

(No. 53.)



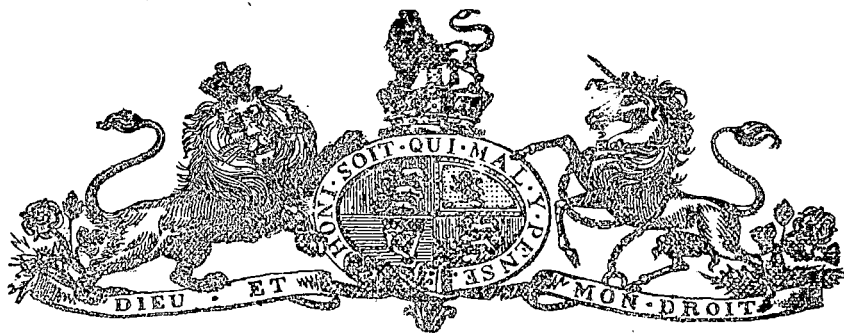
1885.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

ST. HELEN'S POINT, EAST COAST OF
TASMANIA :

MARINE SURVEY.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



ROCK OFF ST. HELEN'S, EAST COAST, TASMANIA.

*Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company,
Head Office, Hobart, 25th March, 1885.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to inform you that I have received intimation of the existence of a rock, or break, or some impediment to navigation of vessels making the passage through Banks' Strait *via* the East Coast of Tasmania.

I learnt incidentally that Mr. L. Jones, the master of the fishing ketch *Rachel Thompson*, had on several occasions observed a break about four miles to the north-east of St. Helen's Point. Deeming the matter one of serious import to the steamers of this Company, I had an interview with Mr. Jones, who stated most positively that he had on several occasions distinctly observed a break in calm weather after heavy east and south-east weather. I beg to hand you herewith copies of letters which I received yesterday from Captain Capurn and Mr. J. W. Evans, both of which are in strong confirmation of the statement made by Mr. Jones.

I take the liberty of commending this matter to the most serious consideration of the Government, with the view to the exact position of this alleged rock, or break, being clearly defined. You are doubtless aware that Captain Stanley's valuable survey only extends as far south on the eastern coast of Tasmania as Eddystone Point, and I would venture to suggest to yourself and your colleagues the advisability of extending the survey of the coasts of this Island, (especially the East Coast), as there are many known dangers in still unsurveyed parts, and concerning which differences of opinion exist as to their true position.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

The Hon. W. H. BURGESS, Treasurer.

EDWARD J. FREEMAN, Manager.

*Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company,
Hobart, 24th March, 1885.*

DEAR SIR,

IN reference to the rock or break reported by Mr. L. Jones, the Master of the *Rachel Thompson*, I beg to say, that some six years ago when Master of the s.s. *Truganini*, I was lying to an anchor close under St. Helen's Point, on which occasion I saw several blind rollers about (4) four miles to N.E. of the point just mentioned, which is about the spot indicated by Mr. Jones. My then Chief Officer, Mr. Evans, also observed the break. On my arrival in Melbourne I reported the circumstance to Captain Stanley, who was then just upon completing his survey of Banks' Strait, and who took a note of the circumstance.

I believe that a rock exists at the spot I have pointed out, but as to its nature or the depth of water over it I am not prepared to state.

I have, &c.

EDWARD J. FREEMAN, Esq., Manager T.S.N. Co.

T. CAPURN, Master s.s. Southern Cross.

*Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company,
Hobart, 24th March, 1885.*

SIR,

WITH reference to the alleged break off St. Helen's Point, I beg to state that on several occasions whilst Chief Officer in the s.s. *Truganini*, I have seen a break about three miles to the N.E. of the St. Helen's Rocks. My opinion is that it is caused by a bank, as it only breaks in heavy S.E. weather, and I could not judge the depth of water without soundings.

I remain, &c.

EDWARD J. FREEMAN, *Esq. Manager T.S.N. Co.*

J. EVANS, s.s. *Southern Cross*.

Treasury, 1st April, 1885.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to lay before you Correspondence on the subject of a reported obstruction to navigation in the vicinity of St. Helen's Point, East Coast of Tasmania. It has been suggested that on a day to be selected the services of the steamer *Warrentinna* might be secured to run over the ground and take soundings under the direction of Captain Riddle, if his services can be obtained for the purpose. I shall be very glad if you will favour me with your views on the subject, both as to the probability of such an obstruction existing, and the best way to meet the wishes of the parties who have brought the matter under notice.

I have, &c.

The Master Warden, Marine Board, Hobart.

W. H. BURGESS, *Treasurer*.

Marine Board, Hobart, 18th April, 1885.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 1st instant, with Correspondence, on the subject of a reported obstruction to navigation in the vicinity of St. Helen's Point.

The Board thinks it improbable that any dangerous obstruction exists as reported, and, further, that even if it does, it is most unlikely that such a search as that proposed would result in its discovery. If, however, the Government still think it desirable to proceed in the matter, the services of the Harbour Master are at their disposal.

I have, &c

The Hon. the Treasurer.

A. G. WEBSTER, *Master Warden*.

Hillside, Sandy Bay, 10th June, 1885.

SIR,

REFERRING to our conversation of to-day, and to the examination of the locality of a reported rock off St. Helen's Point, I beg to inform you that in my opinion the best method of conducting the examination would be for me to locate myself at George's Bay, hire a whaleboat and crew of five men, and taking advantage of fine weather carefully sound in the supposed position of the danger; if it really exists, as I think probable, it will not take long to ascertain its nature and position. I think it likely that both men and boat can be hired on the spot, and if so, such a plan would be most advisable as engaging the sympathies and assistance of those able, most probably, to render effective co-operation. I should require a small buoy and mooring cable or chain wherewith to mark the position while the examination was proceeding, and a couple of leads and lines.

Mr. Jones, the Master of the *Rachel Thompson*, consents to accompany me and act as pilot; he will, I hope, be able to point out the approximate position of the rock, so that the work of examination will become comparatively easy.

I estimate the cost as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Hire of four men for 30 days, at 7s. 6d. per diem	45	0	0
Captain Jones, at £1 per diem and expenses	40	0	0
Buoy, rope, leads, and lines	10	0	0
Hire of boat	10	0	0
Personal wage, 30 days	63	0	0
Travelling expenses, &c.	15	0	0
Unforeseen expenses	17	0	0
Or a total of	£200	0	0

I do not think this estimate is likely to be exceeded, and if the rock is discovered at the outset, (which will depend on its reality and the weather), the cost will be less.

The Hon. the Treasurer.

I have, &c.

H. J. STANLEY.

Treasury, 11th June, 1885.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant in reference to examination of the locality of a reported rock off St. Helen's Point, East Coast, Tasmania, and submitting an estimate of the probable cost of making the necessary examination.

In reply I have to request that you will take steps to proceed with the work, as early as possible, the Government having decided to accept the terms named in your letter.

I have, &c.

Captain H. J. STANLEY, Hobart.

W. H. BURGESS, *Treasurer.*

[TELEGRAM.]

George's Bay, 23rd June, 1885.

HAVE discovered rock with only twelve feet of water upon it, lying east one mile from St. Helen's Point. I do not consider this the rock for which I am in search, but it is dangerous to shipping, and I recommend Notice to Mariners.

H. J. STANLEY.

The Hon. the Treasurer, Hobart.

[TELEGRAM.]

George's Bay, 24th June, 1885.

NOTICE to Mariners.—Notice is hereby given, that a sunken rock with only twelve feet of water upon it, has been discovered lying east one mile from St. Helen's Point, entrance to George's Bay, East Coast of Tasmania.

H. J. STANLEY.

The Hon. the Treasurer.

George's Bay, 4th July, 1885.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to inform you that I have completed the search for the reported rock off St. Helen's Point. I duly informed you by telegram of the discovery of a rock with 12 feet of water upon it at low water, lying one mile east of St. Helen's Point, and received yours requesting to be supplied with a description of it, which I understood as applying to a form for publication. I now think I mistook your meaning. Upon arrival in George's Bay I made inquiries respecting fishermen acquainted with the "Bar" and the outside locality, and those inquiries led me to engage an additional man named Merrick, who informed me that he had once while fishing suddenly come upon 10 fathoms of water, and that there might be less in the vicinity; the search thereabouts resulted in the discovery above mentioned; it is a huge granite boulder nearly perpendicular to the north-eastward, with a sharp top not two feet in diameter; the whole of the rock and the shoal water about it is covered with weed; to the south-eastward there is a coral bank said to have about 15 fathoms upon it, to which fishermen resort for "trumpeter."

I have named the rock "Merrick," after the man who was the cause of its discovery.

As regards my search for the rock supposed to lie about five miles N.E., I can find no indications of shoal water; on the contrary, it gradually deepens to about 60 fathoms sand, or sand and shells, and then drops rather suddenly to more than 100 fathoms. Upon one occasion when outside, a slight breeze from the southward sprung up, and immediately caused a very nasty cross sea; it is evident to me that at times this sea would be dangerous to small craft. I experienced a current setting to the southward, and passed masses of floating weed, from which I gather that a current does sometimes, and I think generally, set down the East Coast of Tasmania at a certain distance from the land, and the great ocean swell meeting this current at right angles combined, with sudden rise of the sea bottom, causes the break seen at times, and thought by some to be a rock. If I had had better appliances I should have been able to investigate more perfectly the cause of the report, but I am glad that at all events the search has brought to light at least one unknown danger.

In the intervals during which I have been unable to cross the Bar, I have busied myself obtaining the necessary data for the construction of a plan of St. Helen's Point, with the soundings

I have taken, and this I shall have the honor of forwarding in a few days, and so preserve a record of the examination; also I find that the existing chart is on so small a scale and so imperfect as to be quite useless for the work of representation.

I am sending the men and whaleboat to Hobart per *Warrentinna*. I myself intend returning by train, and shall arrive almost as soon as this letter.

I have, &c.

The Hon. the Treasurer, Hobart.

H. J. STANLEY.

Hillside, Sandy Bay, 18th July, 1885.

SIR,

HEREWITH I have the honor to forward a Plan, on a scale of 3 inches to a nautical mile, showing the soundings taken while in search of a rock off St. Helen's Point; and I have marked upon the same the clearing-mark for the Merrick Rock, which, upon careful plotting, proves to lie nearly $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles east of the Point. On the same chart I have copied a section of the existing Admiralty Chart, which is all Mariners have at present to navigate by. It will be seen at a glance that the rocks shown thereon as existing south-east of St. Helen's Point are very much out of position, whilst their character is totally unexpressed; the bearing of the clearing-mark differs on the two plans as much as $\frac{3}{4}$ of a point, which is only explainable upon the assumption that an error exists. I have the honor to enclose accounts and vouchers, and have the honor to be,

Yours, &c.

The Hon. the Treasurer.

H. J. STANLEY, *Commander, R.N.*

Treasury, Hobart, 20th July, 1885.

MEMORANDUM from the Treasurer.

I HAVE the honor to forward herewith a plan or chart prepared by Captain H. J. Stanley in connection with his recent survey of the sea bed in the vicinity of St. Helen's Point, East Coast, Tasmania, and I shall feel much obliged if the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works will allow 100 copies to be printed off for distribution to Mariners.

W. H. BURGESS, *Treasurer.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

FORWARDED to the Hon. the Treasurer, with 100 copies of Chart as requested, also original Chart.

NICHOLAS J. BROWN, *Minister of Lands and Works.*
29. 7. 85.

Treasury, Hobart, 3rd August, 1885.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to enclose, for distribution to mariners, copies of a chart prepared by Captain Stanley, R.N., giving valuable information with respect to a rock discovered on the East Coast of Tasmania, in the vicinity of St. Helen's Point.

I have, &c.

W. H. BURGESS.

*Sent to the Master Warden at Hobart, Launceston, Mersey,
Table Cape, and Stanley.*

