

months—the narrow part of Cook Strait being notorious for the continuous prevalence of boisterous weather. At 4.30 p.m. the southern islet was rounded at the distance of a few yards, and the vessel passed slowly along the western side of both, so that every part of the water-line could be distinctly seen and examined, so far as applied to the purposes of being used as a place for landing.

The evidence of nautical men whose opinions have been required as to the best position for a light in Cook Strait has varied considerably—Cape Terawiti, Stephen's Island, The Brothers, Mana, Cape Campbell, and Cape Farewell being named. It appears that the greatest danger and difficulty of navigation exists in the narrows, which may be embraced between Stephen's Island and Cape Terawiti, the Chief Marine Board have resolved that a light to guide mariners through that particular locality is most required. The Brothers, from their prominence and central position, and being in the immediate neighbourhood of hidden dangers, has claimed the preference. This site is named by Captain Richards, H.M.S. "Acheron," in the "New Zealand Pilot," as being excellent. No account, however, of landing having been made is mentioned.

The northern islet appeared by far the most suitable, it standing further towards the centre of the Strait, and is less abrupt; neither, however, even during the present comparatively quiet state of the sea, offered easy access, the water-line being at almost every point precipitous, and the wash against the rocks sufficient to endanger life had a landing being attempted. One small slope (at an angle of about 45°) might possibly be made available by the construction of strong stages and other works of sufficient strength and magnitude for the lifting and storing the material required for the erection of a lighthouse. But upon this particular, as it would, if practicable, necessarily involve a very large expenditure, we would suggest the expediency of obtaining the opinion of a competent engineer.

The islet, having but a small face and an elevation of 230 feet, is steep on all sides, consequently much labour and outlay would be incurred in the construction of a road by which the building material would have to be conveyed to the site of erection, as also in preparing for the keeper's residence and other necessary buildings. Neither fuel nor water is found on the island.

All communication, whether for the purpose of landing supplies or building material, must be made by means of steam vessels, the heavy tide rips and uncertain currents rendering the approach by sailing craft very dangerous. It should be borne in mind that access can be had only in the most favourable weather.

Having carefully weighed all the preceding considerations, we have arrived at the following conclusions:—1. That the islet only is accessible for the purpose required by the aid of expensive works and in tranquil weather. 2. That the erection of a lighthouse (if possible) on the sight indicated would exceed by several thousand pounds the means placed at the disposal of the Board. 3. That from its isolated position and difficulty of communication, as also the total absence of fuel and water, the maintenance of an establishment would be more costly than lighthouses in other situations. 4. That the site is doubtless good, being prominently visible in passing through the Strait either from the north or south, and if only one light be used, perhaps the best; but if two lights were substituted (one on Mana Island and a second in the vicinity of Wellington Head), they would afford the double advantage of directing vessels to the south entrance of Queen Charlotte Sound (now a great thoroughfare) and in our opinion render the dangerous part of the Strait more easy than though only one light was used. 5. The expense of erecting and maintaining two lights on Mana and Wellington Heads would not, from the comparative easy means of access, probably exceed that incurred for the one on the Brothers.

We have, &c.,

CHAS. SHARP, Master Warden.

R. JOHNSON, Warden.

The Hon. Postmaster-General, Auckland.