

**MEMORIAL OF THE CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF
NEW-YORK, TO THE SENATE AND
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE UNITED STATES, PP. 3-75, 80**

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JR. STEVENS

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MEMORIAL
OF THE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
STATE OF NEW-YORK,
TO THE
SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE UNITED STATES.

PREPARED BY
JOHN AUSTIN STEVENS, JR., SECRETARY,
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION.

New-York:
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1864.

RESOLUTION OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

At a regular meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York, held 5th November, 1868, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That a Special Committee be appointed to make a thorough investigation of the subject of OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION, and of the continual depredations on commerce, with a request to report at a subsequent meeting.

From the Minutes of the Chamber.

JOHN AUSTIN STEVENS, JR.,

Secretary.

	PAGE
11. Partial Comparison of the Progression of the Commerce of the United States and of Great Britain,.....	85
Introductory Remarks,	85
Mexico, Comparison of Exports and Imports to and from Great Britain and the United States, 1853 to 1860,...	26
Central America, do. do. ..	37
West India Islands, do. do. ..	37
South America :	
I. Brazil, do. 1851 to 1860,...	39
II. Central Republics, do. 1853 to 1860,...	40
III. The West Coast, do. 1853 to 1860,...	41
IV. Northern South America, do. 1853 to 1860,...	42
South America, Recapitulation, do. do. ..	43
Total South American Trade, do. do. ..	45
The Isthmus Trade, do. do. ..	47
Sandwich Islands,.....	47
China,.....	48
12. Progression of Commerce of the United States with France and the Hanse Towns,.....	48
13. Prayer to Congress,.....	57

TABLE OF CONTENTS--APPENDIX.

TABLE.	PAGE
1. Mexico, comparisons of British and American Trade, 1853 to 1861,.....	56
2. Central America, do. do.	57
The West India Islands :	
3. 1. Cuba—Porto Rico, do. do.	58
4. 2. Hayti, do. do.	59
5. 3. Danish, Dutch, French, British, &c., &c., Islands, do. do.	60
South America :	
6. I. Brazil, do. do.	61
7. II. Central Republics, do. do.	61
8. 1. Argentine Republic, do. do.	62
2. Cisplatine Republic, do. do.	63
III. The West Coast :	
9. 1. Chili, do. do.	64
10. 2. Bolivia, do. do.	65
11. 3. Peru, do. do.	66
12. 4. Ecuador, do. do.	67
13. 5. New-Granada, do. do.	68
IV. Northern South America :	
14. 1. Venezuela, do. do.	69
15. 2. The Guianas, do. do.	70
16. The West Indies—Total Trade, do. do.	71
17. South America—Total Trade, do. do.	72
18. Southern American Countries, do. do.	73
19. Sandwich Islands, do. do.	74
20. China, do. do.	75
21. Comparisons of Trade of Great Britain and United States with all nations, 76	76
22. France and the Hanse Towns—Progression of American Trade,.....	77
23. Entries and Clearances of Steam-vessels of the United Kingdom, 1860,...	78
24. Steam Fleet of Peninsula and Oriental Steam Navigation Co., Jan., 1861, 79	79

MEMORIAL

OF THE

Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled :

May it please your Honorable Bodies :

THIS memorial of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York respectfully represents the imperative importance of some legislation on the part of Congress to foster and support the commerce of the United States. Whatever view may have been hitherto entertained as to the wisdom of special legislation to promote any particular class of national interests, the period for hesitation has surely passed. The large and growing debt of the United States, arising from the cheerful and willing loans of the people, in which the mercantile classes are as fully represented as any other, presents considerations of a wholly new character. In borrowing such large sums from the nation the government has assumed duties of a new class—the duty of rendering that burthen as light as possible to the patriotic people who have assumed it—and it will not certainly be claimed to be an improper or unwise exercise of the power granted to Congress, by the Constitution, to “regulate commerce,” if some additional debt be incurred to develop that branch of industry which the experience of all nations has shown to present the readiest and most equal method of meeting the expenses of government and interest on its obligations. In other words, Congress will not hesitate to lend to commerce some pecuniary aid, if it can be shown that such aid will develop the resources and add to the wealth of the nation, and at the same time increase the revenue of the government. It is not proposed in this memorial to show the decline in the commerce of the United States since the breaking out of the rebellion. A combination of causes has fortunately prevented that serious decadence which was looked for. In nothing, perhaps, have the immense resources of this nation been shown so much as in the maintenance of its export line, even when deducting from it the vast amount of the cotton crop. Nor

will more than distant allusion be made to the ravages which have been committed upon American tonnage by the piratical cruisers of the South, nor the amount of tonnage which has been changed from American to foreign flags be examined into. These are subjects of great importance in themselves, which the forthcoming reports of the Treasury Department on Commerce and Navigation for the years ending June 30, 1862 and 1863, will plainly elucidate; and any statement of their probable figures would be unwise and premature.

It is believed that when those reports shall be produced, facts shown to exist will be so striking, and their nature so alarming, that your honorable bodies will need no hint or prompting from without to take proper measures to correct the serious and growing evils.

Yet your honorable bodies will hold in mind that the notorious decay of our tonnage from the causes named, makes it of increased importance to adopt measures which, in the judgment of your petitioners, would have been necessary even had no rebellion, with its consequent evils, occurred.

The hope is not entertained that at the present time, while rebel cruisers endanger the safety of our vessels, and naturally divert from them the passenger trade, and the valuable cargoes which are the principal support of steam lines, oceanic lines will be immediately established, even with the aid which is sought from government; but as the rebellion wanes and the dawn of national prosperity again brightens, it is confidently believed that the energy of the people of the United States will be aroused to the renewal of the struggle for commercial supremacy, which it has for the time abandoned for duties of a more imperative and sterner class, and such timely legislation is asked as will encourage the effort.

It is proposed to show the effect of ocean steam communication upon the commerce of the United States and Great Britain—her chief commercial rival; the development of markets for domestic produce by the increased facilities which steam affords; the steady and gradual increase in the commerce of Great Britain over our own, even with the nations which are our nearest neighbors and natural allies, and to point out the methods by which our lost influence may be regained. A full series of tables accompanies the memorial, to which reference is asked, and only such partial comparisons, as are necessary to throw light on the subject, are included in the body of the memorial itself.

The examination of this subject will necessarily embrace some account of the rise and progress of ocean steam navigation, and will show that the power and wealth of nations is, in this century, subjected to a new measure, the measure of steam, and that the commerce of nations has increased or dwindled as they have availed of or neglected this great agent of civilization.

THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF STEAM NAVIGATION.

CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION.

The American system of ocean steam navigation dates from the year 1846.

For some years prior to this period, efforts had been made to establish lines of steamers, with the aid of Congress.

In 1841, Mr. T. BUTLER KING, of Georgia, at the extra session, made a report from the Committee on Naval Affairs, urging the passage of a bill for the establishment of a home squadron, which was passed, and appended to it was a resolution directing the Secretary of the Navy to advertise for proposals for the establishment of lines of mail steamers similar to the British lines, to run to some European ports, and also for a line from some of the Northern to some of the Southern ports of the United States.

By an act of Congress passed 3d March, 1845, the policy was inaugurated of contracting for the transportation of mails to foreign countries, under the direction of the Postmaster-General; all such contracts were required to be made with citizens of the United States, and the service to be performed by American vessels. In pursuance of this authority, the Postmaster-General advertised for proposals to carry the mails on various routes.

A contract was made with Mr. EDWARD MILLS, of New-York, to run a line of steamers from New-York to Bremen twice a month, touching at Cowes, with the privilege of going alternately to Havre, the compensation to be \$400,000 per annum; and if to Havre, \$350,000.

About the same period, Mr. E. K. COLLINS made his first proposition to run a line to Liverpool twice a month, for eight months, and once for the other four, for \$385,000.

In May, 1846, the subject was again brought forward by Mr. KING, in a report from the Committee on Naval Affairs, and in June of the same year a contract was made for the conveyance of the mails from New-York to Bremen in four first-class steamers.

In June, 1846, Mr. NILES, of Connecticut, introduced into the Senate the following resolution:

"The Postmaster-General is hereby authorized to apply twenty-five thousand dollars of the money appropriated for mail transportation for a line of mail steamers from the United States to Bremen, and a further sum of twenty-five thousand dollars for a line of mail steamers from the United States to Liverpool, in England; but no farther sums shall be diverted to any other objects than the transportation of the mail within the United States."

It was at this time that it was proposed in England to duplicate the Cunard line, and it was thought that the establishment of an American line would perhaps arrest the project, so little was the fixed policy of the British government understood at that period.