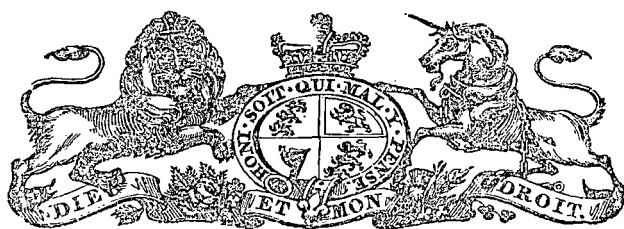


(No. 65.)



1860.

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T A S M A N I A.

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S U B M A R I N E C A B L E.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, &c.

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Laid upon the Table by Mr. Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, 23 August, 1860.



Launceston, 21st August, 1860.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit to you the following Report of my proceedings :—

On the 2nd of May, in pursuance of my instructions, I took possession of the *Ira* schooner, sixteen tons burden, and fitted her suitably for the Expedition from which I have just returned, (namely, to ascertain the position and magnitude of the fault in the Submarine Cable across the Bass' Straits), she being the most suitable vessel then offering for that purpose. On the same day I employed five men, at a salary of six pounds per month, to work the vessel, and assist in the necessary operations.

On the 3rd of May, I was towed by the *Tamar* tug to George Town, where I was detained by a strong westerly gale until the 15th; when the wind favouring, I got under weigh and proceeded to Circular Head. On the following day encountered a heavy gale from the N.N.W.; and, but for a sudden change of wind, it is very doubtful if the vessel would have reached Circular Head, at which place I arrived on the night of the 17th.

Heavy westerly gales prevailing, I was not able to leave Circular Head until the 21st; and in the meantime I was occupied in repairing sails, fitting the vessel for underrunning Cable, and taking spare Cable on board.

On the morning of the 21st the wind being favourable, I started for Three Hummock Island; but, again meeting westerly weather, I did not arrive there until the evening of the 23rd.

On the 24th, grappled unsuccessfully for the Cable at West Bay, Three Hummock Island. The next day I attempted to underrun from the beach; but the surf being very heavy, and the Cable being deeply imbedded in the sand, I was obliged to desist. Again took to grappling, and succeeded by next evening in picking up and underrunning to about three miles from the beach, where I buoyed it; but the wind again veering to the westward, I thought it advisable to start for Sea Elephant Bay, King's Island, which is the other landing place of that section of the Cable.

On the 27th I sighted Sea Elephant Rocks, King's Island,—but, in consequence of more unfavourable weather, was unable to commence operations before the 5th of June, although I repeatedly made attempts before that date.

On the 5th I landed at Sea Elephant Bay and tested: the result of my tests caused me to believe the fault existed five or six miles from the shore.

On the same day I succeeded in underrunning about three miles of the Cable, which I buoyed at that place; the wind then coming strong from S.E., I was compelled to run for Franklin Roads, where, though frequently making unsuccessful attempts to proceed, I was detained until the 14th June, when the weather moderating I again made Sea Elephant Bay, picked up the Cable at buoy, and underrun to about six miles from the shore. I found the water shoaled here suddenly from twelve to nine fathoms; several chafed places were observed on the Cable; and before the way of the vessel could be checked, the Cable parted at one of these chafed places. Upon picking up the end, I found the conducting wire was broken, and the Cable only held together by two of the outer wires, these being almost severed by abrasion on the rocks. I immediately marked the spot by a buoy, and on the following day recovered both ends by grappling, and let in a piece of spare Cable to remedy the defect. Ere I had this completed it came on to blow heavy from the N.E., and I was compelled to buoy the Cable and stand out to sea.

The gale continued unabated ; and on the 23rd June, being short of provisions, and the sails in a very bad state, I proceeded to Circular Head to refit.

After effecting everything necessary at that place, I left on the 26th June ; but, encountering very unfavorable weather, was not able again to commence operations at Sea Elephant Bay until 6th July, when, the buoy being carried away, I was obliged to grapple for the end of the Cable again. On the 7th, I succeeded in picking up and underrunning to about 300 yards further than where I had let in the piece, when I found the Cable had again parted by abrasion on the rocks. I buoyed the end, and grappled unsuccessfully for the other until dark.

On the morning of the 8th it came on to blow heavy, and I had to run for Seal Bay.

From this time to the 2nd August, I had no opportunity of grappling on the south side of the fault ; and the buoys having been carried away, I had twice to grapple for and underrun the shore end.

From the 2nd to the 7th August I grappled repeatedly on the south side of the fault, but, from the nature of the bottom, I did not succeed in picking up the end ; and all my grapnels being broken or straightened on the rocks, all hope of succeeding without repairing the gear was at an end. I therefore left for Launceston to report my proceedings, and refit for the proposed work in case it meets with your approval.

It is evident, from the nature of the bottom on which the Cable now lies, that an alteration in the route is absolutely necessary. To effect this a much longer length of Cable than is on hand will be required.

I should therefore suggest that a Vessel be sent out to take soundings and ascertain the best route on which the shore end may be re-laid. She might also take advantage of the best weather for grappling to the southward of the fault, and buoy that end.

As soon as the best route is ascertained, the requisite quantity of Cable might be sent for ; and, in all probability, long ere it arrived in the Colony the Vessel employed on the Survey would have prepared the Cable for effecting the necessary repairs.

I would further advise that, without loss of time, I should proceed upon this work.

The *Ira*, in which I have worked hitherto, was only taken by me until a more suitable Vessel could be provided.

I am satisfied that, had I taken a Steamer at first, I could not have done more than has been done with the *Ira* for the first two months, on account of the unfavorable weather ; and, as the work could not have been properly completed, it is as well that the great expense the hiring of a Steamer would have entailed was not incurred.

Until the proposed Survey has taken place it would be impossible for me to give an estimate of the cost of the work, but I should say, under unfavourable circumstances, it would not exceed Six thousand Pounds.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

GEO. SAVAGE,

*Superintendent Inter-Colonial and Submarine Lines.*

*The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer.*

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*Department of Electric Telegraph, Office of the General Superintendent,  
Melbourne, Victoria, 28th July, 1860.*

SIR,

IN order that you may be fully informed as to my position in reference to the present suspension of communication on Section No. 2 of the Bass' Straits Inter-colonial line of Telegraph (Sea Elephant Bay and Three Hummock Island), and the action which I have taken towards aiding the efficient completion of the repairs now in progress, I have the honor to forward herewith copies of official correspondence which has recently passed between the Government of Victoria and myself.

The Telegrams alluded to in the concluding paragraph of my letter of the 9th instant were merely progress reports received from Mr. Savage from time to time as he was enabled to communicate with me.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

SAMUEL W. M'GOWAN.

*The Inspector-General Public Works, Tasmania.*

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[By Electric Telegraph.]

*King's Island, 24th July, 1860.*

RETURNED to the Cove yesterday in consequence of heavy easterly gales. Succeeded in again picking up cable after three days' grappling, but was unable to underrun until Saturday, the wind being S.S.E. fresh breeze. On Saturday we had light breeze from N.E. for about three hours, when we underrun three miles; but, the wind chopping round E.S.E., I was compelled to buoy and leave it. It has since been blowing a strong gale from the eastward. The reason of the buoys not watching on the last two occasions must have been that there is a shelf of rock close to the buoy-rope, as there was sufficient chain bent on to keep the line off the bottom.

Has anything been arranged respecting Steamer? If so, I will send list of articles required for immediate service.

G. SAVAGE.

*Telegram for S. W. M'GOWAN, Esq.*

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*Department of the Electric Telegraph, Office of the General Superintendent,  
Melbourne, 9th July, 1860.*

SIR,

IN acknowledgment of your letter of the 7th instant, requesting information as to the interruptions in the Telegraphic Communication between this Colony and Tasmania, I have the honor to state, that since the 28th of April last, a break has existed in the section of Cable between Sea Elephant Bay and West Bay, Three Hummock Island (50 miles); but owing to the continuance of boisterous and unfavourable weather, as I am informed by Mr. Savage, the Superintendent of the Straits Line, it was impossible to make any material progress in effecting the necessary repairs during the month of May. In the beginning of June, however, he was enabled to commence the work of grappling and underrunning; and from that period until the present time he has, I believe, been as constantly at work as the state of the weather would permit.

The injury to the Cable would appear to have been sustained on that portion of the Line comprised within the deviation specially alluded to in my Report of the 22nd August, 1859; to which document I would beg to refer you for full information, as to the manner in which the Contractors executed their work on the section in question.

As it will probably be necessary to secure the services of a small Screw Steamer for two or three weeks, in order to complete efficiently the requisite repairs, I purpose addressing you further upon this subject at an early date.

I forward herewith copies of various Telegrams which have passed between Mr. Savage and myself, up to this time.

I have, &c.,

S. W. M'GOWAN.

*The Honorable the Postmaster-General.*

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*Department of Electric Telegraph, Office of the General Superintendent,  
Melbourne, 16th July, 1860, 6 p.m.*

SIR,

REFERRING to my letter of the 9th instant, and enclosures, relative to the existing interruption on No. 2 Section of the Bass's Straits Submarine Cable (Sea Elephant Bay and Three Hummock Island), I have the honor to inform you that I am, this evening, in receipt of a communication from the Superintendent of the Bass's Straits Line, Mr. Savage, reporting the continuance of unfavourable weather and urging the necessity for the despatch of a small steamer.

I therefore deem it necessary to recommend that, in order to secure the immediate execution of the requisite repairs in a satisfactory and efficient manner, a suitable steam vessel should be despatched to Sea Elephant Bay at the earliest moment; and, with the view of carrying out this suggestion, I would beg to request that I may be authorised to make such enquiries among the agents and owners of steam vessels now available at this port as will enable me to ascertain whether it may be possible to obtain a suitable vessel here; and, if so, to submit for your approval the most reasonable offer obtainable *within 48 hours*.

The vessel should be a screw steamer not less than 70 nor more than 100 tons register, from 35 to 50 horse-power, and well found in sails, rigging, and ground tackle, particularly the latter, as the anchorages are mostly open roadsteads. Officers, crew, and provisions for 30 days, should be found by the owners. Coals should be furnished at contract price by the Government contractor.

I estimate the total expense at or under £500; and the expenditure is provided for under Division No. 55, Subdivision 46, item "Proportion of Expenses for maintenance of Submarine Line to Tasmania, £1000."

I have, &c.

S. W. M'GOWAN.

*The Honourable the Postmaster-General.*

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*Department of Electric Telegraph, Office of the General Superintendent,  
Melbourne, 25th July, 1860.*

SIR,

REFERRING to my letter of the 9th instant, (with enclosures), and subsequent letter of the 16th instant, relative to the existing interruption on the Second Section of the Tasmania intercolonial line in Bass' Straits, requesting that means should be taken for despatching a small Steamer to Sea Elephant Bay in order to afford proper facilities for expediting the necessary repairs, I have the honor to enclose herewith copy of a Telegram received last night from Mr. Savage, the officer in charge of the line, and to request that I may be favoured with your instructions as to the course to be adopted.

I have, &c.

S. W. M'GOWAN.

*The Honorable the Postmaster-General.*

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[URGENT.]

GENERAL Superintendent Electric Telegraph forwards copy of Telegram respecting interruption in Telegraphic Communication with Tasmania, and requests instructions thereupon:—

THE disasters attendant upon the maintenance of this Cable, and the prospect of further heavy charges on account of the work, require serious consideration before any further sanction can be given by this Government to additional expenditure. At present, the Government are not prepared to say what course will be adopted; in the meantime, neither the cost of Steamer nor of more Cable can be sanctioned.

JOHN R. BAILEY.

26th July, 1860.

For information of General Superintendent of Electric Telegraph.

WILLIAM TURNER, *Secretary.*

*General Post Office, 27th July, 1860.*