

(No. 87.)



1882.

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T A S M A N I A .

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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RIVER TAMAR IMPROVEMENT BILL, (No. 43):

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

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Brought up by Mr. Scott, and ordered by the Council to be printed, October 4,  
1882.



## R E P O R T.

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THE Select Committee of the Legislative Council appointed, on the 27th September, to consider the provisions of the Bill to authorise the appropriation of a sum of £20,000 for effecting certain improvements in the River Tamar at Launceston, have the honor to report that—

Your Committee examined Captain Gilmore, the Master Warden of the Launceston Marine Board, in reference to the works and improvements intended to be carried out by the Marine Board under the provisions of the said Bill, and your Committee desire to call special attention to the evidence given to your Committee by Captain Gilmore, which will be found annexed to this Report.

Your Committee find that the greater portion of the moneys proposed to be appropriated under the authority of the said Bill will be expended in dredging and improving the North Esk River at Launceston, and only a comparatively small amount in improvements in the River Tamar. Your Committee, therefore, recommend that the title and first section of the Bill be amended to authorise the Marine Board to carry out the improvements in the North Esk River as contemplated by the Launceston Marine Board.

Your Committee desire to point out that when the improvements are completed there will be an increased depth of two or three feet of water on the Bar and at the wharves on the North Esk River at Launceston.

Your Committee, however, feel it their duty to call attention to the fact that steamers coming up the River Tamar from Melbourne, Sydney, or elsewhere, will derive but little benefit from the dredging and other improvements contemplated in the North Esk River at Launceston, as they will not be able to come up the River Tamar further than they do at present until that river is deepened by dredging (some three or four feet) at the points named by Mr. Napier Bell in his Report,—a work that would require a very large outlay of money in the first instance, with a considerable annual expenditure to keep the channels of the river navigable for steamers coming up or going down the river.

Your Committee are of opinion that, should Parliament deem it desirable to make more satisfactory arrangements for the arrival and departure of steamers with mails and passengers from Melbourne and other Intercolonial Ports, it would be far more beneficial to the public interests, and less costly, to extend the Launceston and Western Railway to deep water in the River Tamar below Rosevear's; this would enable large steamers to run between Melbourne and Launceston at all times of the tide, to the great benefit of the travelling public between Tasmania and the other Colonies, and with considerable advantage to the inhabitants of this Colony.

Your Committee have the honor to return the Bill herewith.

The Minutes of the Proceedings of the Committee are attached to this Report.

THOS. D. CHAPMAN, *Chairman.*

WHILST concurring in the general tenor of the above Report, I take exception to the sixth paragraph, which suggests the extension of the Launceston and Western Railway to Rosevear's for the purpose of facilitating the delivery of passengers and mails to Hobart, as I am of opinion that result could be obtained at much less cost to the country by making arrangements with the Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company to run tidal trains, as is done in other countries where the communication is affected by tidal rivers.

JOHN SCOTT.

## MEMBERS.

The PRESIDENT.		Mr. GRUBB.
Mr. MOORE.		Mr. SCOTT.
Mr. GELLIBRAND.		

## DAYS OF MEETING.

September 28, 29; October 3, 4.

## WITNESS EXAMINED.

The Hon. George Gilmore.

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 MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.
 

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1882.

The Committee met at 12 o'clock.

*Present.*—The President, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Gellibrand.

The President was appointed Chairman.

The Hon. George Gilmore was examined.

The Committee adjourned till to-morrow at 11 o'clock.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1882.

The Committee met at 11 o'clock.

*Present.*—The President (Chairman), Mr. Scott, Mr. Gellibrand, Mr. Grubb, Mr. Moore.

The Hon. George Gilmore further examined.

Mr. Gilmore withdraws.

The Committee deliberated.

The Committee adjourn till Tuesday next at 11 o'clock.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1882.

The Committee met at 11 o'clock.

*Present.*—The President (Chairman), Mr. Gellibrand, Mr. Scott, Mr. Moore.

The Chairman submits a draft Report, which is considered; and amendments are made thereto, and ordered to be printed.

The Committee adjourn till half-past 3 this day.

The Committee met at half-past 3 o'clock.

*Present.*—Mr. Chapman (Chairman), Mr. Gellibrand, Mr. Scott.

The Committee adjourned until 11 o'clock to-morrow, to consider the printed Report.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1882.

The Committee met at 11 o'clock.

*Present.*—The President (Chairman), Mr. Gellibrand, and Mr. Scott.

The draft Report, as submitted by the Chairman, was agreed to.

Mr. Scott hands in his reasons for taking exception to the sixth paragraph.

Mr. Scott to bring up the Report.

The Committee adjourn *sine die*.

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## EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1882.

*The Hon. GEORGE GILMORE, examined.*

1. *By the Chairman.*—Your name is George Gilmore, and you are Master Warden of the Launceston Marine Board? Yes.
2. Did you receive from the Government the Bill now before the Council for the improvement of the River Tamar? No.
3. Were any copies of that Bill forwarded officially to the Marine Board? Not that I am aware of.
4. When did you first see a copy of that Bill? Yesterday, about midday.
5. Have you seen Mr. Napier Bell's reports on the Ports and Harbours of this Colony? Yes.
6. I place in your hands a copy of Mr. Bell's Report, and call your attention to that portion of the plan of the Port of Launceston embraced within that portion of the North Esk River between the bridge over that river on the George Town Road and the old bar near the Town Point, near the junction of the North Esk with the River Tamar. Do you agree with the recommendations of Mr. Bell with reference to the port of Launceston? I do not altogether approve of them.
7. Will you point out to the Committee the points in which you differ? I do not agree with Mr. Bell's scheme suggesting the reclamation of 15 acres 3 roods opposite the Market Wharf.
8. Can you give us any reasons for that? I consider the deepening of the present channel of much more importance to the port from Town Point up to the bridge.
9. What other portions of the report do you take exception to? The present market wharf is in a good position for the trade, and instead of having it removed by filling up the water-courses for the reclamation of land, I would prefer the present channels being deepened and continued round into the South Esk and made suitable for the navigation of the coasting vessels.
10. Are there any other portions of that map you would like to speak on before proceeding to other portions of the report? I may state that the Marine Board are desirous of deepening the whole of the river to 17 feet along the wharfs. At high water vessels drawing 18 feet can get up to the bar off Town Point. The difficulty is to get up from thence to the wharfs.
11. What is the present depth of water at ordinary high tide along the wharf? From 14 feet to 16 feet.
12. You only contemplate dredging then about 3 feet? Yes.
13. Do you mean to deepen at the bar to the same depth? Yes. It is also contemplated to cut away a portion of the Town Point.
14. The whole of these improvements contemplated are included in the North Esk River? Yes. There is also some portion of the River Tamar, just below the Cattle Jetty, where the Marine Board contemplate dredging.
15. Which is only about half a mile below the Bar, is it not? Yes.
16. Calling your attention to the provisions of the Bill, you will see that they are limited to the expenditure of moneys for dredging and other improvements on the River Tamar, on which the Marine Board only contemplate at present expending some two or three thousand pounds, while the other expenditure, with the improvements in the North Esk, amount to probably some 25 or 30 thousand pounds? Yes, but we have arranged with the Government that this expenditure shall extend over four years.
17. *By Mr. Scott.*—Will it take the whole of the £30,000 to carry out the improvements that are now contemplated to be done by the Marine Board? Yes, with the cost of dredges, lighters, supervision, and labour.
18. *By the Chairman.*—Do you contemplate getting any other description of dredge beyond the Priestman's dredge you now have? We intend getting another Priestman's dredge, with which we shall have to get probably a dozen more lighters.
19. *By Mr. Scott.*—Do you not think that it would facilitate the work and enable you to carry it out much more rapidly to have a powerful ladder dredge? There is no doubt that if expense were not a matter of consideration, the style of dredge you name would be better and do the work in half the time.
20. Do you not think that at no very distant time it will be necessary to dredge the Tamar from the Cattle jetty below Nelson Shoals? No doubt it would improve the navigation of the river to some extent, but it must be understood that the Tamar is a tidal river, with a rise and fall of 10 feet, and should be navigated at tide time.
21. They have bold water at all times below Rosevear's? Yes, for vessels drawing 20 to 25 feet.
22. Do you not think, from your extended experience both as a master mariner for many years and as Master Warden of the Port, that it would be more desirable to at once dredge the river from Rosevear's to the wharfs? I think the expense would be so great to obtain 3 or 4 feet more water than there is at the present in the river that I could not recommend it. Even that would not make it navigable at all states of the tide for large steamers.
23. By large steamers you mean the present steamers travelling between Melbourne and Launceston? Yes, vessels of that size, or larger. In consequence of the strong tidal current on the ebb tides it would not be safe to navigate that portion of the Tamar at that state of the tide.
24. Then you cannot state that, no matter what expense may be incurred by dredging the Tamar, it would ever be a passenger river for large vessels at all times and tides? I think it is quite possible by an expenditure of money to do it, but it would be a very large amount.
25. On the last quarter of the ebb, Melbourne steamers come to the Town Point now, do they not? No.
26. What is the lowest tide at which they can come up? At half-flood, but it is not desirable that they should attempt it at half-ebb, though they do sometimes do it.
27. That is only in consequence of the strength of the tide? At ebb tide a vessel will not steer so near the ground; consequently is likely to get on shore.
28. Could you tell the Committee the depth of the water at low-water in the boat channel at Pig Island? Six or seven feet, at spring tides.

29. *By the Chairman.*—Can you inform the Committee of the draught of water of the T.S.N. Co.'s steamers now in the Melbourne trade? They usually draw from 12 feet to 13 feet 6 inches.

30. The new boat that is coming out, what will her draught be? I should imagine about 14 feet. The *Corinna* in the Sydney trade, when laden with coals, draws from 15 to 15 feet 6 inches.

31. *By Mr. Gellibrand.*—These boats can only come up at high water? They frequently come up two hours before high water.

32. That would give a depth of water at present of over 15 feet at high water? Yes.

33. *By the Chairman.*—The principal obstruction is at present at Pig Island, is it not? Yes; and at Nelson Shoals. The dredging is not for the steamers. There is plenty of water for the steamers, provided they come at a proper stage of the tide: it is required for deeply laden vessels.

The Committee adjourn till 11 o'clock to-morrow.

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1882.

*The Hon. GEORGE GILMORE further examined.*

34. *By the Chairman.*—Are there any other matters referred to in this Bill which you desire to bring before the Committee? There is nothing else that I can suggest.

35. *By Mr. Scott.*—Have the Marine Board at present the necessary staff to carry out the supervision of the contemplated improvements? No; they have not.

36. *By Mr. Moore.*—Have the Marine Board had any experience in the working of the Priestman dredge? We have simply tried the new dredge belonging to the Marine Board. It has answered very well, and filled three small lighters, of about 25 tons each, with silt.

37. At what cost per yard? That has not been calculated. It was only a trial.

38. Do you consider the results of that trial sufficient to justify you in the purchase of another Priestman dredge? If we had the means at our disposal, and the necessary appliances and lighters, I should say yes.

39. At what part of the river do the Marine Board contemplate emptying their lighters? The silt is being emptied at present at the other side of the Invalid Depôt. It is contemplated, when dredging is in full operation, to land it on the Swamp, just opposite the Queen's Wharf, between the Bridge over the North Esk River and Town Point.

40. That is on Crown land? On Crown land. It is contemplated to raise the land from three to four feet.

41. *By Mr. Grubb.*—Could not the silt be placed with greater advantage and at less expense at Cormiston Point, and thereby reclaim several hundred acres of land? That is a matter for consideration for a Civil Engineer. I consider the distance from the North Esk (about three miles) would be an objection.

42. *By the Chairman.*—Under the provisions of this Bill you are limited to dredging and other improvements in the River Tamar at Launceston, under estimates, plans, and specifications of the works proposed to be performed, as the Minister deems necessary: do you contemplate seeking authority for applying any of this money in the erection of new wharfs or landing-stages? The Marine Board has hitherto always made the wharfs, but in the event of the purchase of properties fronting on the North Esk near Sydney Place, a large expenditure will have to be made for a new public wharf, and it will be necessary for the Marine Board to raise funds for that purpose.

43. Is it the intention of the Marine Board to apply to the Government for authority to expend any of the funds provided by this Bill for the erection or repair of wharfs or landing-jetties? I believe it is not the intention of the Board to do so.

44. How do you contemplate raising the £10,000? From the revenues of the Board, extending over a period of four years.

45. Are the existing wharfs in Launceston in a good state of repair? In fair working order, but will soon require extensive repairs.

46. In the event of your securing the new property near Sydney Place, what do you estimate will be the probable cost of erecting the wharf there and the construction of the road? From £1000 to £1200.

47. Will not that absorb nearly the whole of the funds you will have available for the erection and repair of wharfs for the ensuing year? The Board will be prepared to spend that amount without trespassing too heavily on their funds, provided those new properties are purchased by the Government.

48. Do you still consider that, after providing the necessary funds for the wharfs you will have sufficient funds available from current revenue to meet the expenditure required as the Board's quota towards the dredging and other improvements for the ensuing year? Yes; I consider that from the improvement in the revenue of the Board during the last twelve months there will be no difficulty attending it.