

1856.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE
ON
INTER-PROVINCIAL COMMUNICATION.

EXTRACTS FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES.

VOTES, No. 14, FRIDAY, MAY 9, 1856.

8. Inter Provincial Communication :—Mr. Elliott, pursuant to notice, moved, That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the most efficient mode of maintaining a rapid and frequent communication between all the Provinces of the Colony, and that such Committee consist of Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. Hall, Mr. Macandrew, Mr. C. Brown, Mr. Graham, and the mover. Report to be brought up this day fortnight.
Question put and passed.
-

VOTES, No. 24, FRIDAY, MAY 23, 1856.

10. Inter-Provincial Communication Committee :—On motion of Mr. Elliott, Chairman of this Committee, the time for the Report of the Committee was extended to this day fortnight.
-

VOTES, No. 33, FRIDAY, JUNE 6, 1856.

16. Inter-Provincial Communication :—Mr. Fitzherbert brought up the Report of the Committee on Inter-Provincial Communication, which was read and ordered to be printed, together with the evidence taken before the Committee.

REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE of the House of Representatives, appointed May 9th, 1856, to consider the most efficient mode of maintaining a rapid and frequent communication between all the Provinces of the Colony, report as follows :—

The Committee appointed on the subject of steam communication between the different Settlements have taken the evidence of the following persons, viz., Messrs. Mailler, Milton, and Deck.

Their own enquiries, added to the information thus obtained by them, have strongly impressed the Committee with the necessity that increased efforts should be made by the Government to render the communication by steam between the several Provinces more efficient both as to speed and regularity.

They are further of opinion that the present is a very favourable opportunity for carrying the above object into effect; in support of which opinion they particularly desire to draw the attention of the House to the evidence of Captain Mailler, the whole of whose statements indeed appear to the Committee worthy of particular attention.

The Committee definitely recommend that the Government should immediately advertise in the neighbouring Colonies for two steamers, of power, respectively, equal to that of the S.S. "William Denny," and offer a united bonus of £8000 for their services in maintaining a communication between the Provinces, including Otago, in accordance with the route-arrangements suggested in the evidence of Captain Mailler appended hereto.

WILLIAM FITZHERBERT, *Chairman.*

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE INTER-PROVINCIAL COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE.

EXAMINATION OF CAPTAIN MILTON.

WEDNESDAY. 28TH MAY, 1856.

1. *By the Chairman.*—You, as master of the “Zingari” steamer, have been on the coast of New Zealand for about eighteen months, and are acquainted with all the ports between Manukau and Otago?—Yes.

2. Would it be possible to maintain a fortnightly communication, with one steamer, between Manukau and Otago, calling at the intermediate ports of New Plymouth, Nelson, Wellington, and Lyttelton, both going and returning, provided that a detention of not more than twenty-four hours was allowed in any one port?—It would be possible to make two trips a month, calling at the ports mentioned, provided a detention of a few hours only took place in each port. The actual time of steaming would be only nine days, which would leave twenty-one days for detention in harbour.

3. From what you know of the coasting traffic of New Zealand, what size vessel would be best adapted for the trade; and what power should she possess to enable her to make, say twenty-two trips in the year, calculating that two trips would be lost in making repairs, &c.?—I think that a vessel of 350 tons register would be large enough, because she would not be required to carry cargo; she ought to be guaranteed to run eight knots an hour.

4. Would you object to state to the Committee what, in your opinion, should be the probable bonus which such a vessel should receive, to induce her to enter on such an undertaking?—I should think not less than £10,000 a year; but I think that an arrangement might be made by the owners to run a vessel, by guaranteeing a fixed interest on the capital advanced.

5. Do you believe a vessel of the character described could be procured from the Australian Colonies, which would be willing, on receiving the bonus you have named, to undertake the maintenance of such a communication?—No; I think not; I made enquiries when I was in the other Colonies, and there was not a single vessel that would answer the purpose.

6. Will you favour the Committee with an opinion as to the best mode of proceeding to obtain the services of such a vessel?—I should think by advertising, first in the Australian Colonies; and if not successful there, then in England.

7. Do you think a rapid communication between the ports mentioned could be maintained regularly by sailing vessels?—No; most decidedly not; I think there is no part of the world where it would be more difficult than on the coast of New Zealand.

8. *By the Colonial Secretary.*—What is at present the average stay of the “Zingari” in each port?—About three days in each port, with the exception of Taranaki.

9. What is the average speed of the “Zingari”?—I cannot say for certain; I think about six knots an hour in fine weather.

10. Do you not think that the speed might be increased?—By the substitution of a new boiler her speed could be increased to an average of six knots an hour in all weathers; but she would be obliged to go off the coast for about two months, for the purpose of making the necessary alterations. The owners of the “Zingari” would not be disposed to make this alteration unless there was a contract entered into for not less than two years.

11. Supposing the above mentioned alterations to be made at what rate per annum would the owners undertake a monthly trip to all the ports including Otago?—I think for about £6000 per annum, but I am not prepared to enter into any contract at present.

12. Supposing the Government to enter into the arrangement, when could the “Zingari” commence her trips?—About four or five months from the time of the arrangement being entered into.

13. *By Mr. Graham.*—Could you suggest any improvements for landing passengers and goods at any of the ports?—Vessels cannot get further up than the White Bluff in the Manukau. If a jetty of about 500 feet was made at the White Bluff, it would be very convenient for landing passengers and goods; at present there is a great want of some accommodation of that sort. In the event of not being able to procure the necessary accommodation, a landing place at Onehunga would be of great service.

14. Could you state the average number of passengers you carry?—I could not do so without going through all the agents' books; but I think about ten cabin and six steerage passengers would be about the average.

15. What would be the charges for the trip to Otago and back?—£30; £15 there and the same back again.

EXAMINATION OF CAPTAIN DECK.

FRIDAY, 30TH MAY, 1856.

1. You were for some time, I believe, the commander of the Colonial Government brig "Victoria," and sailed in her altogether several years?—I was chief officer four years, and commander five years, of H.M. Colonial brig "Victoria."

2. As this long service on the coast of the Colony must have made you well acquainted with the prevailing character of the weather experienced there, will you state your opinion whether quick passages could be relied upon to be made between Manukau and Otago, and the ports of the intermediate Provinces, by smart sailing schooners?—Quick passages could not be *relied upon* if sailing vessels of any description were employed, unless there were several of them—say two between each Province, one going and one coming; each of these vessels would cost from £800 to £1000 per annum. The coast of New Zealand is a very stormy one; and a vessel sailing from Auckland to Otago, calling at each of the intermediate ports, would have to alter her course to every point of the compass; the longest run she could make on one course not exceeding 300 miles, *i.e.*, from Cape Maria Van Dieman to Cape Egmont. Not the slightest dependence *as to time* could be placed upon them, if they had to start from or come into the Manukau.

3. Are you sufficiently acquainted with the harbour of Manukau to be able to state whether sailing vessels experience any considerable detention in entering and leaving that port?—Vessels are frequently detained at the Manukau for five or six days, in consequence of the prevailing westerly winds on that coast; the "Zingari" was once detained there eight days, in consequence of the heavy sea rolling on the bar.

4. What is the character of the ports of Nelson, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Otago, in respect of facilities of ingress and egress for sailing vessels, in all states of the weather?—The harbour of Nelson can be entered with the flood tide with any wind except a south-easter, or a heavy north-easter, which winds seldom blow there: it is a difficult harbour to get out of, especially in south-west winds, when vessels are frequently detained there three or four days together. Wellington is a very fine harbour when once in it; but one of the most difficult in New Zealand for vessels to get in or out of—the wind always blowing either in or out of the entrance. I have frequently, when in the "Victoria," coming from the northward, been inside the outer rock of Barrett's Reef, but owing to the strong winds have been unable to carry sufficient sail to beat to windward, and have in consequence been driven out to sea for two or three days together; it has on two or three occasions taken me longer to get from Cape Palliser to Wellington, a distance of thirty-eight miles, than it has from Auckland to Cape Palliser, a distance of 400 miles. Vessels cannot beat out of Port Nicholson in strong south-easterly weather, which is prevalent in the winter months. Lyttelton is the easiest port in New Zealand for ingress or egress. Otago is a bar harbour, but the bar seldom breaks; the channel up to the port is very narrow and intricate; vessels can rarely leave on the day appointed; I was detained there in the brig five days, in consequence of adverse winds, the pilot not being able to take the vessel over the bar.

5. What, in your opinion, would be the average time of passage for clipper sailing vessels between all the ports named respectively, including calls at New Plymouth?—Supposing a sailing vessel able to leave Manukau, I should say the average passages would be as follows:—

Manukau to New Plymouth	2 to 3 days.
New Plymouth to Nelson	2 to 5 days.
Nelson to Wellington	3 to 6 days.
Wellington to Lyttelton	2 to 5 days.
Lyttelton to Otago	3 to 4 days.

But it is almost impossible to speak with any degree of accuracy, as the winds are so variable; by referring to the appended scale it will be seen the various passages the "Victoria" made during the seven years, I was in her up to July, 1853; the last two years log book I am unable to refer to, as it is at Nelson. I should say a steamer like the one I have recommended below would make the entire trip, calling at all the ports, including stoppages, in all weathers, in thirty days.

6. Are you practically acquainted with steam vessels; and if so, will you state your opinion of the relative advantage of a powerful steamer and a clipper sailing vessel, as vessels for maintaining a rapid and regular communication between the ports of the various Provinces of the Colony?—I have never served in steamers, but have frequently been in them, both at home and in New Zealand. I have a sufficient knowledge of the marine engines to know if anything is wrong in the working of them.

I should say a wooden steam vessel of 400 tons, with engines of 80 or 100 horse power, schooner rigged, with three masts, would be the best description of vessel for the coast of New Zealand; the above is considerably more power than is usually given to vessels of such tonnage; but when the heavy winds and strong tides of Cook's Straits are taken into consideration, I do not think less power would enable her to make head way against them; if economy is to be considered, I should give it in favour of clipper schooners.

7. Will you state any suggestions you may have to offer to this Committee on the best mode, in your opinion, of maintaining such a communication?—I would recommend that a steamer of 400 tons, and 100 horse power, should be procured. The vessel, I think, should be Government property, and carry nothing but passengers, mails, and light packages. Such a vessel, with her expenses, would cost as follows:—

Cost of a Steamer of 400 tons, with engines of 100 horse power	£18,000
Wear and tear, 5 per cent.	900
Insurance	900
Interest	900
	£20,700
Commander's pay, per month	£25
Chief Officer	16
Second ditto	10
First Engineer per month	26
Second Engineer, per month	15
Four Firemen, at £12 per month	48
Eight Men, at £8	64
Two Boys, at £3	6
Cook	12
Steward	11
	£233
Wages per annum	£2796
	£800
Victualling	£800
A vessel of this description would burn, say ten or twelve tons of coals per day—18 days under steam per month, which would give 216 tons per month; at £2 per ton—£432 per month for coals;—per annum	
Cost of oil and tallow, per annum	80
Sundry ship's stores, sails, &c.	300
	£9160

The number of passengers such a vessel would probably carry per month would be about 60, which, at an average charge of £7 per head, would give £420 per month, or £5040 per annum, independent of the saving to Government of the passages of the Governors, Members of the General Assembly, Judges, &c., which would reduce her actual cost per annum to about £4000. If each Province was to have its own two clipper schooners, one leaving each of the ports for the other on fixed days (wind and weather permitting), a fortnightly communication between Canterbury and Auckland might be effected at a cost of about £700 for each vessel per annum.

RETURN, shewing the longest, shortest, and average Passages, made by H. M. Colonial Brig "Victoria," between the various Ports in New Zealand, from January, 1846, to July, 1853, inclusive.

	No. of Passages.	Longest Pass.	Shortest Pass.	Average Pass.
From Auckland to Wellington	20	19 days.	6 days.	11 days.
„ Wellington to Auckland	17	22	6	11
„ Nelson to Wellington	16	7	1	4
„ Wellington to Nelson	19	10	16 hours.	3½
„ Wellington to Port Cooper	6	7	3 days.	4
„ Port Cooper to Wellington	6	11	3	5
„ Auckland to New Plymouth	4	11	7	10
„ New Plymouth to Auckland	3	9	5	7

PHILIP A. DECK.

EXAMINATION OF CAPTAIN MAILLER.

SATURDAY, 31ST MAY, 1856.

1. *By the Chairman.*—What class of vessel would be best suited for the traffic between the Provinces?—An iron screw steamer of about 300 tons register, and 80 horse power, would be the best.
2. What would be the average speed of such a vessel?—Her speed would be about $8\frac{1}{2}$ or 9 knots an hour over an average of voyages.
3. Are there any vessels of the above description that could be obtained in the other Colonies?—Yes; the “Lady Bird,” “Black Swan,” and “Royal Shepherdess.” These vessels were lately advertised for sale by auction, and in all probability either one or the other of them could be procured.
4. *By Mr. Fitzherbert.*—What bonus would the owners of those vessels be disposed to take?—From £5000 to £6000 a year.
5. Which of those vessels do you consider the best suited?—The “Lady Bird” would be the one I should recommend. She has an average speed of ten knots, and has not been employed for some time.
6. What number of cabin passengers would she carry?—About 50 cabin passengers.
7. Do you think there would be sufficient traffic for two steamers?—I do; I think every fortnight would increase the traffic.
8. Would there be much greater expense in having two steamers?—No; two steamers might be obtained for £8000 a year.
9. Is that on the supposition that they should belong to the same company?—Yes.
10. Supposing there were two steamers employed, how would you propose that they should run?—The best arrangement would be for the steamers to start from Wellington, one northward and the other southward.
11. What time would the trips take, supposing the vessels to start from Wellington?—The trip could be made in 14 days, provided that she could take in all her coals at Wellington.
12. Could there be any means of maintaining a regular postal communication with the neighbouring Colonies?—A regularity could be maintained with respect to postal communication in connection with the neighbouring Colonies.
13. Would the bar at the Manukau be of much hindrance to steamers of the tonnage proposed?—A vessel of the power I have described would be able to take the bar at a time when one of the size of the “Zingari” would not.