

**INQUIRY INTO THE OPINIONS
OF THE COMMERCIAL
CLASSES OF GREAT BRITAIN
ON THE SUEZ SHIP CANAL**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649063758

Inquiry into the Opinions of the Commercial Classes of Great Britain on the Suez Ship Canal by
Ferdinand de Lesseps

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FERDINAND DE LESSEPS

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BRITISH OPINIONS
ON THE
ISTHMUS OF SUEZ SHIP CANAL.

INQUIRY INTO THE OPINIONS
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COMMERCIAL CLASSES
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SUEZ SHIP CANAL

By FERDINAND DE LESSEPS.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN WEALE, 59, HOLBORN.

1857.

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OPINIONS
OF THE
COURT OF EAST INDIA DIRECTORS
AND
PENINSULAR AND ORIENTAL STEAM NAVIGATION
COMPANY.

Two years ago I visited England, and in a first publication laid before the public of this country the early draught of the project for effecting a communication between the Red Sea and Mediterranean by a Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez, for the execution of which I have obtained a concession from His Highness the Viceroy of Egypt. It was my object to learn how this great undertaking would be regarded by that nation whose vast possessions in the East, and ever-increasing commercial relations with the whole world, placed her foremost among those who would be affected by the important revolution which would thence result in the conditions of trade and navigation throughout the globe. As the highest authority that could be consulted in all that concerned the interests of the British possessions in India, I submitted the results of our preliminary studies to the Court of Directors of the East India Company; and as an excellent practical guide as to the immediate consequences of

the project on the existing mercantile traffic with the East, I referred them also to the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, whose vessels already pursue, in disjointed fragments, the course it is intended to render continuous and unbroken. The expression of opinion which I solicited in both cases was freely, and at once given, and I subjoin the letters in which it was conveyed, as here fitly finding their place, at the commencement of a record which presents the collected verdict of British commercial interests on the Isthmus of Suez Canal.

“East India House, 16th August, 1855.

“SIR,—I have received and laid before the Court of Directors of the East India Company your letter dated the 7th instant, and in conveying to you their acknowledgment for your work entitled ‘The Isthmus of Suez Question,’ I am commanded to inform you with reference to the important enterprise to which it relates, that the Court must always feel a deep interest in the success of any undertaking that would facilitate the means of communication between this country and India.

“I am, Sir,

“Your most obedient, humble Servant,

“J. C. MELVILL, Secretary.”

“Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.
Offices 122, Leadenhall-street, London,
15th August, 1855.

“SIR,—I have, by order of the Directors, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated 6th inst., and to express their best thanks for the copy of