

## Letter Inclosure No. 1, 13 November 1859

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

Published by Livingstone Online ([livingstoneonline.org](http://livingstoneonline.org))

[0001]

(IV.)

Statement

respecting a turning lathe furnished by  
M<sup>r</sup> John Laird to the Zambesi Expedition

The Engineer of the Expedition  
having been ordered to see that every  
necessary tool was supplied mentioned  
a turning lathe as part of the usual  
equipment - and as he understood  
one was ordered from Whitworth's  
Manchester at a cost of £53 -  
but some delay occurring in the  
delivery at Birkenhead, M<sup>r</sup> Laird  
proposed to substitute an old one  
from his shop, and the naval  
officer in charge professed willing-  
ness to accede to this proposal.  
But M<sup>r</sup> Rae refused his consent  
saying that "as a new article  
was to be paid for, it would be  
as well for us to get the new  
thing." We left under the  
conviction that the new lathe  
was supplied, as the new  
price (£53) was paid; but  
on opening the box at Tette,  
which had never been disturbed  
from our leaving Liverpool  
we found that the bolts inside

[0002]

which held the machine had been unscrewed  
though furnished with double nuts. Some  
old parts of a turning lathe substituted  
for new ones - and not a single  
tool left in the box. Important parts  
of the machine were also abstracted &  
M<sup>r</sup> Rae has been obliged to make them  
the N<sup>o</sup> on the old parts substituted  
being "56" from an old established  
house, is proof of the swindling; and  
affords a cue which might be traced

were the proposal made & agreed to  
by Commander Bedingfeld & refused  
by M<sup>r</sup> Rae not sufficient to point  
the delinquent.

I make this statement not from  
any wish to injure M<sup>r</sup> Laird, but from  
a natural desire to prevent the Govern-  
ment, with which I have the honour  
to be connected, being again stultified -  
and its operations retarded - and possibly  
public blame attached, by similar  
frauds.

David Livingstone

13 Nov<sup>r</sup>

1859

Captain Washington R. N. &c.

Admiralty

[0003]

M<sup>r</sup> Rae shewed Bedingfeld that she was then drawing 19 inches  
and when weight equal to that of the house was put in she drew 25 inches  
yet Bedingfeld reported her to be " just the thing we required."

The cylinder is unquestionably  
a low pressure one applied to high  
pressure purposes. The projecting  
portion in the middle of the cylinder  
of which I shall endeavour  
to send you a photograph proceed  
it at a glance - and a corresponding  
hollow inside cannot be explained  
on any other idea It is quite evident  
that we were furnished at an exorbitant  
price with the sweepings of the shop.

For a considerable time after  
the fire is lighted the water on one  
side remains cold - and by opening  
a cock on that side the hand may  
be held in it while the other side  
is too hot to be endured. Until  
steam is generated one side remains  
comparatively cold.

the vessel is altogether an ill  
planned affair. She drew more than  
18 inches at her first trial in the  
Mersey. We shall make the most  
of a bad & shabby bargain, but  
it is mortifying to be obliged to spend  
precious time which otherwise

[0004]

would have been devoted to the exploration

& civilisation of Africa, in tinkering  
a vessel - a mere punt - for which  
we paid such an enormous price -  
£1200 (extras all paid for besides)  
was pretty fair for 12 months very  
slow work with-out any whine  
of "doing it all for the good of the  
cause." If I ever hear the phrase  
after this, I shall ask if the "cause"  
at the bankers is meant or what.

It occurs to me that it will be well to add  
the irrelevant sentence I left out in another  
sheet It is.

"I have not seen Baikie's official report  
to Lord Clarendon, but in his letter to me  
describing the accident to the Dayspring  
it seems have arised from the Bow  
being in one current and the Stern in another  
in consequence the vessel would not answer  
her helm - she was in fact ascending a rapid  
without a steadying line to the shore - which  
in the Nile - Indus - & Euphrates has always  
been found necessary" - With this sentence  
you have the entire note of 16 Jan<sup>y</sup> 58

The compartments joined by Laird's plan  
become force pumps as soon as the pins  
below wear a little The motion of the vessel

brings the comp<sup>ts</sup> together below with a jerk & the  
water is forced out on all sides & above. No caulking  
can prevent it. This is the reason of our being always wet