

It is mainly a financial question; but as the citizens of Bristol are the owners of the docks it is natural that they should desire that the business in which they are engaged should be managed on the same lines as any other important business. Those who are not prepared to keep pace with the times must be content with an inferior position, and there are no reasons why such a feeble policy should be pursued in Bristol. The fundamental works have been prepared, and only require completion. There is no question now as to the choice of a site for a dock; nor does the choice lie between the construction of a dock and the dockisation of the river. These questions have been settled; and what remains to be done is to utilise the works already in existence, and adapt them for the traffic it is desired to attract. If the improvements indicated in the resolutions of the Chamber of Commerce were carried out the port would be able to offer accommodation having very special advantages. Bristol is specially adapted for what may be termed the auxiliary traffic, having excellent warehouses, cattle lairs, cold stores, and it also has the nucleus of a very valuable Canadian trade, both as regards imports and exports. The future really rests with the Docks Committee, and as this body has of late shown something of the old Bristol spirit of enterprise, it may reasonably be hoped that we are approaching the time when the accommodation for the very large steamers will be undertaken.

The superior advantages Bristol offers to make a scheme for the proposed fast Atlantic service from this port both practicable and profitable are numerous. As a mail station, the port of Bristol has great advantages. As such, it is a more convenient centre for mails to and from Canada, United States and West Indies than any other great port. The principal object in view, which has first to be taken into consideration, is the saving of time, and to this end Bristol stands foremost of all other ports in the United Kingdom. For instance, the mails and passengers could leave London and be on board steamer at Avonmouth ready for sea in less than three hours, and as there is no bar to pass, the steamer could proceed direct to Halifax, Canada, *via* Queenstown. Thus the time saved by shipping the mails at Avonmouth as compared with Liverpool and other ports is enormous, and not only has it this advantage, but the directness of the route in comparison with other ports can easily be seen by a glance at the map, as it is almost in a straight line from London, *via* Bristol, Avonmouth and Queenstown to Halifax.

A fast line of steamers running direct from Bristol to Halifax would make a difference of a couple of days at the latter port, from London, and in connection with the Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific Railway, the mails could be delivered in still another day, making in all three clear days in British Columbia and the North-West. All that we need to start the traffic is a low water pier, approachable at all states of the tide, and an extended lock at Avonmouth Dock.

The average speed of the first Atlantic steamer, "The Great Western" (which was made and sent out from Bristol) on her first voyage, was a trifle over eight miles an hour; the "City of Paris," with her fifty-four furnaces and thirteen miles of boiler tubes, during an Atlantic passage in May last was twenty-four miles per hour. From these facts, some important conclusions may be drawn. Speed is now regarded as of first-class importance. Bristol is nearer to Halifax or New York than any other port in the Kingdom; it is nearer to the central and southern markets of England than either Liverpool or Milford. The Welsh port can hardly hope to be more than a port of call, and at the best the port of call is a clumsy arrangement, as it delays the steamer when she is on her voyage. Without holding out any hopes that are not likely to be realized, it may be fairly claimed that, with an extended lock and a low water pier at Avonmouth, Bristol would have advantages that neither Liverpool nor Milford can offer. Liverpool is a tidal port; Milford cannot economically distribute cargoes. The Docks Committee cannot be wrong in making the provision requisite for the accommodation of the new traffic. It ought to have been provided long ago, but it is never too late to mend; and it is fortunate that the changes required to place the port in a front position are not so extensive as to lead to the conclusion that they are beyond the reach of moderate enterprise.

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