could get over the difficulty in respect to the matter of funds by agreeing to pay any difference between the amount of pilotage dues received and the expenses of the respective Pilot Establishments, and charging it to the separate account of the Province in respect of which the difference is paid ; but it cannot so easily get over the difficulty (until Local Boards are generally established) of the absence of a local authority having control over the Pilot Establishments ; and the Government is of opinion that it will be better to leave matters as they are, at least until Local Marine Boards have been generally established. It can hardly be doubted that practically the Pilot Establishments would not be kept in such good working order as they are now if the Chief Marine Board took charge of them before the Local Boards were in a position to exercise that supervising power which it was manifestly the intention of the Act that they should have ; and the efficient working of the Pilot Establishments is the main question.

The next difficulty is that with reference to the imposition of Lighthouse dues. The Chief Marine Board is empowered within the limits prescribed by the Schedule to fix Lighthouse dues ; and the Attorney-General has given his opinion that dues cannot be levied until lights are burning. The Board has made provision by special arrangement with the Bank of New Zealand for the erection of lights in Foveaux Straits, at Port Chalmers, at Lyttelton, one in Cook's Straits, and another at Tiritirimatangi. Lights already exist both at Wellington and Nelson. When the lights that have been ordered are burning, light dues may be levied generally on shipping arriving at all the principal Ports in New Zealand, as they will all receive the benefit of a light, and a revenue may be collected of some considerable amount, sufficient to pay interest on the cost of new lights and to furnish a fund for the erection of others. The lights at Wellington and Nelson are maintained efficiently by the Provincial Governments of those places. The levying light dues upon vessels entering those Ports would afford a revenue inconsiderable in itself whilst it might be regarded as operating in other respects to the prejudice of those Ports, such dues being imposed nowhere else in New Zealand.

The Government is of opinion that such dues should be imposed only at the request of the Provincial Governments of Wellington and Nelson.

In reference to the proposal to purchase a vessel and incur expenses to the amount of at least £3,150 per annum for Coast Surveys, the Government is of opinion that such Surveys should be undertaken by the Board only at the request of the Provincial Governments desiring such Surveys, and upon their guarantee to pay all necessary expenses ; but in the absence of any appropriation by the House of Representatives for the purpose, it cannot sanction the expenditure now proposed.

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READER WOOD.

The Secretary to the Chief Marine Board, Auckland.

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