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# Steam-vessel for use of civil government of Alaska.

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STEAM-VESSEL FOR USE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT OF  
ALASKA.

APRIL 2, 1890.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE, from the Committee on Commerce, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany S. 1739.]

The Committee on Commerce, to which was referred the bill (S. 1739) providing a steam-vessel for the use of the civil government of Alaska, having duly considered the same, report said bill with the following amendment: strike out from lines four and five the words "from one hundred to two hundred tons capacity" and insert in lieu thereof the words "not less than one hundred tons capacity," and when so amended the committee recommends that the bill do pass.

The urgent need for this legislation will appear from the Senate report upon this bill, which the committee adopts, and still further from certain communications from the Secretary of the Interior, the collector of the port of Sitka, and the Governor of Alaska, which are also made a part of this report.

[Senate Report No. 287. Fifty-first Congress, first session.]

Mr. MANDERSON, from the Committee on Territories, submitted the following report to accompany bill S. 1739:

The Committee on Territories, to whom was referred bill (S. 1739) providing for a steam-vessel for the use of the civil government of Alaska, have given the matter full consideration and brought the bill back with a recommendation that it pass.

Reference to Executive Document No. 93 of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-first Congress, first session, being a letter from the Acting Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, with accompanying papers, an estimate from the Secretary of the Interior for appropriation for the purchase and maintenance of a steam-vessel for the use of the civil authorities of Alaska, shows full and abundant reason why this bill should pass.

The Territory of Alaska is of such vast extent, and there is such a great extent of sea-line consequent on the innumerable inlets, islands, and peninsulas, that a vessel of the character provided for is indispensably necessary for the good government of the people of Alaska. Without it the civil authorities of that outlying province are absolutely unable to enforce the existing law.

The following letter has been received from the Secretary of the Interior, and constitutes a further showing of the necessity of the passage of the bill:

## 2 STEAM-VESSEL FOR USE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT OF ALASKA.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, January 30, 1890.*

SIR: I have the honor to furnish, in addition to the inclosed communication from Governor Lyman E. Knapp, of Alaska, and others, what information I have at my command relative to the need of the civil government of Alaska for a small steam-vessel. In a communication addressed to this Department August 6, 1889, Governor Knapp said:

"The situation is this: Southeastern Alaska consists of something more than eleven hundred islands, containing over 5,000 square miles of land, together with a deeply indented shore-line of mainland of more than 400 miles, among which islands and along the shore-line are innumerable ship passages. In this territory (southeastern Alaska) are twenty-six native villages and a large number of white settlements, canneries, mines, mills, and other enterprises.

"There are no wagon roads, mails, telegraphs, or other means of communication, except by boat. The Pacific Coast Steam-ship Company's line carries mails and passengers and freights fortnightly from Fort Townsend to Sitka, touching at only five or six places. There is no regular communication with the other villages. The lives and property of those engaged in business in these out of the way places are to a considerable extent subject to the caprices of partially civilized natives, who know their power and opportunity, and who, when inflamed by intoxicating liquors, are certainly dangerous in the extreme. Ordinarily they are a very peaceable people. But there are bad tempers and rough characters among them, as well as among many civilized people. Besides, their medicine-men ('Shamans') do not hesitate to appeal to their superstitions and arouse their evil passions on occasions. Where they can be readily reached the fear of punishment prevents serious damage ordinarily, but in the remoter settlements crime and ravage and bloodshed often hold high carnival."

In a letter to this Department of date August 30, 1889, the Secretary of War says: "I had quite a talk the other day with Dr. McIntire, who is the superintendent of the Alaska Seal Company. He has been in the service of that company for many years, and although spending most of his time on the seal islands, has traversed the Territory and is very well acquainted with the whole situation. I had not received this letter when I saw Dr. McIntire, but I was asking him about the necessity of a small military force in Alaska.

"His reply was directly in the line of Governor Knapp's suggestion, that a boat would be much more useful than a military force. If there was a boat patrolling the waters there would be little danger of trouble, while a military force would be only at one or two points, and with no means of transportation might, and probably would, be of little use."

In another letter of December 21, 1889, the Secretary of War says:

"I have given a great deal of attention to the situation in Alaska on account of the numerous applications that have been made to this Department to send a military force there; have consulted with Senator Manderson and others who have been there the past summer, and Senator Manderson has given the matter special attention on account of his interest as one of the Committee on Military Affairs. It seems to me that something like Governor Knapp's plan is the very best possible one. I think it the better plan to have the whole matter under your Department than to have divided jurisdiction. With the vessel and some little militia and police, or similar organization, I do not believe there would be any occasion for an army detachment there. The governor's arrangement will be very much more useful and provide for every contingency much better than any other plan that has been suggested."

The late Governor A. P. Swineford, in his report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1888, in discussing the necessities for enlarged mail facilities for Alaska, says:

"Unless such routes are established, particularly the one to the westward from Sitka, a vessel for the transportation of officials, always at their command, will be absolutely indispensable to an extension of the civil authority over any part of the Territory save the southeastern section, which embraces less than one-twentieth of its nearly, if not more than, 600,000 square miles."

Governor Knapp, in his report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1889, says:

"The judge and district attorney, whose experience and observation during their term of office render their opinions of especial value, are emphatic in their declarations that the greater hindrance to the rapid dispatch of the business of the court and the administration of justice is the inadequacy of the means of transportation and the great expense and difficulty of obtaining competent jurors. There ought to be provision for transporting the court officials, prisoners, witnesses, and jurors to and from the place of holding court. This is essential to the administration of the laws in Alaska. There are a great number of native villages situated at a distance from the mail-steamer routes, with no access to them except by canoe. In many instances it has been impossible to serve processes for the want of a light-draught vessel within the absolute and immediate control of the civil government, without the embarrass-

ment and uncertainty of depending upon the courtesy and convenience of those acting under the orders of another Department of the Government than the one upon which the responsibility rests. A vessel of 100 tons capacity, thoroughly built and sea-worthy, with a wooden hull, filled with first-class machinery, adapted to our inland channels, with accommodations for twenty to twenty-five passengers, carrying one or two 3-inch-bore breech-loading guns and perhaps a Gatling gun, would probably serve all ordinary purposes of the civil government when there is no unusual excitement or trouble."

In view, therefore, of the immensity of the Territory of Alaska, the impossibility of land communication, the great extent of the sea line consequent on the innumerable inlets, islands, and peninsulas, and of the contiguity of the settlements to the water-ways of that distant region, I regard a vessel of the character provided for in Senate bill 1739, for the use of the civil authorities of the Territory, as indispensably necessary to the well-being and good government of the people of Alaska, and I earnestly recommend that said bill become a law.

In this connection I would refer to my estimate for this purpose, with accompanying documents and exhibits, printed Ex. Doc. No. 93, Fifty-first Congress, first session.

Very respectfully,

J. W. NOBLE,  
*Secretary.*

Hon. ORVILLE H. PLATT,  
*Chairman Committee on Territories, United States Senate.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, March 20, 1890.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit copies of two letters from the governor of Alaska and also copy of a letter from Mr. Max Pracht, collector of customs at Sitka, Alaska, in reference to the purchase of a ship for the use of the civil authorities in Alaska, which, according to representations, is a good vessel suitable to the needs of Alaska and can be purchased at about half first cost.

Senate bill No. 1739, authorizing the purchase or construction of a ship for said service limits the capacity to between "one and two hundred tons." The ship referred to seems to be over 200 tons capacity, and I would respectfully suggest that it might be well to amend the bill so as to read "not less than one hundred tons capacity," so that if, upon proper inquiry, it should be thought desirable to purchase this ship this Department will have authority to do so.

Very respectfully,

JOHN W. NOBLE,  
*Secretary.*

Hon. ORVILLE H. PLATT,  
*Chairman Committee on Territories, U. S. Senate.*

JUNEAU, ALASKA, *January, 24, 1890.*

SIR: Apropos of the proposition coming before Congress for a boat, and expecting that it will come in the form of an authorization to you to purchase one, I have the honor to report the receipt of a letter from Lieut-Commander Chas. H. Stockton, U. S. Navy, now at Mare Island Navy-Yard with the *Thetis*, in which he says: "I happened to have a talk with Mr. Knowles concerning a steam-vessel, and he told me of a steamer, new and of wood, of nearly 300 tons, with state-rooms numbering twelve, and capacity for two months' steaming and for two-hundred steerage passengers. This vessel, named the *Dublean*, could be got for less than \$50,000 so the estimates given for cost of construction are well inside the work. If you desire to follow up the suggestions of this vessel, Mr. Knowles would doubtless be pleased to communicate with you upon the subject."

From letters received from Senators and members of recent date I judge that we have some chance of securing this much-needed addition to our facilities for efficient government, and the purchase of a vessel would give it to us much sooner than construction.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LYMAN E. KNAPP,  
*Governor of Alaska.*

Hon. J. W. NOBLE,  
*Secretary of the Interior.*

CUSTOM-HOUSE, SITKA, ALASKA, COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, 1  
February 24, 1890

SIR: It is evident that the petition of the Territorial officials for a steamer to be used for purposes of internal communication, etc., will have proper attention in Congress, which to my mind means that the Senate bill No. 1739, introduced by Senator Manderson, and House bill No. 5609, introduced by Representative Grout, will become a law, and the vessel provided in the manner indicated.

Having in view the extreme necessity which exists for such a vessel, and the delays incident to the preparation of plans, building, and equipment, which to my mind would keep us without one for a year more at least (after the passage of the act and appropriation), I would suggest that the clause permitting the purchase of a suitable vessel be emphatically indorsed, especially because of the fact that a vessel in all respects suitable for the purpose and quite new is to be had, which vessel, though somewhat larger than the one contemplated (not a bad fault) and much more costly (having cost over \$80,000 to build), can nevertheless be purchased for a sum about one-half her original cost, to wit, between \$40,000 and \$50,000 certainly within the amount of the appropriation. I refer to the steamer *Manuel Dublan*, of San Francisco, built in 1888, of Puget Sound fir, very staunch, splendid machinery, compound engines and steel boiler, excellent cabin and steerage accommodations for as many first-class and steerage passengers as you will at any time have need to transport, to wit, court officials, jurors, witnesses, etc., and to fit her for service in these waters very little need be done to her beyond putting in steam-heating apparatus and giving her another coat of paint and a new name.

The vessel was built for service in Southern waters, to ply between San Diego Cal., and Ensenada, Mexico, but owing to the collapse of the boom in that region about the time she was finished she made but a few trips and has since lain idle, and she can no doubt be purchased for about half her original cost. I am personally cognizant of her merits and value, as I had her under careful inspection almost daily up to the date of her launching, and I can assure you that great care was used in the selection of the material and in the workmanship.

The fact that she is twice as large in tonnage as is the vessel contemplated in the bill is rather an advantage than a detriment, and though it would require perhaps two additional men and one boy to complete her complement, yet the extra cost of same would be more than counterbalanced by the saving in the cost of coal annually, because she can stow away and bring up with her not only her one year's supply of fuel, but also enough as cargo to furnish all the Government officers with a year's supply in addition, the difference in cost of her own fuel, 250 tons, costing at the bunkers at Departure Bay \$4 per ton and at Sitka \$10 per ton, is at the rate of \$6 per ton, for 250 tons \$1,500, which will more than pay the additional cost of running a vessel of her size. In addition to this may be taken into account the saving on 100 tons of coal at \$6 per ton for official use in the various departments \$600 more.

Such a vessel could make the trip to St. Michaels, or, if need be, Point Barrow, without stopping for coal en route. In addition to the saving indicated in the foregoing, there should be an additional sum of \$1.50 per ton (not provided for in the original estimate), as the extra cost of handling when same has to be landed from the common carriers and stored on shore at Sitka, then rehandled to put into the vessel's bunkers. Neither has there been any provision made for storage of her coal on shore; the only available building is now occupied by the U. S. Navy, and such, if provided, would involve another item of expense not estimated for.

I give below her tonnage and general description:

Length, 151 feet; breadth, 27½ feet; depth, 14 feet; tonnage, 339 tons; built at San Francisco in 1888; two masts; schooner rig; first cabin aft with accommodations for 28 people; steerage on the main deck forward, large and roomy; machinery inclosed in iron casing.

Vessel has two decks, the upper one flush forward; she is an excellent sea-boat; in fact there is none better of her size; can readily steam 10 knots per hour; her furnaces can be adopted to burn wood by simply and automatically dropping the gratings, say, 4 to 6 inches.

A board of examination can readily be got together at San Francisco, who would examine and report upon her condition at no cost to the Government. If favorably reported and the purchase effected, an officer from here conversant with the needs of the completed vessel could be detailed to look after the alterations and repairs needed. On her way up she can call at the coal mines and bring a cargo of coal, as herein explained.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

MAX PRACHT,  
Collector of Customs.

Hon. LYMAN E. KNAPP,  
Governor of Alaska, Sitka.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Executive Office, Sitka, Alaska, February 27, 1890.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a letter from Hon. Max Pracht, collector of customs at this port, relative to the *Dublin*, the steamer which Capt. Charles H. Stockton, U. S. Navy, wrote me about and the letter sent to you by me sometime since.

I suppose the bill now pending in Congress limits the vessel to "from 100 to 200 tons burden." If not already despaired of, I presume it might be amended to a vessel of "not less than 100 tons burden." But I do not care to express an opinion myself. If some kind of a boat can be obtained I shall be entirely satisfied. The size of the *Dublin* would not be objectionable to us. I only fear it might require a little more expense to run it.

Yours, very truly,

LYMAN E. KNAPP.

HON. JOHN W. NOBLE,  
*Secretary of the Interior.*

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