(No. 119.)

1870.

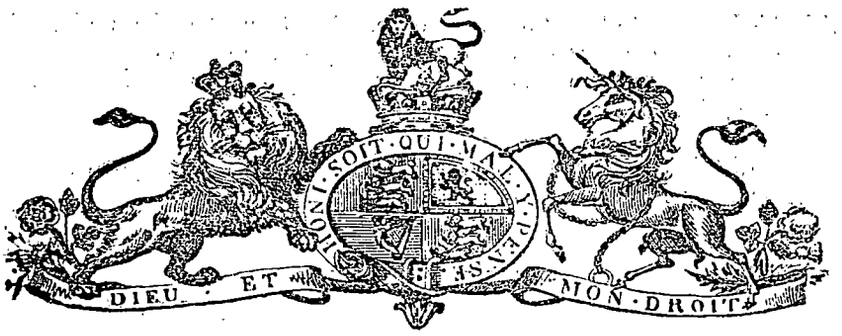
TASMANIA.

EAST BAY NECK.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands and Works, and ordered by the House to be printed, October 7, 1870.

*



To His Excellency CHARLES DU CANE, *Esquire, Captain-General, Governor-in-Chief, and Vice-Admiral of Tasmania.*

The humble Petition of the undersigned Residents of East Bay Neck, Bream Creek, and in the vicinity thereof.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH:

THE great advantage that would result on the East Coast, and to the Citizens of Hobart Town, by cutting a Canal through East Bay Neck of sufficient depth to enable Centre-board Vessels of light draught but capable of carrying large cargoes to pass from Frederick Bay to Blackman's Bay, and thus save the long and tempestuous passage round Cape Pillar.

The benefit to your Petitioners would be greater facility in sending their farm produce to market and receiving their supplies therefrom; and the advantage to Hobart would be an increased trade consequent on the improved communication with the Capital.

The Canal would also open up forests of good timber and firewood, and a better supply of fish; and last, not least, would put a value on all Crown Lands on the East Coast.

Your Petitioners do not believe that any engineering difficulties will be found in carrying out this work; and earnestly and respectfully pray Your Excellency to cause a competent person to be sent to East Bay Neck to select the best place to cut the Canal and to estimate the expense of the work, which your Petitioners do not think will exceed a few thousand pounds.

And your Petitioners will, as in duty bound, ever pray.

[*Here follow* 49 *Signatures.*]

Government House.

I WISH to be in a position to form a plan and estimates of the cost of cutting a communication from Frederick Henry Bay to the sea through East Bay Neck.

Let the Deputy Surveyor-General be instructed to send off, at once, a party to make a survey not only of the isthmus itself, but also of the estuary to the point where it opens into the sea, opposite the south end of Maria Island. This plan should be accompanied with a section of the isthmus itself, and with soundings in Frederick Henry Bay, showing the depth at given distances from the shore until a depth of 10 feet at low water is attained.

Sounding should also be taken along the channel through the estuary, and the nature of the bottom stated, in order to enable me to form an opinion as to the mode in which the necessary depth for a ship channel could be secured.

It would also be very desirable that the actual level of the surface of the sea on both sides of the isthmus should be ascertained at different times of tide; that is, that the level of the water on both sides should be marked at a given instant on both sides, and then the differences of the level determined with accuracy. This should be done at high and at low water, and at one or two intermediate times of tide. It should also be done when the wind is blowing strong into Frederick Henry Bay, and again when it is blowing from the eastward. These levels are of importance, for from the data afforded by them we shall be altogether guided in the mode of executing the channel and in the arrangements which it may be necessary to make either for keeping it open or for facilitating the passage of vessels through it. A boat will be required to take the soundings. Arrangements can be made to send one down when the survey is in sufficient forwardness, and Captain Hawkins had better at that time go down himself and make himself so thoroughly acquainted with the locality as to be able to report fully upon the scheme.

W. D.
27th October, 1854.

I should wish this business to be set about at once. I return the plan and sections of Ralph Bay Neck. The soundings should be shown in Ralph Bay to the depth of 10 feet below low water, and the relative levels of the water on both sides accurately determined in the manner explained with regard to East Bay Neck.

To save time I forward this minute to the Surveyor-General, who will be good enough to carry out His Excellency's instructions.

W. CHAMP.
27th October, 1854.

Ralph's Bay, 5th January, 1855.

SIR,

I BEG to offer the following remarks with respect to the practicability of cutting a canal across the Isthmus of East Bay.

The water in Norfolk Bay shoals out for a considerable distance, and the bottom being composed of fine sand causes at every influx of the waves (more especially when the wind is blowing from the S.W. which is very prevalent) a quantity of sand to be thrown on the shore, and remains until the wind shifts to the N.E., when a greater part is again carried away to sea; and, as I am informed, what is not carried away in this manner remains until the winter sets in, when the heavy rains of that season remove what has been deposited in the summer.

The wind has great effect on the water in this bay: the stronger the wind blows from the S.W. the more the tide recedes at low water, and is stationary for a greater period than in calm weather, and it does not reach its usual mark at high water.

It appeared to me singular at first, as I thought that the wind blowing directly into the bay would have a tendency to increase instead of diminishing the rise of the tide, but from a number of observations taken when the wind was blowing from the S.W. I found invariably the same result. The wind blowing from the N.E. causes a higher tide and does not allow it to recede so far as when blowing from the S.W. No accurate result could be obtained of the high and low water-marks when the wind was blowing strong. The high and low water-marks given in the plan is the mean of a series of observations taken in calm weather.

The isthmus (Section A.B.) is composed of a loose sandy soil that would make it easy of excavation, but it would require to be faced with masonry, or piled and faced with planks, to keep the sides from being washed into the cutting.

The Section C.D. passing through the Township of Dunnolly is marshy on the S.W. side for 10 chains: the rest of the distance is composed of a sandy loam, and would require to be faced the same as Section A.B.

The Section A.B. would be the most desirable situation for the proposed canal, as the tide acts more on that part of Norfolk and East Bays, and would therefore keep the cutting free from any lodgment of sand, &c.

The difference of time in the tide at East Bay is 1 hour 40 minutes (the mean of several observations taken in calm weather) later than Norfolk Bay. From the line of 10 feet below low water to Boomer Island is nearly of one uniform depth. From the opening of Blackman's Bay a narrow channel commences and runs in a circuitous route by Bream Creek to the Narrows, and ranges from 3 to 6 fathoms in depth. This channel would require to be marked by buoys being laid down. There is a heavy ground swell continually breaking on the north side of the Sandspit in Marion Bay that would prevent any sailing vessel unless with a fair wind entering the Narrows. If any master attempted to beat in he would run a great risk of losing his vessel.

From the great body of water on each side of the Narrows at the turn of the tide either in ebbing or flowing causes a strong current to run through the latter place. The bottom of East Bay is composed of mud and sand and shells. From enquiries I have made from persons resident on the isthmus, and from personal observations, the prevalent winds are from the S.W. and N.E., which would materially affect sailing vessels.

The timber required for the construction of this work could be got from Government land in the vicinity. Stone of an inferior quality could be got from Boomer Island: there is no durable stone in locality. Shells in abundance for making lime can be got on the spot.

Fresh water would be required to be brought from a distance of 4 miles to supply the wants of the artisans and laborers employed in the construction of this work.

JOHN ASHPLANT, *Private Royal Sappers and Miners.*

Captain HAWKINS, *R.E.*

JAMES BARNARD,
GOVERNMENT PRINTER, TASMANIA.