

No. 193^a

U. B. BERGEN
Ms. 32j

As the calls of business and the lateness of the season, together with the impracticability of now calling a full meeting of the Shareholders, require a speedy departure from Bergen - Mr. Owen has thought it most advisable to lay before the Directors and Company of the Bergen Steam-Boat, a brief and simple statement of such facts as he thinks necessary for a mutual understanding and an amicable decision between both parties - which statement the Directors and Shareholders can then consider at their leisure, and be enabled to form a correct and impartial judgment of the case.

The Directors are aware that the contract required Mr. Owen to construct two Steam-Engines each of 32 horse-power, with a velocity of not less than seven miles an hour. At this time Mr. Owen was ignorant of the intended purchase of the two Steam-boats by the Norwegian government, and was consequently preparing to build the vessels and construct the engines according to the contract entered into. Soon after this Mr. Owen became acquainted with the size and dimensions of the engines then constructing in England, which in his judgment gave the case a new and very important appearance. He immediately saw by comparing the power of these engines with the size of the vessels, and contrasting them with the

proposed dimensions of the Company's Engines and vessel, that the advantages the former possessed over the latter were such, as would entirely defeat the Company's design. It follows, as a matter of course, that when two Steam-Boats of unequal velocity ply upon the same stations, the swiftest vessel has always the greatest number of passengers - consequently the slower one gains but little profit, and in most instances the Proprietors suffer considerable loss. Besides which, in case of storm or rough water, the greater the velocity, the easier it is for the vessel to make her way - whilst on the other hand, she is not only delayed on her passage, but often exposed to actual danger. Now being aware, that the Company's Steam-Boat must come into competition with such formidable opponents - and, unless able in some measure to stand against them, must materially, if not totally, defeat the intentions of the Company, Mr. Owen, confidently relying on the honour of the Company, immediately resolved to make such improvements, as would enable the vessel to compete with her antagonists. This he did by adding six feet to the length of the vessel, and giving the Engines 80 instead of 64 horse-power, whereby the velocity became 9 miles an hour. The expense of this additional horse-power alone Mr. Owen estimates at 9500 Swedish Rix Dollars francs.

Such is the plain state of the case between the Company and Mr. Owen - on which he is not disposed to enlarge. It remains for the Directors and Company, who are honorable men, to say whether he has consulted their interests by the above alterations, or whether he has not - whether the advantages gained thereby overbalance the difference in the expense, or whether they do not. The case is an exceedingly simple one, and every man must and will judge for himself. Should the Company decide in the affirmative, Mr. Owen is convinced that they will award him a just compensation, and eventually have reason to thank and not

to censure him - Should they decide in the negative; - he can only repent that he has thus ignorantly mistaken, where he had honorably confided. But he has this consolation, that throughout the whole business, he has consulted their best interests and success, which he shall still wish them.

Mr. Owen begs it to be distinctly understood that he makes no claim whatever to any compensation for the loss he has sustained in the building of the ^{vessel}, a loss of at least 10,000 Rix Dollars Banco, the accuracy and reasonableness of which can be easily seen by comparing it with the account of the two English Steam boats or any other whatever. This however is a point of honour - which as such he leaves untouched. But the other he considers as a matter of justice, and as such leaves it to the decision of honest men.

In whatever way the case shall be decided, Mr. Owen is perfectly at ease. If the Company make him the compensation required he feels assured of their increasing and continuing confidence, from the known excellence of the engines and the adaptation of the vessel for its intended destination. If they do not - though as a private individual and standing alone - he must suffer - and suffer most considerably - the public will judge between ^{them} - and time and a little more caution for the future will prevent any similar occurrence.

Bergen.
October 27th 1827

Samuel Owen