

**REPORT OF NAVAL COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING A LINE OF MAIL STEAMSHIPS
TO THE WESTERN COAST OF AFRICA,
AND THENCE VIA THE MEDITERRANEAN TO
LONDON WITH AN APPENDIX ADDED BY THE
AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649339464

Report of Naval Committee on establishing a line of Mail Steamships to the Western Coast of Africa, and Thence via the Mediterranean to London with an appendix added by the American colonization society by Various

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VARIOUS

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WITH
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AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

WASHINGTON:
PRINTED BY GIDEON & CO.
1850.



The memorial of Judge Bryan was referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs, composed of Representatives from the following States :

Fred. P. Stanton, Tenn.

Thos. S. Boccock, Va.

Robert C. Schenck, Ohio.

Emile La Sere, La.

Hugh White, N. Y.

Elbridge Gerry, Me.

E. Carrington Cabell, Fla.

John McQueen, S. C.

Lewis C. Levin, Pa.

100
8-11-21

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the memorial of Joseph Bryan, of Alabama, for himself and his associates, George Nicholas Sanders and others, praying the establishment of a line of steamers from the United States to the coast of Africa, designed to promote the colonization of free persons of color, to suppress the African slave trade, to carry the mails, and to extend the commerce of the United States, beg leave to submit the following Report :

The proposition of the memorial involves an extension of that system, recently commenced by Congress, which has for its object the creation of a powerful steam navy, to be used in time of peace in carrying the mails, and in effecting great public objects, not to be attained by private enterprise without the aid of Congress. How far it may be desirable to extend this system will depend upon the double consideration of the present condition of our naval force, and the importance and feasibility of the ends to be accomplished by the measure. As to the first of these, the committee will present a brief statement of the facts material to a correct understanding of the comparative extent of our present steam navy.

For Cass, 1814, 12-10-35

In the report of Mr. Secretary Bancroft, made to the Senate on the 2d March, 1846, the total effective steam navy of Great Britain was stated, at that time, to consist of one hundred and ninety-nine vessels, of all classes; that of France numbered fifty-four; that of Russia, without the Caspian fleet, thirty-two; while the steam navy of the United States could boast of but six small vessels, and one in process of building; and of these one was for harbor defence, and another a steam-tug.

Since that time, however, Congress has provided for the building of four war steamers, and for the establishment of several lines of steamships engaged in carrying the mails, consisting of seventeen large vessels, suitable for war purposes, and at all times liable to be taken for the public service. Of these latter, nine will run between New York and European ports; five between New York and Chagres; and three between Panama and San Francisco.

Notwithstanding this increase in our force, it has by no means kept pace with that of other great commercial nations. The American Almanac for the present year estimates the steam navy of France at sixty-four steam vessels of war, besides a reserved force of ten steam frigates now ready, and six corvettes and six small vessels nearly ready. The French Government has also resolved to follow the example of England in establishing lines of steamers, built so as to be easily converted into ships of war, to be employed in commerce and for carrying

mails, but being at all times subject to the requisition of the Government.

England, also, has added largely to her steam navy, and has increased her lines of mail steamers, giving evidence that she, at least, considers this the best and cheapest mode of providing in time of peace for the exigences of war. On this subject the committee refer to the following facts, for which they are indebted to the remarks of the Hon. T. Butler King, of Georgia, made in the House of Representatives, February 19, 1848.

By act of Parliament, 7 William IV, chap. 3, all previous contracts entered into for the conveyance of the mails by sea were transferred to the Admiralty. In the year 1839, the idea was conceived that the vast expenditures required in naval armaments might be made subservient to the purposes of commerce in time of peace. Accordingly, a contract was entered into with Mr. Cunard and his associates, for the conveyance of the mails from Liverpool, via Halifax, to Boston, in five steamers of the first class, for £85,000, or about \$425,000 per annum. It was stipulated that they should be built under the supervision of the Admiralty, should be inspected on being received into the service, and certified to be capable in all respects of being converted into ships of war, and of carrying ordnance of the heaviest description. Various stipulations were entered into in this and other contracts of a similar character, which placed these ships under

the control of the Government ; thus, in fact, making them, to all intents and purposes, at the same time a part of the mercantile and military marine of the country.

In 1846, the Government enlarged the contract with Mr. Cunard and his associates, by adding four ships to run from Liverpool to New York, and increased the compensation to £145,000, or about \$725,000 per annum.

In the year 1840, a contract was made by the Admiralty with the Royal Mail Steamship Company, at £240,000 sterling, or \$1,200,000 per annum, for fourteen steamers to carry the mails from Southampton to the West Indies, the ports of Mexico on the Gulf, and to New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, and Charleston. These ships are of the first class, and are to conform in all respects, concerning size and adaptation to the purposes of war, to the conditions prescribed in the Cunard contracts. They are to make twenty-four voyages a year, leaving and returning to Southampton semi-monthly. Another contract has lately been entered into for two ships to run between Bermuda and New York. These lines employ twenty-five steamers of the largest and most efficient description.

In addition to the above, a contract was made, 1st January, 1845, with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company for a line of similar steamers, seven in number, from England to the East Indies and China, at £160,000 sterling, or

\$800,000 per annum. This line passes from Southampton, via Gibraltar and Malta, to Alexandria, in Egypt; thence the route continues overland to Suez, at the head of the Red Sea, from whence the steamers again start, touching at Aden, Bombay, and at Point de Galle, in the island of Ceylon, from whence they proceed to Singapore and Hong Kong. There is a branch line connecting with this, from Point de Galle to Calcutta, touching at Madras.

A contract was made, 1st July, 1846, for a Pacific line of British steamers, four in number, running from Valparaiso to Panama, touching at intermediate ports. This line connects overland, from Panama to Chagres, with the West India line.

Besides these, there were, in 1848, twelve more lines of Government steamers running between Great Britain and the continent of Europe; making a grand aggregate of one hundred and fifteen ocean steamships fitted for war purposes. Very recently the British Parliament has resolved to extend the mail steamship system to Australia.

The committee do not propose that our Government shall attempt to emulate this vast network of steam navigation, with which England has already encompassed the globe. But it is believed that the recent increase of our territory, on the Pacific and in the Gulf of Mexico, forms an additional reason for a considerable augmentation of our steam navy, whether by a direct addition to the navy proper, or