

## Letter to John Washington, 5 November 1859

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

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[0001]

(III)

River Zambesi, Shupanga,

5 Nov<sup>r</sup> 1859

Captain Washington R. N.

Sir

In answer to the of M<sup>r</sup> Laird of 4<sup>th</sup> January 1859 copy of which you enclosed I have remark that the statements of that disagree in the most marked with the promises [he] held forth the Steam Launch, and I possess in his own writing, dated as follows,

" Hamilton Square

Birkenhead

Jany 16/58

"Dear Sir,

D<sup>r</sup> Livingstone's Launch more probably exceed Ten knots fall below it - when kept in proper trim - she appears admirably for what she was proposed , the upper Zambesi above "Tete"

[0002] she is heavily laden with stores speed will of course be diminished her draught of water is increased. they are putting the engine together is impossible to alter the power "even if desirable - which it is not."

(Here follows an irrelevant sentence D<sup>r</sup> Baikies expedition

"D<sup>r</sup> Livingstone may calculate upon Ton for every inch Disp<sup>t</sup> in Launch, and as in the river he safely load her to 2 feet from to twelve Tons will be available stores and crew - as to space the sent up shews accurately the .

"On the Indian Rivers where light draught so essential - all the River steamers used as Tugs which is the best of the power and if my is taken this Launch will always

"be kept light and any extra weight towed

I remain faithfully yours

Macgregor Laird

a true copy

David Livingstone

the above note was sent to the Admiralty

[0003] answer to my protest against an engine Ten horse power only.

The note which M<sup>r</sup> Laird has been good to print shews indisputably a on my part to be satisfied. It written while the Launch was still supplied coal by the Pearl, and it was only the coal was expended that I discovered imposition that had been practised the Expedition. It was somewhat , now that we were away from the means of remedying the evil, to the statement made publicly. "Well Liverpool people must have imposed me", and to find that at the "trial by alone" "coal has seen to be in once and again" and other which though they can be proved forbear mentioning

At the trial trip in the Mersey drew 19 inches without anything her [but the weight equal to the house drew 25 inches] and since she came out here recieved her gear, she has never less than Two Feet One Inch crew of twelve kroomen - no - no fuel brought her to two feet two inches

[0004] one days fuel (about a ton) and near as we could ascertain nearly Tons brought her down to feet six inches. M<sup>r</sup> Laird

"designed her to carry when loaded" 2 feet Ten or Twelve Tons!"

I beg leave to submit the of our last trip in M<sup>r</sup> "Dispatch boat" up the Shire. had four barrels of salt meat two bags of coffee, a medicine , boxes of instruments of no weight & half a bale of calico whole would not be a Ton in . [Fuel say another Ton] We had forty four Makololo men of light weight and six . M<sup>r</sup> Laird "intended" her draw 13 inches we found ourselves about 30 - and with the between 50 & 60 lbs could not three and a half knots. We passed over ground therefore at the rate of less than one knot an hour & took a month to go from Kongone Harbour to Chibisa's about 200 milethe carrying loads on their heads on to the next bend of the river waited till we came up again;

(~~against the 2 1/2 knot current of the Shire~~) and to our disgust we saw a lame walk away ahead of us altogether.

[0005] it will be said "She was overloaded at all we had taken the precaution towing all the Makalolo except a dozen to work the vessel two whalers behind - and when so at a sudden bend the current past caught her bow and of the whalers when drawn across with her was swamped and our sorrow one poor fellow drowned.

Take another example of the per-of the Launch - In going from Shupanga to the sea were a good deal lighter than the last trip having no cargo

& not 1/2 a ton of ~~nails~~[fuel] & with 14 natives and four Englishmen.

M<sup>r</sup> Medlycott of the Lynx took , and was dumfounded find that a stiff breeze held her to a dead lock [with between 50 & 60 lbs steam] and obliged to anchor. that was nothing to us, for wherever have a 3 1/2 knot current cannot stem it even with 60lbs of steam

[0006] M<sup>r</sup> Laird will explain why at the trip she ran with the tide only in direction then waited till the tide turned ran back with it in the other, the of performances here and may be accounted for. Her top in the Zambesi against the current

measured by anchoring in a part which cannot stem while going at full speed

repeatedly by Patent and log - has been 3 1/2 knots between 50 & 60 lbs of steam.

M<sup>r</sup> Laird promised over "Ten knots"

Funnel - Furnace - Deck - Bottom all become shaky , after only Twelve work - i.e £1200 for

12 months. Extras all paid for . It ought to be known the Admiralty that do what we we never could keep our dry. We have had carpenters men of war attempting to remedy evil, but have been obliged sleep on damp rotten cushions notwithstanding all efforts. Our botanist cannot his collections to the sea without

[0007] risk of their suffering the same as those of poor D<sup>r</sup> Vogel the great Niger Expedition. He in his journal that his cabin always in the same state as ours, public blame was most injustly to the Admiralty. I enclose a in view of the bottom of this unworkmanlike & flimsy vessel.

Copy

Report

1<sup>st</sup> August 1859. At Kongone harbour

Beached the vessel furnished by M<sup>r</sup> Laird to the Zambesi Expedition the right bank of Kongone harbour dug out the sand from the middle in order to examine her . Found the plates which were one sixteenth of an inch at the to be fairly worn & rusted in several places, and the so very thin that it is quite impossible patch them - bolts would have nothing hold on by. The rent would be worse by any mending welding - no other process such wedging or staying can be applied are therefore obliged to puddle the

[0008] with clay in canvas bags over the (covered with India rubber) as the only means in our power of keeping her to perform the service of taking us of the unhealthy Delta. The Funnel also full of holes

(signed)

David Livingstone

John Kirk M.D.

Charles Livingstone

A true copy

David Livingstone

In conclusion as every point advanced the engine - boiler & vessel for information of the Admiralty has been result of my own patient and minute , I am sorry to observe the , ungenerous & totally unfounded against our "Clyde Engineer" was not only recommended by Tod & Macgregor of Glasgow (a firm in way superior to M<sup>r</sup> Laird's) but as very best man in their employment, we have been thoroughly satisfied with skill, zeal, and trustworthyness, but has joined us at a considerable pecuniary to himself as he occupied a post chief engineer in the largest sea going . We intend sending the engine & to a Museum in Glasgow.

David Livingstone