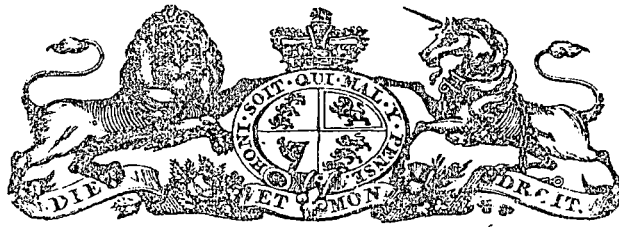


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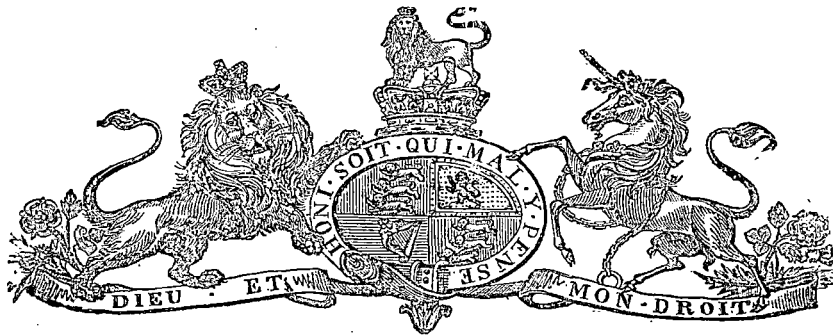
1863.

T A S M A N I A.

M A R I N E B O A R D.

PROGRESS REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Brought up by Mr. Davies, and ordered by the House to be printed, 6 March,
1863.



SELECT COMMITTEE appointed on the 27th February, 1863, to enquire into the Operation and Results of the Acts of Parliament which regulate the Management and Control of the Ports of Hobart Town and Launceston, with power to send for Persons and Papers.

M E M B E R S.

MR. ALLISON.
MR. BALFE.
MR. DAVIES.
MR. LETTE.

MR. ROSE.
MR. HAGGITT.
MR. MURRAY (*Mover.*)

DAYS OF MEETING.

No. 1.—4 March, 1863. *Present*—Mr. Davies, Mr. Murray, Mr. Rose, Mr. Allison, and Mr. Haggitt.
No. 2.—5 March, 1863. *Present*—Mr. Davies, Mr. Murray, Mr. Balfe, Mr. Allison, and Mr. Rose.
No. 3.—6 March, 1863. *Present*—Mr. Davies, Mr. Murray, Mr. Rose, Mr. Lette, and Mr. Haggitt.

WITNESSES EXAMINED.

1. T. T. WATT, Esq., *Landing Surveyor.*
2. J. R. BATEMAN, Esq., *J.P.*
3. ALEXANDER M'NAUGHTAN, Esq., *J.P.*

R E P O R T.

YOUR Committee have had under their consideration the matter referred to them by your Honourable House, and have held three meetings, and examined three important Witnesses; but in consequence of the statement made by the Honourable the Colonial Treasurer on the evening of the 5th instant, to the effect that an early prorogation of Parliament might take place, your Committee have decided to bring up a Progress Report, with the Evidence which they have taken, and the following Resolutions, which they have unanimously adopted:—

I. That, in the opinion of this Committee, sufficient evidence is already before them to warrant them in recommending to the Government the propriety of considering the advisability of doing away with the Marine Board at Launceston, and of transferring the duties thereof to the Customs Department.

II. That it is the opinion of this Committee, with a thorough knowledge on the part of some of the Members, in addition to the evidence before them, that an entire remodelling and great reduction of the Port charges of Launceston should be made.

JOHN DAVIES, *Chairman.*

Committee Room, 6 March, 1863.

EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, 5TH MARCH, 1863.

THOMAS TRAILL WATT, *Esq.*, Senior Landing Waiter, called in and examined.

In answer to Questions from Mr. Murray,—

I was Collector of Customs from August, 1858, to August, 1861. I had a seat at the Marine Board *virtute officii*. The Board met once a week, and the business was generally Pilot arrangements, and at the last meeting in each month the Accounts were passed. The time occupied in business at each meeting was from 15 to 20 minutes, sometimes half an hour, never exceeding three quarters of an hour. The Wardens were paid salaries,—the Master Warden £200, and the other Wardens a guinea each for every meeting which they attended. I think the Departments of Marine Board and Customs could be managed by amalgamating the former with the latter, with a Harbour Master and Harbour Clerk, whose Office should be at the Port Office, the Collector of Customs to be Port Officer. The proper staff for the River Tamar should be a boat's crew of two men, or tenders could be obtained from a waterman (but this is a question) to perform the duty when necessary. Three Pilots would be required at the Heads, and a boat's crew of four men, with a coxswain capable of acting as extra Pilot when necessary. This would be sufficient to carry on the Pilot and Harbour Service. No second Port Officer would be required at the Heads. The duties of the Port could be as efficiently performed, and certainly at much less expense, if the Marine Boards were abolished.

The Pilots are paid by Salaries at Launceston, so much per annum each. In Hobart Town they are paid by fees; the exact amount received being divided amongst them. In Hobart Town Port if a vessel enters without a Pilot, or none offers, she is not charged Pilotage; but in Launceston all are compelled to pay Pilotage whether they employ a Pilot or not.

I consider the Pilotage very heavy. I don't think it keeps vessels away from Launceston, but it does from the Heads; for if they call at the Heads for any purpose they are charged all expenses.

I think Salaries are best for the Pilots in a Port like Launceston; the fees ought to be sufficient to pay the salaries.

I have always thought that the Steam Tug is worked at a disadvantage. When she has been engaged to tow a vessel to George Town, she cast it off at the Heads and returned to Launceston without anything; and I have known many instances, on her arriving at the Bar at Launceston, for her to receive instructions to proceed again immediately to the Heads to bring up a vessel. In my opinion when she casts off a vessel she should proceed to Lagoon Bay till a telegram were sent for her to proceed to Launceston. If the charge for Towing were so reduced as to induce all vessels to use the Tug the number of Pilots at the Heads could be very materially reduced, and the Tug would be very much more sought after. I think she should have a Coal Depôt at George Town, where coal is 7s. or 8s. cheaper than it is at Launceston. She could proceed to the Mersey, if necessary, for her own coal.

By Mr. Allison.—I think it would be better to sell the Steam Tug by tender, and leave it to a private company to take the business up, fixing by law a maximum rate of Pilotage. Any vessel may tow if she likes, but she must pay a towage fee of £25 a year, which is exacted by a Bye-law of the Marine Board.

If the boat is to be kept on, she ought always to be over the Bar; I have known much inconvenience from her being above the Bar.

Private enterprise would not interfere with existing Pilot arrangements, as you would have to keep on the same number of Pilots.

The Wardens have a Secretary, who has no extraordinary duties to perform; his regular hours would be 2 or 3 a day, but he must be at the Office.

The Customs could not do it with their present staff, but the Clerk at the Port Office could do duty as Shipping Master also.

By Mr. Haggitt.—At present there are three Pilots at the Heads and one in Town. There would be no difficulty in getting a sufficient number of Pilots at a smaller salary than they at present receive. I think the Pilot in charge might have £225, the second £200, and the third £180, all with quarters. I do not think it necessary to have Wardens; a Board from the Chamber of Commerce could be formed to settle difficult questions, they would act without salaries. These duties are at present performed by the present Wardens. The Board would be called together, when required, by the Collector of Customs, who should be Chairman. As long as there is no private enterprise on the River, I think the Tug might at stated periods be despatched from the Tamar to the Mersey there to load with coal for her own consumption, but she must have no detention whatever. Her coal and cargo must always be ready. I think if the Tug is thrown open to private enterprise she could go as far as the Mersey or the Don.

Mr. Watt withdrew.

Captain J. R. BATEMAN called in and examined.

I was Harbour Master and in charge of Light-houses, Buoys and Beacons at Launceston, from 1838 to 1853 or 4.

My salary was £100 a year, and I had Fees which were paid by Shipping; these Fees varied from £10 or £15 a month to £70. I had a Coxswain who had previously been with me as a Seaman, and a Prisoner Clerk without salary; his duties were simple, little or nothing. There was no Marine Board then. We had 6 Pilots and 2 or 3 extra Pilots. During part of my time there was no Steam Tug; we managed it by perseverance and tide work; the duty was like board ship work—looking for tides night and day.

I have seen 17 or 18 large square-rigged Vessels, and I have known 40 to 55 Vessels in the River. The Shipping paid Dues. A ship of 17 or 18 feet draught would pay by tonnage £8 1s. 0d., the lowest Pilotage was £3 4s. 6d. I had charge of the fees from which the Pilots were paid. In our busy times as much as £45 a month was received by a Pilot for working night and day. I consider they are better paid by salaries. The same number of Pilots if paid by salaries would have done the work. Half the number of Pilots ought to do the duty now that steam power can be taken advantage of. The *Gypsy* used to be employed and towed vessels; she was of 25 horse-power, and did the work of the port. Half the consumption of coal by the present boat would be sufficient for her. I may mention that Mr. Whyte the Premier sent for me yesterday to inspect the *Cobre*. He mentioned £600 a year as the price, but it was £2600. £1080 were paid for the boilers. She would require £50 or £60 for towing apparatus. She would not use more than a quarter of the Coal. The Harbour Master of Launceston inspected the Light-houses. I did this by a vessel of 17 or 18 tons, and I supplied the keepers with their year's supplies. The tour of inspection could be made in three weeks. It is very seldom now that the Harbour Master goes on board a vessel. I was Harbour Master at Launceston during the gold fever, and performed all the duty without a Marine Board, and there were no complaints, but, on the contrary, I was requested to return by the Government on the death of Mr. Walker. I was Harbour Master at Hobart Town for some time, and did the duty entirely.

FRIDAY, 6TH MARCH, 1863.

THOMAS TRAILL WATT, *Esq.*, again called in and examined.

By Chairman.—Can you offer any suggestions to the Committee as to disposing of the Tug in the event of the Government doing away with the Marine Board? The best way would be to advertise the Tug to be leased by Tender, under certain restrictions, and binding the person to keep her on the river. The *Tamar* should be sold, and a less expensive boat in a thorough state of repair be purchased, which can be done for little more than this could be sold for. If advertised, it should be throughout the Colonies.

ALEXANDER M'NAUGHTAN, *Esq., J.P.*, called in and examined.

I am a Merchant, and have establishments in Hobart Town and Launceston, and I am connected with the shipping interest of Tasmania. I was one of the Wardens of the Launceston Marine Board from its first commencement in 1857 to June 1861. We met about once a week; there was generally a Report brought up, and the accounts were submitted by Mr. Boothroyd. The Master Warden made a short report of what had been done, and if there were any complaints they were submitted to the Board. The ordinary routine was gone through. The meetings took about an hour per week; very often there was nothing to be done. All fees were collected by the Customs and paid over to the Marine Board, who paid the Pilots their salaries, and the members of the Marine Board. We got 21s. each per Meeting, but I seldom went to the Meetings. It did not suit my purpose to go, as I had a great deal to do. The Launceston Board supervise all the North West Coast. The work might be done by the Customs with the assistance of a Merchant after Customs hours. The Merchant ought to be paid for his services. If the Marine Boards were done away with, the Collector of Customs and his Officers would be all the better for the aid of an experienced Merchant. I am of opinion that it would be to the advantage of the Colony if Marine Boards were done away with, and the duties transferred to the Customs. This would decidedly be attended with economy. The expense of the Launceston Marine Board is about £600 a year in salaries. The Master Warden used to get £200, the Mayor and Collector of Customs, *ex officio*, and two Merchants each a guinea a meeting. The Merchant should have £150. Mr. Green, who is at present Master Warden, and perfectly competent, receives £150.

By Mr. Rose.—Would not a Master Mariner be better than a Merchant? They have the Pilots and Harbour Master. A Master Mariner would be very useful, but at the same time a Merchant would be useful in the Custom House on the Board. The salary I have suggested would be sufficient to a Master Mariner to give up his whole time if required, or even £100 a year, or less.

By Mr. Murray.—I knew the system before the Marine Boards were established. The old system was better for the Town and Port. The Government then furnished boats' crews.

By Mr. Lette.—Three Pilots for the River would be enough. A good deal would depend on the management of the Tug; but not enough as it is at present managed. The Tug has not been profitably managed. Two boats' crews, of 5 men each, would be required at the Heads, in the event of accident happening to one boat, or for extra assistance.

By Mr. Haggitt.—The merchant being always amongst the shipping, such information as he could give would be useful to the Collector on general grounds. He could give the general opinions of the merchants as to probable arrivals of vessels, and then arrangements could be made for their berthing, &c.

By Chairman.—The Tug has been improperly managed. The fuel has been obtained in an extraordinary manner by small craft trading from the Mersey to Launceston. The Tug might have saved money by coaling herself at the Mersey. Tenders were taken at 32s. at Launceston, while it could be obtained at 15s. delivered at Torquay on board the Tug. There is no occasion for a coaling depôt at Launceston. There ought to be one at George Town. My opinion is that George Town is the proper place for the Tug, where coal could be more reasonably obtained. When a vessel is seen in the offing a telegram could be sent to the Tug to get up steam and take the vessel up to Launceston. She would carry 30 or 40 tons of coal, and say that it cost £8 to coal her to Mersey and back, there would be a saving of 15s. a ton on 30 tons, equal to £22 10s. The Mersey coal was always used by the *Titania*, which was employed in the coast trade. Assuming she went to coal at Mersey, she might carry passengers and cargo, if there were no private enterprise, so as not to come into competition. I agree with Mr. Watt as to leasing a boat if a new one were obtained. There should be a Steam Tug on the River: we can't do without it. The Tug should always be at the command of proper authorities, in case of wreck, &c. A dredging machine is also much required on the Tamar. The Pilots should be paid by salaries, as at present. The Tug would be very useful to wind-bound vessels while she was there coaling. Complaints are made of the excessive charges in the Launceston Port by captains.