

CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING SWINGING OF STEAM VESSELS.

No. 1.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT of AUCKLAND.

(Circular.)

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Wellington, 19th January, 1867.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose for your information a copy of a Letter, dated 9th instant, from Mr. Balfour, the Colonial Marine Engineer, to the Honorable the Postmaster-General, and copies of its enclosures, conveying information as to the working of "The Steam Navigation Act, 1866."

In accordance with Mr. Balfour's suggestion, I would call your Honor's special attention to paragraphs ten and eleven with regard to swinging vessels for compass correction.

His Honor the Superintendent of Auckland.

I have, &c.,
E. W. STAFFORD.

[Similar letter addressed to all other Superintendents.]

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. J. M. BALFOUR to the Hon. J. HALL.

Steam Navigation Act, 1866.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 9th January, 1867.

I have the honor to suggest that copies of the information as to the working of "The Steam Navigation Act, 1866," be sent to the various Superintendents of Provinces, and that their attention be specially called to paragraphs ten and eleven with regard to swinging vessels for compass correction.

As an arrangement for swinging vessels is a necessary part of the equipment of any port which possesses facilities for building and repairing, I feel satisfied that attention has only to be called to the want in order that it may be supplied, as otherwise a steamer after repairs might require to be sent to some other port solely for the purpose of being swung.

The requirements of a good swinging establishment may be defined as follows:—

1. Sheltered water, of sufficient depth.
2. Absence of local attraction.
3. Either a mooring dolphin (which is most convenient), or a heavy mooring chain on span or compound moorings carefully laid, so that they will bear a heavy vertical strain without being weighed.
4. A set of four to six lighter mooring buoys arranged at equi-distant points of a circle, of which the dolphin or main mooring is the centre.
5. A well ascertained bearing to some object, the more distant the better. As this bearing is that from which the whole of the compass deviations are afterwards deduced, it cannot be too frequently checked. When a distant well defined object cannot be seen, or when such distant object is liable to be frequently obscured by fog, a near mark may be formed by erecting two poles on a known bearing; but as this renders it necessary to manœuvre, the vessel being swung so as to bring the poles in line as the point where the dumb compass is erected, the system of near marks cannot well be adopted with a fixed dolphin, and the distant mark should always be preferred in simplifying and expediting the operation.

Whether near or distant it is immaterial what bearing the object is on, provided the actual bearing be accurately ascertained.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

JAMES M. BALFOUR,
Colonial Marine Engineer.

Enclosure 2 in No. 1.

(Circular.)

Commissioner of Customs Office,
Wellington,

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SIR,—

By direction of the Commissioner of Customs, I have the honor to forward copies of a series of regulations which have been drawn up by the Colonial Marine Engineer, with a view to improve the practical working of "The Steam Navigation Act, 1866."

I beg to call your attention to sections 5, 6, 7, and 8, and to request that you will endeavour to give effect to them.

With regard to section 6, I have to explain that it is not necessary for you to call in a Surveyor in all circumstances. Many accidents are of such a nature that the vessel cannot run till the damage is repaired—such as the breaking of geering, &c. In cases of accident to the hull, the steamer will be most likely to be surveyed on account of the underwriters should she be insured, in which case probably no additional advice may be required. Such emergency surveys are only to be held when the requirements of justice seem to call for it (as in the case of any suspicion of foul play on the part of any one on board), and in the case of minor accidents of such a nature that a professional opinion is