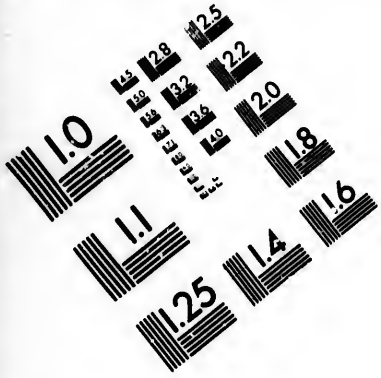

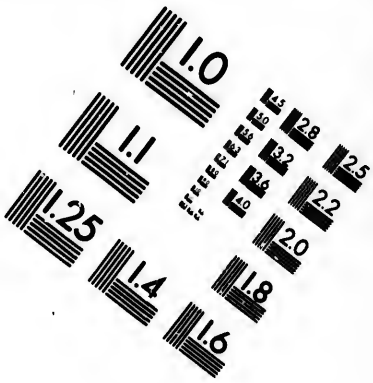

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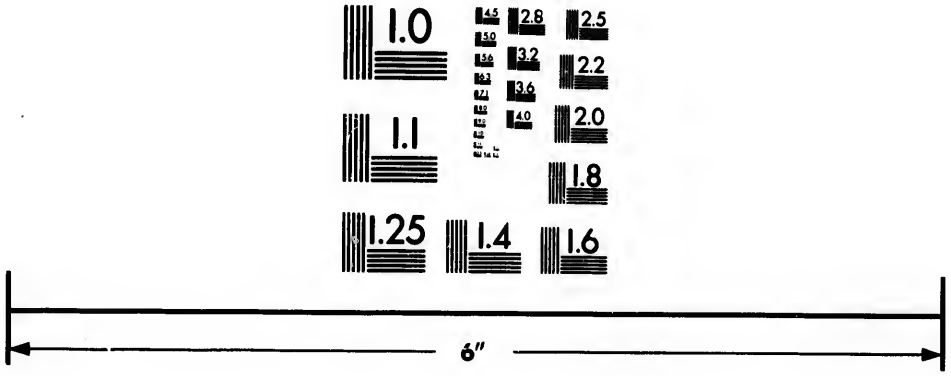

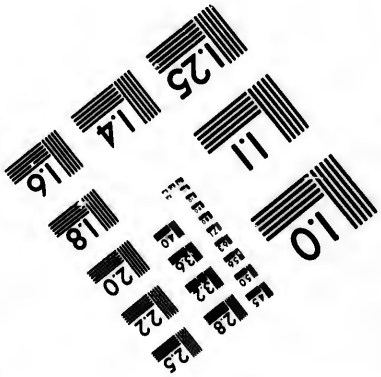

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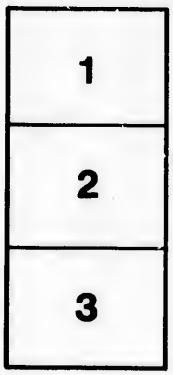

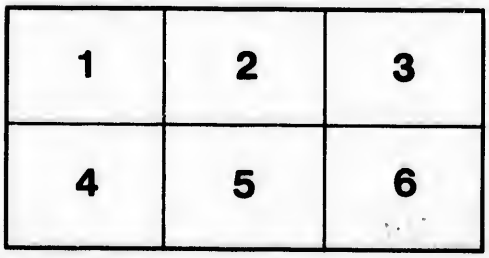

TRANSATLANTIC PACKET STATION.

ELECTRIC AND POSTAL

ATLANTIC TRUNK-FERRY,

AND

THE COLONIZATION THEREBY

OF

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

LONDON:
TRELAWNEY SAUNDERS, 6, CHARING CROSS;
AND HODGES AND SMITH, DUBLIN.

1851.

TRANSATLANTIC PACKET STATION.

THE Commissioners appointed by Government to report on this subject have, in their search for information, circulated a number of queries, but from the manner in which various points are involved in each other, they do not admit of direct *seriatim* reply. They also contain some irrelevant matter, especially with reference to the conveyance of goods. The inquiry does not appear to be sufficiently concentrated upon the subject under investigation, which subject is the determination of a *Packet* Station; and although this inquiry will legitimately and necessarily involve digression into several collateral matters, the conveyance of goods is clearly unconnected with it.

The conveyance of goods is an affair for producers, and consumers, and shipowners, to arrange for themselves. It will seldom happen that the best Packet Station shall be found to be the medium whereby goods can be sent profitably to market; but it is an affair with which the public, and consequently the Packet Station Commissioners, have no concern, and need have no solicitude.

According to Dr. Johnson, a packet means a post-ship, not a sea-wagon; and all that the public avowedly interfere in is the transmission of *intelligence* by Packets, or post-ships, which cannot undertake the office of sea-wagons, without detriment to their efficient performance of their primary duty.

The Dover and Calais Packet Stations, or the Holyhead and Kingstown Packet Stations, are not selected and appointed with reference to the conveyance of eggs, butter, silks, or satins; and neither must trans-Atlantic Packet Stations be selected and arranged with reference to the conveyance of laines and linens, notwithstanding the jumbled ideas of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, and many other such bodies, on the subject.

The Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, for example, in their memorial against the establishment of an Irish trans-Atlantic Packet Station, allege that it would have the effect of "throwing by far the largest portion of passengers and goods traffic into the hands of the Americans direct from Liverpool." Perhaps it would—but if artificial arrangements are desirable for averting this anticipation of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, a side wind or dodge is not the proper weapon. Let it be openly considered and discussed whether an undisguised, straightforward new Navigation Law, with discriminating duties, or bounties, against foreigners, calculated to have the desired effect of giving a heavy blow and great discouragement to American steamers in the trade with England, ought or ought not to be enacted; but, if this be sought for, let it be done aboveboard on its merits, instead of the real, pure, Packet Station question and subsidies being obscured and mystified by the dodge of making them a stalking-horse for cargo bounties to select squadrons of British mercantile steamers. If shippers of goods and shipowners be left to themselves, without any paralyzing influence of this kind, the sea will soon swarm with mercantile sea-wagons,

with auxiliary screw power, by which goods will be conveyed as required from the sources of their production to New York, or wherever they may be in demand.

That an open discussion will quash the idea of bounties being given to cargo steamers there cannot be a doubt, and the only incidental employment of mail steamers deserving any degree of public support will be found to be the conveyance of emigrants and their connections, and other passengers, between the mother country and *the British Colonies.*

It will be found that the most perfect system for conveyance of intelligence between the Old World and the New can be most harmoniously combined with the economical promotion of an enormously improved system of emigration, affording what has generally been deemed an unattainable desideratum in regard to that object.

An extract from a speech of the late Sir Robert Peel, on the introduction of the Irish Poor Law Bill in the House of Commons, on 13th of February, 1837, will serve to shew how he could not have failed to appreciate what will in the sequel of this paper be shewn to be now attainable. Sir Robert Peel, in the speech alluded to, said :—"The hon. and learned Member for Dublin has asked why the Government, in the case of Ireland, do not follow the example of the United States? 'See,' says the hon. and learned gentleman, 'how widely extensive, and wonderfully beneficial, is the system of emigration acted upon in the United States of America.' No doubt many and great benefits have resulted from the system in that country; but it must never be forgotten

that the question of emigration here is vastly different to what it is in America. There, the emigration consists only of a removal from one part of a great continent to another; here, no emigration can take place except by a long passage over sea, attended with many expenses, much inconvenience, and the depressing notion of a complete separation and alienation from one's fathers. All these afford, in England and Ireland, obstructions to extensive emigration—obstructions not known in the United States."

Now it fortunately happens that the most perfect trans-Atlantic Packet system that can be devised for the transmission of intelligence, at a speed which will leave the Cunard pretensions as immeasurably in the back ground as they left their sailing predecessors, can be combined with affording the means of personal intercourse, to and fro, to a vast extent, at so small a cost per head as entirely to dissipate *all* these drawbacks, pictured by Sir Robert Peel, to emigration in connection with the British North American Colonies, and bring those undervalued provinces and the United Kingdom into the same practical contiguity with each other, as subsists between the different states of the American Union—commencing a new era in colonization and the progress of the British trans-Atlantic possessions. Alienation, and final separation of relatives, will cease to be a necessary adjunct of emigration.

Although cargoes cannot be carried cheaply at high speed, the case is radically different with passengers, provided that the passengers are sufficient in number to occupy large vessels; for, the weight of passengers being

inappreciable, their carriage does not, like goods, necessarily preclude the use of fast steamers for their conveyance; and although the absolute cost of a large steamer, going at a high speed, must unavoidably be great, if measured annually, such steamer can perform so many voyages in a year, and can carry so many people each time, that the cost per passenger need not be by any means so heavy as might be anticipated.

A large scale being essential in a steam-vessel towards obtaining high speed, the arrangements necessary for celerity in the transmission of intelligence, and the arrangements for accomplishing the grand national anti-Malthusian desideratum of making British America and British Europe practically one country, become thus identical. Not merely the conveyance of emigrants, but unlimited personal intercourse to and fro, of all classes, will thus exist;—there would be no gulf between those who go and those who stay behind, with its depressing notions; and emigration, such as has been longed for, but feared to be unattainable, could then go on.

It remains to submit a scheme and estimate for such a line of Colonization Packets as ought to be established between the West of Ireland and Halifax. So great are the advantages possessed by steamers on a large scale over smaller vessels, *cæteris paribus*, that concentration at one *trunk*-ferry is dictated. The expense and probable employment of the available accommodation of the ships, is the only limitation to their size. Upon the whole, it would probably be found that vessels of 2,000 to 2,500 tons, and 800 to 1,000 horse power, would for some time to come be found the most suitable size. Vessels of this

size, if specially constructed for the conveyance of intelligence and passengers for the length of run between Ireland and Nova Scotia, can be made to maintain an average speed of 15 knots, for that distance, thus performing the passage in six days. They would never make a tedious passage. In this latter circumstance would be one of their great merits. Such gales as would retard the ill-constructed Cunard vessels several days, would be scarcely felt by these contemplated vessels; and if their passage ever extended to eight days, it must be under such exceptionally adverse weather as might extend a Cunard passage to 15 days.

That celebrated naval architect, Mr. Oliver W. Lang, of Her Majesty's Dockyard, Chatham, has, at my suggestion, in concert with Mr. Penn, the eminent marine engineer, of Greenwich, (known as the constructor of the best engines in the Royal Navy, and elsewhere,) designed a vessel calculated for this service. All the information to be derived from this design will be at the service of the Packet Station Commissioners, and at the service of other parties desirous of promoting the object in a *bonâ fide* manner.

As regards the cost of a combined Post Office, Electric and Colonization intercourse by means of such vessels, it would probably be as follows. It may be assumed that the service required would embrace a weekly mail each way during eight months of the year, and a fortnightly mail during the four winter months. This would be 88 passages per annum, and, making allowance for contingencies and ships being sometimes under repair, it could be sustained by five vessels. (If five vessels were in uninterrupted work, they could perform together 130

passages annually, and it may be considered that in practice they could easily fulfil the required duty of 88 passages.)

The cost of the five ships would be	£500,000
The annual expense of 88 passages would be—	
Coals	£80,000
Wages, Victuals, Sundries, exclusive of Steward's department	50,000
Insurance, Interest, Repairs, &c.; Depreciation 25 per cent.	125,000
Total Annual Cost of 88 Passages .	£255,000

Though round numbers are here given, the figures are rounded off on the safe side, and there need be no distrust of the estimates on that ground.

In return for this gross annual sum, there would be derived the performance of the Post Office services in a transcendent manner,—the Electric service, that is to say, the most rapid interchange of messages and intelligence between the extremities of the electric systems of the two hemispheres,—and the conveyance of a vast mass of passengers to and fro, the value of which it would be impossible to estimate with pretensions to accuracy. Towards enabling others to estimate its value it may be stated, that each vessel performing these 88 passages would have the elements of accommodation to the extent of 11,000 superficial feet of cabin floor; and that, according to the Passenger Act, one adult passenger is allowed to 10 superficial feet. As the Passenger Act regulations are framed with reference to sailing vessels, which are subject to very tedious voyages, it is clear that a modification of this Act might safely be made, so as to

allow steam-vessels occupying only a week at sea to take a much larger number of passengers in proportion to their space; but in the following calculation no credit will be taken for such modification.

Suppose then that the 11,000 superficial feet of cabin floor be allotted thus, viz:—

2,500 feet to 100 cabin passengers, at 25 feet each passenger.
3,000 feet to 200 intermediate class passengers, at 15 feet each passenger.
5,500 feet to 550 steerage passengers, at 10 feet each passenger.

11,000 feet.

Supposing the rates of passage-money to be £10 for each cabin passenger, £5 for each intermediate passenger, and £2 for each steerage passenger—and suppose the vessels to be full on each of their outward voyages, and to have only 100 cabin passengers, 100 intermediate, and 100 steerage passengers on each homeward voyage,—

The annual passage-money would amount to . .	£211,200
The gross annual cost of the line, as has been estimated above, being.	255,000
Leaves as a charge against the Post Office	£43,800

The cost of passengers' provisions is not included in the above rates fpassage-money, but it would be a trifle—not more than 6*s.* a day per cabin passenger, 2*s.* 6*d.* a day for intermediate, and 1*s.* a day for steerage passengers.

It is not pretended that the foregoing estimate of the number of passengers should prove exactly correct. The number that may be expected is a matter of opinion,

but looking at the existing number constantly going by sailing vessels, there are few people who will not admit that the foregoing estimate, considering the low fares assumed, is a very moderate one. Any one, however, can modify it according to his own judgment of probability. It will be more easy to magnify it than to diminish it.

The traffic of passengers at this European and American Ferry will never attain its due expansion, however, unless the Halifax and Quebec, and Halifax and Portland Railways be undertaken; but, on their completion, the traffic would be ten times as great as the above estimate, and a very much larger class of steam-vessels would then be required.

As regards the indirect prospective economy to the Post Office that would arise from this trans-Atlantic Trunk Ferry being perfected, it is to be observed, that the West Indies would be more speedily reached by this line, with an offshoot from Halifax, than by the Royal West India Mail route; and here there would be the elements of a future saving of public expense on that line, to the extent of, at least £150,000 per annum. It is also to be observed, that with the proposed vessels in operation by the British Government upon this ferry, the whole, entire trans-Atlantic postage would be received by the British Post Office, to the complete exclusion of the United States Mail Steamers, which on the voyage from New York to England could not approach in speed vessels adapted to the shorter ferry from Halifax. This point cannot be too forcibly insisted on.

It is particularly to be hoped that the design of a modern steam-vessel suited to this ferry, as submitted by

Mr. Lang and Mr. Penn to the Commissioners, may be scrutinized, and this branch of the subject probed.

It ought not to be quashed by the incredulity of ignorance, *or the pooh-poohs of interested parties*, under whose withering influence British talent and superiority is at present hid under a bushel. It suits some parties to crush genius with their deadly monopolist paw; and it is amazing with what voluntary ignorance and tameness the public submit, and are content with the undeserved *eclat* of the Cunard Company. Their outrageous efforts to hold back the advancing wave of science must be shewn to be as futile as was Canute's sceptre to turn back the waves of the sea.

ROBERT M^cCALMONT.

30, Eaton Square, London,
January 1851.