

The buoys absolutely require to be lifted, overhauled, and painted; and another buoy is much wanted to define the new channel (between Emma Bank and Trammere Shoal), but I understand that one of the buoys inside would answer for that purpose, and that a smaller buoy could be made to answer its present purpose well enough.

The most costly operation by far is the buoy shifting; but it cannot be longer delayed, as there would be great danger of the buoys going down at their moorings unless speedily repaired and cleared of mussel and seaweed (even now they ride very deep in the water).

As for the rest of the work, I believe that Captain Wing's proposal to employ a carpenter as one of his boat's crew would effect a great saving, and the following estimate is based on the supposition that this is done. It is certain that such work could not be so cheaply done by contract, as the site is so distant and inaccessible.

(a.) The present salaries (exclusive of the Harbourmaster), as I understand, are:—

	£
Signalman	100
Chief boatman	84
Two hands at £72	144
	—£328

Proposed additional salaries:—

To chief boatman, to make him same as others	16
A carpenter	100
Fourth hand at £5 per month	60
	— 176

(b.) Lining signalman's house, supplying water tank, fitting rain-gutters,

adding one room	50
Extension of beacon ways	30
Signal mast for up harbour	50
Boatmen's house on South Head	100
Signal staff for do.	15
Sundries, paint, nails, repairs to boat, &c.	24
	— 269

(c.) Hire of steamer for shifting buoys, about

Cleaning, painting, and repairing twenty-two buoys in harbour at £4... ..	88
Do. do. one outer buoy	50
Sundries	25
	— 713

£1158

The estimated cost for a steamer, £550, is founded on an offer made to supply the "Halcyon" at £15 per day, exclusive of coals, which might bring the average cost up to £17 to £18 per day, and this for thirty days, which Captain Wing thinks would be the least time the work could be done in, would amount to £510 to £540.

Possibly better terms could be made for another vessel, but this offer of the "Halcyon" is the most favourable I have been able to get yet.

It is very desirable that this work (of shifting the buoys) should be undertaken without delay, as, should it be put off till bad weather comes on, the time lost will greatly increase the cost. I believe that it would be cheaper to employ a steamer even for the inside buoys, as by so doing much time will be saved.

Auckland, 8th February, 1869.

JAMES M. BALFOUR,
Colonial Marine Engineer.

No. 11.

MR. BALFOUR to the Hon. J. HALL.
Manukau Harbour.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 27th May, 1869.

I have the honor again to bring the subject of Manukau Harbour before the Government, and to request instructions.

Since the date of my last report nothing has been done beyond calling for tenders for repairing the buoys: I believe, indeed, that a tender was accepted, but no further action has been taken, and the consequence of this delay is that the Trammere Buoy, which cost some £150, has entirely disappeared, as I ventured to predict would be the case when I reported to the Superintendent of Auckland (copy of that report is attached to my report of the 8th March). The consequence is that it will cost not less than £200 more to put the harbour in proper order now than it would have done in February last.

At present the harbour is not safe, and the working staff is too small, and generally ill-managed; at the same time it is a difficult matter to interfere at all unless the management of the harbour be taken over once for all, as even the slightest interference would give rise to endless jealousies, and divided responsibility is apt to engender carelessness.

The Colonial Government has a most undoubted right to put the buoys in order at the expense of the Province (Marine Act, 1867, sections 27 and 28), and this would also be the case as regards any repairs to the beacons; but there are no available funds to cover salaries, repairs to dwellings, and so forth—the pilotage and harbour dues (which can be retained in terms of the 49th section of the same Act) being quite insufficient.

At the same time I think it right to report that, in my opinion, the Colonial Government should