Letter Inclosure No. 1, 13 November 1859

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

(IV.)

Statement

respecting a turning lathe furnished by
Mr. 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, Mr. 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 Mr. 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 &
Mr. Rae has been obliged to make them
the No. 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 Mr Rae not sufficient to point
the delinquent.

I make this statement not from
any wish to injure Mr 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 Novr

1859

Captain Washington R. N. &c.

Admiralty
[0003]

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 exhorbitant
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^{y} 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^{ts} 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

M^{r} 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."