

2. Take away the present criminal remedy from the compulsory pilot, and leave him a mere civil action against the master or owner of the ship for the amount of his pilotage.

3. Give pilotage authorities, with consent of Her Majesty in Council, power to raise pilotage rates where pilotage is voluntary.

4. Exempt home-trade ships—*i.e.* coasters and all ships trading with ports between the Elbe and Brest—altogether from compulsory pilotage.

5. Do away with the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, which require coasting passenger ships to employ a pilot, and enable the Board of Trade instead to call in the pilotage authorities to assist them when examining the officers of these ships, for the purpose of ascertaining their proficiency in local navigation.

As regards the first of the two points above referred to, *viz.*, “that all pilotage authorities shall “examine and license all competent men who apply to them,” it is no doubt of very great importance. The case is very ably stated by Mr. Augustus Smith in applying for more pilots at Scilly. See also other papers on the same subject.* On the Thames, in the Cinque Ports, at Orfordness, Yarmouth, and all round our coasts there are numbers of competent men who are at times wanted, and who are now kept from offering their services because they may be superseded at any moment by an unlicensed pilot. This state of things is very absurd and injurious. I was particularly struck with it myself this year at Scilly. The crew of a fine pilot cutter, eight in number, came to see me. Four of them were licensed, four were not. All eight were men of the same class; had passed much the same sort of lives as seamen and mates in merchant ships; were about the same age; and, according to the account of those who had licenses, the others were full as competent as themselves. All of them, those who were licensed as well as those who were not, were anxious that the latter should obtain licenses. They said they worked together in the same boat; that they met ships bound up the English or Irish channels; that masters would not take the unlicensed men, and that if taken they might be superseded at any moment by licensed pilots; and that consequently their boat’s crew and their common earnings were arbitrarily and capriciously deprived of payment for services they were competent to earn, and masters of ships deprived of the services of competent pilots. They said further that at times there was a demand for all, and more than all, the competent men that could be found. As regards their pilot funds, they said that this difficulty might be met either by excluding new men from the benefit of the fund, or allowing them the benefit of it only on condition of their paying a sufficient amount to earn a pension.

It will be observed that in 1863 the only reason given by the Trinity House for not extending the number of the pilots was that the average earnings of the pilots were not more than they ought to be, and that the pilot fund would be injured. They took no account of other sources of earnings by the pilots, of their partnership in the boats with men who were not pilots, or of the fluctuating demand for pilots’ services.

But there is nothing that I am aware of in the existing law that compels any pilotage authority to limit the number of their licensed pilots, and I believe that the best way of getting this evil set right will be through the free action of those authorities. If, for instance, the Trinity House were to begin to act on free trade principles, other authorities would follow, and the thing would be quietly and effectually done. If this be not sufficient, a power might be given to the Board of Trade, on appeal either from the pilots or boatmen of any district, or of the shipowners interested, to call upon the pilotage authority to examine and license, under such conditions as to pilotage funds, &c., as might be thought necessary, any men who might be found competent. I doubt, however, if this would, at the present moment, be easily carried.

The chief difficulty in granting licenses generally will be the Pilot Superannuation Fund, in which, and in the future continuance of which, existing pilots have a vested interest. But this difficulty might, perhaps, be met by making it optional with future pilots whether they join the fund, proper terms as to contributions, having regard to age and other circumstances, being carefully determined; and if, as I fear is the case, some of the present funds are in a bad state, future and additional pilots, admitted under a freer system, might perhaps be required, as the price of their license, to pay something towards the funds of the present pilots with whom they would be allowed to compete.

Pilotage Jurisdiction.

The second of the two important questions above referred to remains, namely, whether any, and what, alteration is needed in pilotage jurisdiction. In 1853 there were many questions of this kind open, which have since been settled.

The Cinque Port pilots have been placed under the Trinity House.

The Liverpool pilotage was, in 1857,† partially taken away from the old close Pilotage Commissioners, and, though the arrangement was less complete than might be wished, has been placed under the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board.

The pilotage of the Clyde has been placed in the hands of a board representing both Glasgow and Greenock.‡

The pilotage of the Bristol Channel, formerly exclusively under the Town Council of Bristol, has been divided, and Cardiff, Newport, and Gloucester have each their own pilotage board.||

The pilotage of the Tyne, of Sunderland, and of Hartlepool has been taken away from the Trinity House of Newcastle and placed in the hands of pilotage boards created at the several ports by provisional orders under the powers given by “The Merchant Shipping Act Amendment Act, 1862.”

There may be other cases of local jurisdiction of the same kind still unprovided for; for instance, at Leith, where the Trinity House, an effete body of old sailors, still exercises some jurisdiction over the sea pilotage. But if there are such cases, they may be easily dealt with under those clauses of

* See Parliamentary paper 532, 1864, Nos. 1 to 6; also 13 to 17; Parliamentary paper 455, 1862, Nos. 45, 46; Parliamentary paper 148, Sess. 2, 1859.

† Mersey Dock Consolidation Act, 1858.

‡ Clyde Navigation Act, 1858.

|| Bristol Channel Pilotage Act, 1861.