

STEAM-ENGINES.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES,

January 16, 1838.

Mr. SERGEANT, from the Select Committee on the subject of steam-engines, reported the following resolution, which was adopted by the House, viz :

Resolved, That ten thousand extra copies be printed of the report of the Secretary of the Treasury on steam-engines, and of the two communications from said Secretary this day ordered to be printed.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

Transmitting, in obedience to a resolution of the House of the 29th of June last, information in relation to Steam-Engines, &c.

DECEMBER 13, 1838.

Read, and referred to a Select Committee of seven members.

Printed by the printer of the House, under the superintendence of the Secretary of the Treasury, with authority to make any additions and corrections which may occur to him in the progress of the printing.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *December 12, 1838.*

SIR: The House of Representatives, on the 29th of June last, adopted a resolution in the following words:

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Treasury be required to collect and report to Congress, on the first day of the next session, all the information that can be obtained as to the use of steam-engines in the United States, and the accidents and loss of life or property which have attended their use; and especially that he ascertain and report:

1. The whole number of steam-engines in the United States: where and by whom they were constructed; where they are used; how long they have been used; their capacity or power, respectively; and the purposes or uses to which applied; and whether high or low pressure.

2. The explosions or other disasters which have happened to such engines: when and where; with as many of the circumstances attending the same as can be collected.

3. The causes, as far as they can be ascertained, of such explosions or other disasters.

4. The loss of life or property, or injury to persons or property, which

Thomas Allen, print.

has ensued in each case; distinguishing the mode of injury, by burning, scalding, wounding, drowning, or otherwise.

5. The disasters to steamboats, when, where, and how they have occurred, by explosion, collision, fire, or otherwise; the size, capacity, or burden of the boats, their age, and where and by whom built.

6. How such steamboats were manned; and whether intoxicating liquor was served out to, or permitted to be used by, the hands or persons employed on board the same.

7. The names of the owners and masters or commanders of the boats to which such disasters have happened, and of the officers and crews thereof.

8. In the case of boats to which no disasters have happened, the burden and size of the same; when, where, and by whom built; and the names of the owners and masters, or commanders and engineers.

9. Any such other information as may seem to him material."

Steps were immediately taken to procure the information desired, though it was of a character so extensive and ramified, that the prospect of much success in so short a time was very unpromising.

As the different districts for the collection of the customs include all the territory of the United States, and most of the steamboats had been built, and the accidents to them occurred, near the residence of the chief officers in those districts, the most appropriate and efficient course appeared to be to request those officers to act as agents in obtaining facts on the whole subject of the resolution. Accordingly, a circular was prepared with a view to accomplish that object; and on the 12th day of July it was forwarded to each of them.

Other circulars, besides various letters, have since been sent to such of these officers as had made imperfect or no returns of the information requested. Copies of all the circulars are annexed, (Nos. 1, to 3.) In those districts where the greatest number of steamboats and other steam machinery was supposed to be employed, an authority was given, in a postscript to the original circular, to engage additional assistance in collecting the information, so as to secure, as far as possible, a thorough and early return. A copy of the postscript is annexed, (No. 4.)

With a view to procure such other intelligence and opinions as might be useful to Congress in further legislation on the important subject of steam-vessels, and in an especial manner to enable the Department, under the 9th section of the resolution, to offer something which might conduce to the public benefit in preventing accidents in the use of steam, I prepared a letter, on the 28th of August, requesting advice in relation to the causes and preventives of explosions in steam-engines, and in relation to such modifications in the late act of Congress concerning steam-vessels, as might appear likely to promote increased security of life and property. It was addressed to several gentlemen of scientific attainments, as well as others possessing practical skill. A copy of it is annexed, (No. 5.)

Other sources of information have been resorted to, some of which, deemed most important, are indicated in the schedule annexed, (No. 6.)

A few of the returns were very imperfect, but have been corrected whenever practicable.

A list of those districts from which no returns, or only partial ones, have been received, is annexed, (No. 7.)

All the returns which have reached the Department have been arranged

Return respecting steam-engines used in steamboats in the district of Miami, Ohio; prepared in pursuance of instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury, to enable him to comply with a resolution of the House of Representatives of June 29, 1838.

Name of boat.	Where employed.	Tons and 16ths.	Length from stem to stern, in feet & in.	Breadth at the broadest part, in feet & in.	Depth from spar-deck to keel, in feet & in.	Where built.	When built.	By whom built.	Name of owners.	Names of masters or command'rs.	Names of engineers.	Power of engine, in horses.	High or low pressure.	By whom engine constructed.	When engine constructed.	How long in use.
Oliver Newberry	Plying between Maumee city and Buffalo.	170 12	120 8 15 9	7 8	Mt. Clemens	1833	Church	Detroit & St. Clair Steam-boat Com'py.	A. Reed	Boat is not running at present.	60	High	Moore & Co. Detroit.	1833	5	
Monroe		341 37	144 7 26 0	9 8	Monroe, Mich.	1834	Unknown	R. A. Fosyth & others.	S. F. Atwood.	A. Harris	130	High	Do.	1834	4	
Oliver H. Perry		352 25	146 2 26 4	9 5	Perrysburg, O.	1834	A. Jones	Perrysburg & B. Com'py.	David Wilkison.	A. Johnson.	160	High	P. B. Andrews & Co.	1835	3	
Anthony Wagner		390 46	156 6 - 25 9	Do.	1837	S. Hubble	Miami S. B. Company.	Amos Pratt	W. Watkins	120	High	Hathaway & Co.	1836	2		
Chesapeake		412 49	172 0 34 6	10 2	Maumee city	1838	A. Jones	Jesse Smith & others.	D. Howe	C. Radcliff	120	Low	St. Mary's f'dry, Montreal.	*	†	
Wabash		From this to Detroit.	82 33	100 8 14 0	6 2	Perrysburg, O.	1838	S. Hubble	Wm. Earle & others.	C. K. Keiler	F. Piko	65	High	Wilkison & Son.	1836	2
David Crockett		On river	18 30	67 0 15 0	2 0	Brunersburg, Ohio.	1836	L. Birdsal	J. E. Hunt	None.	Not running.	None	20	High	Davis & Co.	1835

Perrysburg is a southern suburb of Toledo, Ohio

* Uncertain.

† Uncertain.