

LETTER FROM THE NEW HEBRIDES.

THE NEW "DAYSRING."

BY REV. H. A. ROBERTSON, OUR MISSIONARY ON
ERROMANGA.

Sydney, Australia, 18th Jan., 1896.

DEAR BRO. SCOTT:—We arrived here from the Islands, 18th Dec., just a month ago, and expect to return by the "Dayspring" in April, as the Dayspring Board have agreed, not to accept her as their mission vessel, but to engage her for two trips, pending the decision of the Mission Synod in May.

We came by the S. S. "Katoomba," of the Australian New Hebrides Co., at present running between Sydney, the New Hebrides, and Noumea, and connecting regularly with the inter-island boat which runs monthly around the New Hebrides group.

Owing to the great willingness of the S. S. company to oblige every missionary, their large steamer, a fine vessel of 1,100 tons, kindly called for us at Dillon's Bay as they were passing, to save us going round the group in the inter-island boat, and six days later we arrived in Sydney.

All this is a great change from the old "Dayspring" days, and if I am not very much mistaken, very different from what the new steamer "Dayspring" will ever be able to do either in accommodation, or in comfort and speed.

Oh what a wholesale jumble this steamer "Dayspring" has been! And how, against order, justice, common brotherly fairness, and economy to the various Churches interested in our New Hebrides Mission, and oft-repeated objections, and constant doubt, and clear and decided disapproval, this thing has been literally forced upon the Mission and the Churches interested; and all, through the haste and rashness of the Victorian F. M. Com., and this, too, in the absence of the approval of the Mission Synod and Dayspring Board.

Had not the vessel been almost finished when the matter first came before the Mission Synod, the latter would have passed such a resolution that no Church would have persisted in going forward with such a work.

I trust that it is not yet too late, after the Mission Synod meets in May, for the Churches to consider the whole question, sell the craft, and get our maritime work performed by the Australian N. H. Co., as during the past few years.

Feb. 6, '96.

The "Dayspring" has arrived. She is very small, only 160 tons, and has less space for passengers and cargo than the old "Dayspring." She is a poor successor to the old sailing "Dayspring," which was built 23 years ago here, and although our Mission was small to what it now is, the old "Dayspring" would not even then have been built so small, but she was the only suitable one we could get ready built and cheap.

The present one (not yet and I hope never to

be our regular mission vessel) would suit well for an inter-island mission steamer, but she would be too expensive for that work alone, as we would still require to have the ocean service performed by some company. And to do all that, keeping a private craft of our own at a shameful cost for our little mission, and pay a company for extra work, would be simply a sinful waste of the Lord's money.

If, then, the "Dayspring" cannot, and she cannot, do all the work, inter-island and ocean, as we have been getting it done by the A. N. H. Co. steamers, and with equal comfort to the mission families; and if, besides all her weak service,—not one trip to Sydney for every three or four of the A. N. H. Co.,—she will cost from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year more than the present service, who, with a reasonable soul in him, would advocate such a state of things and support this—craze.

I do trust our Canadian Church through her F. M. Com., will disapprove of this N. H. mission steamer at your June Assembly.

Another Rev. J. D. Landels, missionary to Opinion. Malekula, New Hebrides, who has seen the new "Dayspring" in Melbourne, writes, quoted in the Australian *Presbyterian*, the following:—

"I went on board desiring to be satisfied, if at all possible. But, alas! I am more disappointed than I expected to be. To me the accommodation is miserable. The large hall, dining saloon, and sixteen berths, are one compartment; the additional berth accommodation up to the number stated, is to be had by expelling the officers' crew, and teachers, from their accommodation."

Rev. H. A. Robertson, also forwards a letter which he received from Mr. Landels:

DEAR MR. ROBERTSON:—I am positively ashamed of the craft, and of the Church or individual which would try to cram missionaries' wives and children into such a box. Were we all single, we might, perhaps, put up with any discomfort, or were we likely to use the vessel as seldom as Dr. P.—, we might, if so disposed, disregard the comfort of others; but when we have to use it with our families, I consider it criminal to compel us to it, now that there is such an efficient service at work in the Islands.

Results of the According to the above New "Dayspring," statements, and the extract in another column with regard to French occupation, the results of accepting the new "Dayspring" as the Mission vessel would be fourfold:

1. The missionaries would have very inferior accommodation, and very little room for freight.
2. They would have mails and supplies, every three or four months, instead of monthly, as at present.
3. This service, every three or four months, would cost from \$15,000 to \$20,000 annually, instead of the \$9,000 which the monthly service cost last year.
4. There is a possibility that the mercantile service would be withdrawn, if the Mission work be taken from it, and then French influence will become dominant, and the group perhaps in time be a French penal colony, and the Mission be ruined.

The RECORD ventured to hint some of these things two years ago.