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## The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto, December 6, 1894.

### The Proposed Mission Steamer.

THE following from the *Presbyterian*, Sydney, is an important contribution to the discussion on the Steamer Fund:—

“Rev. Dr. John G. Paton, the famous New Hebrides missionary, has returned from a tour round the world, bringing with him the great sum of £25,000, which he has placed to the credit of the Foreign Mission fund of the Victorian Church. During his tour Dr. Paton visited Canada, the United States, Britain, and Ireland. Everywhere he addressed great meetings, which he so moved by the power of his pathetic pleading and stirring eloquence, that the people opened their hearts and purses, with the magnificent result above mentioned. The Victorian Church owes Dr. Paton a debt of gratitude, and we believe it will enthusiastically acknowledge the obligation.

Some years ago Dr. Paton, during a visit to the old country, collected a sum of £6000 to build a steamer for the exclusive use of the Mission. That sum has increased, by accumulation of interest and by donations received on this last tour, to about £9000. Besides this, Dr. Paton has got promises of annual subscriptions to the amount of about £1000 for the maintenance of the service. The rest of the money needed to keep the steamer running will have to be raised through the “Dayspring Fund.” The money in hand is about enough to build a vessel of 350 tons with an auxiliary screw. Before Dr. Paton left Britain he had the plans drawn and the specifications made out. As soon as the Victorian Committee gives its sanction, a cablegram will place the new “Dayspring” on the stocks.

The project of a mission steamer for the New Hebrides has long been in Dr. Paton's mind and is very near his heart. He has kept it constantly in view, and has pursued it with perseverance in spite of considerable opposition. On the ground that its missionary has collected the money to build the steamer, the Victorian Committee claims the right to control the money and to speak the decisive word as to the build-

ing of the vessel. The Dayspring Board, which is elected by the Mission Synod, may very naturally expect to be consulted. The Churches which through the Dayspring Fund will have to find the means to keep the steamer running, ought certainly to have the opportunity of saying whether they are prepared to raise the large additional sum that will be annually required. The Mission Synod, for the convenience of whose members the steamer would exist, has a paramount right to be heard on the policy of having a mission steamer. The Victorian Committee has 25,000 reasons for gratitude to Dr. Paton and for yielding to his ardent desire to see another “Dayspring” afloat on the Pacific. The Victorian Committee would, however, do wisely not to act hastily under the impulse of a generous feeling, but to delay a decision until the views of the other parties interested, especially of the Mission Synod, are ascertained.

The alternatives are either to build a mission steamer or to use the existing trading steamers. In order that all who are interested might intelligently form an opinion as to which of those alternatives is the best, we have obtained the opinion of a gentleman who is second to none in Sydney as an expert in matters nautical. His detailed and carefully worked-out statement is before us. An auxiliary steamer of 350 tons could make from four to five round voyages annually, calling at all the mission stations on the Islands. This, however, takes for granted that Sydney would be the head-quarters of the vessel. If the head-quarters were at Melbourne, not more than four voyages could be accomplished yearly. The annual cost of maintaining the steamer would be £3200. We asked our expert friend to state the working expenses at the very lowest figure possible. His answer is £3200, and this sum does not include supplies for missionaries, native teacher, etc., while on board. The addition of this last item would increase the annual cost by several hundred pounds.

To make assurance doubly sure, we have got another opinion as to the annual cost of the proposed steamer. This opinion comes from the manager of one of the great steamship companies, who has made the calculations in detail, and brings out this result: “The cost of running a 350-ton steamer from Sydney around the islands would be, at a moderate estimate, about £5500 per annum. This amount would include wages, victualling, coaling, engine and deck stores, insurance (on £10,000) and port charges, but nothing for repairs or docking, nor any allowance for depreciation or interest on the vessel's cost. We generally reckon 10 per cent. per annum for depreciation on our vessels.” Considering that this is the opinion of a gentleman who has at command a large staff of experts, whose daily business it is to make such calculations, we are inclined to