

SESS. II.—1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

GUIDING-LIGHTS ON THE MANUKAU HEADS

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO PLACING).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 17th September, 1884.

Ordered, "That there be laid before this House copy of any correspondence that may have taken place with the Government on the subject of placing guiding-lights at the Manukau Heads since a Select Committee of the House reported on the matter in 1883."—(*Mr. Hamlin.*)

No. 1.

The SECRETARY, Marine Department, Wellington, to the HARBOURMASTER, Manukau.

(Memorandum.)

WITH reference to the stranding of the "Sarah Pile" and "Maud Graham" in the Fanny Channel on the 27th ultimo, it appears, from the evidence taken at the preliminary inquiries, that the vessels took the channel in obedience to the signals made to them, and that they were steering as directed by the semaphore arm at the time they grounded.

I have to request that you will let me know whether you or the signalman can furnish any additional information as to the cause of the accidents, or not.

Marine Department, Wellington, 23rd April, 1884.

WILLIAM SEED.

No. 2.

The HARBOURMASTER, Manukau, to the SECRETARY, Marine Department.

SIR,—

Harbour Department, Manukau, 5th May, 1884.

In reply to your memorandum of the 23rd of last month, referring to the stranding of the "Sarah Pile" and "Maud Graham" in the Fanny Channel on the 27th March, I beg to attach the signalman's letter for your further information on the subject, and, from the inquiry I have made at the signal-station, I have reason to believe his statement is substantially correct. The master of the "Maud Graham," on my inquiry of him, stated that his vessel had received no injury whatever, and did not remain aground over half an hour, at which time the water was very smooth; in fact, he further stated that he was too well acquainted with the Grey River bar to take any notice of his vessel grounding in the Fanny Channel.

The recent shifting of the shoals makes it difficult to guide vessels clear of the shallows, except when the tide is well in. The recent soundings prove the bottom, in places, very uneven, shoaling suddenly on knolls, with not more than 8 or 9 feet of water on them at low tide, deepening quickly to two and three fathoms. I do not look upon the present change in the shoals as being of a lasting nature, as they are liable to clear away as they have done before. I find the masters of the vessels who were so urgent in advocating for leading-lights to be placed at Manukau Heads now see the error of their former notions, the marvellous Captain Fairchild excepted.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS WING,
Harbourmaster.

The Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 2.

The SIGNALMAN, Manukau, to the HARBOURMASTER, Manukau.

SIR,—

Signal Station, Manukau Heads, 2nd May, 1884.

In reference to the grounding of the schooners "Sarah Pile" and "Maud Graham" on the 27th March, I beg to state that at 7 a.m. I put up signal for the schooners to take the Fanny Channel, the wind being N.E. and the tide about half flood, and, as they did not get over the bar by high water, I signalled them to come to anchor. The "Maud Graham" did so, but the "Sarah Pile" kept under weigh. At 2 p.m. I put signal up for the steamer "Argyle" to take the Fanny

Channel, and when she got inside I took the signal down. By this time the N.E. wind had died away, and a light S.W. wind had sprung up. The "Sarah Pile" then steered for the bar, at which time the bar was very smooth, which induced me to put up signal to take the Fanny Channel. The "Maud Graham" then weighed anchor and followed the "Sarah Pile," which vessel shortly afterwards took the ground. I then put up the north semaphore arm to keep the "Maud Graham" clear of the "Sarah Pile," being under the impression that the water was deeper northward of the "Sarah Pile;" but the "Maud Graham" also took the ground; yet neither of the vessels remained so over half an hour, and while they were aground they appeared as quiet as if they were at anchor.

I have, &c.,

R. J. PALTRIDGE,
Signalman.

Captain T. Wing, Harbourmaster, Manukau.