

**Unloading cargo from the 'Aurora' January 1840**  
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William Wakefield to the New Zealand Company Secretary - Port Nicholson 02 Mar 1840

Sir, I think it right to forward you copies of a letter received by me from Capt. Heale of the 'Aurora' and of my answer to it. Although I have certified to the discharge of the cargo of the 'Aurora', I cannot omit to observe, that the manner in which it has been conducted has not been satisfactory to me as Agent of the Company, or to those owners of Cargo on board who did not come in that ship. Whilst anxious to give Capt. Heale credit for skill as Commander, and for attention to his passengers, it has been impossible not to remark, that from want of his condescending to inspect the landing of goods himself, some damage has been sustained by them, through the negligence of his Officers, that time has been lost, when the weather permitted other ships in the harbour to discharge cargo; and that the inefficient state of the ship's long boat, rendering necessary the building of a lighter, for the landing of bricks, has detained the 'Aurora' longer than was needful. In order to avoid similar delays, I would suggest that the contracts should contain the word "land" as well as "discharge" "and embark", which formed at first a question between Capt. Heale and myself that a more minute survey should be made of the ship's launches than has been done in the case of that of the 'Aurora', which had not been out of the ship for two years, and filled as soon as lowered into the water, and that each vessel should carry four boats. The circumstances render it necessary that masters of ships should not imagine that the cargoes are to be delivered at the gangway as at Calcutta, where the consignees discharge them, and the Commanders duties cease so soon as the anchor is down. I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient servant W. Wakefield.

PS The 'Aurora' having discharged her cargo, five days were occupied in building a lighter, to take on shore 25,000 bricks belonging to Dr Evans, after which six days were consumed in landing them, Capt. Heale's affirmation that a long boat would be "doomed to certain destruction by landing bricks on this beach", is inconsistent with the Cuba's boat having discharged Messrs Hopper & Cos bricks without injury to it. The principal cause of the detention of the ship has been the bricks, which were put on board as ballast.

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Captain Theophilus Heale to Colonel William Wakefield – 'Aurora' 15 Feb 1840

Sir, I beg to inform you that the cargo of the 'Aurora' is now all landed, with the exception of a few packages, which for the convenience of individuals I shall land in the river, and at different parts of the beach, as opportunity offers, and that therefore all claim for demurrage will cease this day. As I am led to believe that the landing of the cargo, and indeed the general performance of our contract, has not met with your approbation, and that a charge may be preferred against the ship upon the subject in London, when I shall not be present to parry it; I may perhaps be permitted to make a few observations, in explanation of the imputed delay and neglect. I presume that the condition of the ship's launch will be made the leading article of complaint, now, while I by no means pretend to declare that the boat is in a good state of repair, I do maintain that she is not so bad as to be unfit for the ordinary work of a ship's long boat, and I need hardly remark that neither I, nor the owners, could have contemplated the landing of the whole cargo in her without any assistance whatsoever, and much less that that landing was to be effected on a shallow and exposed sea beach.

Even were I however to admit the long boat to be utterly unserviceable, I can easily show that her weakness, so far from having been a cause of delay, has accidentally greatly expedited the unloading of the ship, had she been a new and valuable boat, I certainly would not have doomed her to certain destruction, by permitting her to land on such a beach as this, with a cargo so weighty as bricks, and I should not then have had an

inducement to build the lighter, which now lands with perfect ease and safety, a cargo nearly double what the long boat in her best condition could have done, with much difficulty and risk.

I imagine this will not be denied, but it will be objected that three days intervened, between her being ready to land bricks, and all the other cargo being out, to which I can answer, that a ship's cargo of dead weight cannot be discharged until Ballast is filled to supply its place (particularly in an open and by no means safe anchorage) and in these necessary preparations, I insist, that the crew were employed during that interval, quite as advantageously for the Charterers, as if actually engaged in unloading.

With regard to the general fitness of the ship for her present employment, I can only observe, that with the exception of this boat which has unhappily afforded a plausible ground of complaint, I challenge enquiry, and scrutiny, both into the qualities of the ship and her finding in Stores &c, and do not fear comparison with any ship under the New Zealand Land Company's Charter.

Any charge against myself, either of unfitness, or want of zeal, I am far from wishing to deprecate, it will be time for me to enter upon my own defence, when directly attacked; but, I trust, that you will not think this defence of my Owners impertinent, or uncalled for, when you consider the loss they are liable to sustain, from any unanswered attack, not so much in their trifling demurrage charge, (the claim for which, I conceive to be incontestable) as from a prejudice which might arise from it, against chartering any other of their ships, which they may offer to the New Zealand Land Company, for that purpose. I have the honor to be Sir, Your most obedient humble servant, Theophilus Heale.

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Colonel William Wakefield to Captain Theophilus Heale - Port Nicholson 15 Feb 1840

Sir, I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter informing me that all claim for demurrage on the 'Aurora' will cease this day. With regard to your zealous defence against an imaginary charge contained in the rest of your letter, I hope that you have not been led to believe anything that I have not stated to you yourself and am sorry that you have had the trouble of excusing yourself before you were accused. The only comment I propose making in the discharge of the cargo of the 'Aurora' will be contained in the enumeration of the items of cargo landed each day, of the interval of five days (instead of three) in which nothing was landed, and of your own acknowledgement to me, that some deduction on the amount of demurrage days ought to be made, for the delay occasioned by the launch's unfitness to land any cargo whatever. I am Sir, Your most obedient servant, W. Wakefield

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