

1879.  
 —  
 VICTORIA.

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P I L O T S.

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COPY OF ALL CORRESPONDENCE WHICH HAS TAKEN PLACE RELATIVE TO  
 THE FORMATION OF A THIRD PILOT COMPANY.

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PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND.

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SIR,

Melbourne, 31st July 1879.

We have the honor to request that you will allow us to bring under your notice the enclosed correspondence with reference to the formation of a third Pilot Company.

On the 3rd of June last we wrote to the Pilot Board asking for licenses to act as Pilots, with the intention of fitting out a suitable vessel to cruise outside the present Pilot limits, as it is considered that such a vessel would be of very great advantage to masters of vessels visiting this port, especially from the westward ; and on the 18th June received a reply stating that the Board do not see their way to grant our request.

We do not wish to go into the merits of the case, as no doubt you are fully informed on the subject, but respectfully request that you will take such steps as may enable us to obtain the necessary licenses.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servants,

(Signed)

JOHN CAMPBELL,

T. R. BROWN,

JOHN BROWN,

CHAS. POOLE,

SAMUEL FINLAY,

W. G. GARTH,

J. H. GILL,

W. SAUL.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary.

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GENTLEMEN,

Pilot Board Office,  
Williamstown, 18th June 1879.

I have the honor to inform you that your letter of the 3rd instant has been laid before the Board, who do not see their way clearly to grant your request.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) JAMES REID,

Acting Secretary.

Messrs. T. R. Brown, C. M. Poole,  
J. Brown, S. Finlay, and W. Saul, Melbourne.

The Merchant Shipping and Underwriters' Association Limited,

24 Market Buildings,

SIR,

Melbourne, 13th June 1879.

I beg to acknowledge receipt of letter of 3rd instant, signed by yourself and colleagues, in which you express your intention of applying for licenses as Pilots, and asking for the support of my committee. The matter will be laid before them at the meeting on Tuesday next.

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) ARTHUR W. CLEVELAND,

Secretary.

Captain T. R. Brown,  
95 Collins street west.

Chamber of Commerce,

GENTLEMEN,

Melbourne, 18th June 1879.

Your letter of the 3rd instant, with accompanying schedule and chart, in reference to the establishment of an additional Pilot Station outside the present Pilot limits, was duly laid before the committee of this Chamber on Monday; and after giving the matter full consideration, I was desired to inform you that the committee had recently, in conjunction with other public bodies, urged on the Honorable the Commissioner of Customs the necessity of re-introducing into Parliament the Marine Board Bill prepared in 1874, chiefly for the purpose of obtaining a more efficient Pilot Service, and that the committee are awaiting the reply of the Government.

I beg, however, to append a copy of resolutions, adopted by a former committee of this Chamber, in reference to the necessity of a Pilot Station at or about the locality indicated on the chart which you were good enough to send, and which substantially the present committee would be prepared to endorse.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) B. COWDEROY,

Secretary.

Messrs. T. R. Brown, Poole,  
Brown, Finlay, and Saul.

PILOTAGE ARRANGEMENTS.

*Resolutions on the above subject adopted by the Committee in 1870.*

1st. That in the opinion of this committee the present pilotage arrangements are inadequate to the requirements of the Port, and call imperatively for improvement.

2nd. That the most practicable and least expensive mode of increasing the efficiency of the Pilot Service, would be to require the employment of three boats, two of which should be constantly employed outside the Heads, within cruising limits to be assigned to them by proper regulations, and the third to be kept as a reserve boat within Port Phillip Heads.

3rd. That a representation should be made to the Honorable the Commissioner of Trade and Customs on the subject, and that the Government should be requested to give effect to the above recommendation.

SCHEDULE OF QUALIFICATIONS.

Master's Name.	Age.	Certificate of—	Date of Pilotage Exemption Certificate.	Number of Years Sailing out of this Port as Master.	Accidents at this Port.
T. R. Brown ... ..	39	Competency ...	1866	14	None.
C. M. Poole ... ..	41	... ..	1859	...	..
J. Brown ... ..	37	Competency ...	1863	16	..
S. Finlay ... ..	35	.. ..	1866	15	..
W. Saul ... ..	40	.. ..	1866	15	..
J. Campbell ... ..	36	.. ..	1871	10	..
W. G. Garth ... ..	43	Service ...	1865	14	..
J. H. Gill ... ..	45	Competency ...	1866	14	..

MEMO.—The best proof of competency to act as Pilots is their having been their own Pilots for so many years without accident.

Referred to Mr. Lalor for consideration and report.

(Intd.) G. B.

8th September 1879.

The Honorable the Commissioner of Customs would be glad to receive the views of the Pilot Board upon this matter.

(Signed) J. CHATFIELD TYLER.  
13/9/79.

The report of the views of the Pilot Board herewith.

(Signed) C. B. PAYNE.  
26/9/79.

SIR,

Pilot Board Office,  
Williamstown, 26th September 1879.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter enclosing correspondence relative to the proposal of Messrs. T. R. Brown and others to form a Pilot Company to cruise outside the limits of the present cruising grounds, and requesting the views of the Pilot Board on the subject. I may at once state that the matter has been already brought under the notice of the Board, who have given the subject their fullest attention, and who fail to see the necessity of a third Pilot boat, as there is always a Pilot boat cruising outside Port Philip Heads, which does not leave its station until the second boat goes out to relieve it.

The expense, also, of fitting out and maintaining a third Pilot boat would be very considerable, the boats at present in use having each cost about £4,400 to fit out, and are maintained at an average expense of £2,850 per boat per annum.

No complaint has ever been made of the absence of Pilots from the outer station, except in the cases of the *Oberon* and *Mernanje Framjee*, which were investigated by the Board on the 25th June and 9th July 1878.

The masters of these vessels having both run up to the Heads during a very heavy gale on the 13th and 14th June, instead of standing out to sea, found on arriving there that the Pilot boat had been driven inside by the extreme violence of the weather; so violent, in fact, was the gale, that the master of the latter vessel, in his report to the public press, characterized it *as the heaviest weather he had ever seen in his life*.

The Board having investigated the facts, found that the Pilot boat was justified in running inside for shelter; and that, owing to the continuance of the heavy weather and sea, it would have been an undue risk to life and property to have gone out through the "Rip" at the time in question. The Pilots were therefore acquitted of all blame in the matter.

What thus happened in the case in question would, with equal force, apply if there were two Pilot boats outside.

The Board also beg to submit to you the following facts, gathered from the statistics of the last five years, as per statement herewith, viz. :—

During the years 1873 to 1878 (both inclusive), the total number of vessels cleared inwards and outwards amounted to 25,968, and their combined tonnage to 10,208,019 tons, and that out of this immense number the casualties of all kinds, however trifling, which have happened to vessels whilst in charge of Sea Pilots have been 36 in number, a quantity equivalent to about 0.1386 per cent., or 1.386 per thousand vessels, and a proportion so ridiculously small as to challenge comparison.

It is also well known that the Pilot Service, from the general character of the men who hold licenses in this Port, will bear favorable comparison in this and every other respect with any service of similar character in the world.

With regard to the Shipping interest generally, the Board have never heard of any complaint having been made as to the inadequacy of the service by those firms who might be supposed to be most largely interested, namely, the agents and owners of our large over-sea traders, amongst whom might be named Messrs. Dalgety, Blackwood, and Co., Bright Brothers, John Blyth and Co., W. Siddeley and Co., Grice, Sumner, and Co., James Henty and Co., and numerous other firms of similar character, whilst intercolonial vessels, being almost invariably commanded by exempt masters, and thus being exempt from pilotage, have little or no interest in the question.

As regards the application of Messrs. T. R. Brown and others to cruise outside the present Pilot limits, they do not state whether they wish simply to pick up vessels at a greater distance from the Port and hand them over to the Port Phillip Pilots as soon as they arrive within their waters, or whether they wish to be entitled to pilot them the whole distance up to Melbourne.

If the former is intended, the Board think it very unlikely that ship-masters would care to pay extra pilotage for the sake of being assisted to navigate their vessels in comparatively open water; but if the latter, which the Board presume is more likely to be their object, I have only to point out that it would be in the highest degree unjust to the Pilots at present in the service, as the proposed new company, not being under any obligation to watch the Heads, which is the most dangerous spot, would be enabled to pick up all the largest European traders coming from the westward for themselves, and leave for the other Pilots only such small craft as they did not think it worth their while to take.

The Board also notice that several of the signatures appended to this letter of application, which is endorsed by the Chamber of Commerce and the Merchant Shipping and Underwriters' Association, are those of disappointed applicants for admission to the Pilot Service; and that even if it should be considered necessary to appoint additional Pilots for the service, it does not by any means follow that they would be the persons selected for it, more especially as their ages are, in nearly every instance, above the limit at which the Board are in the habit of appointing Pilots.

In the report of the annual meeting of the Victorian Shipowners' Association, it is stated that "they have noticed with regret that occasionally the Pilot Station outside the Heads has been left unprotected, both Pilot schooners being inside; and that although it is true that during heavy southerly gales the Pilots may be unable to board inward vessels, but that being on the station they can at least signalize strangers approaching to keep out to sea."

To this the Board reply that the Pilot schooner on the outer station never runs inside as long as any Pilots remain on board, except in the very heaviest weather, and when forced to do so do it at the risk of the loss of the schooner and all on board; and it must be remembered that Pilots have before now lost their lives in the discharge of their duty. If, however, the Pilot schooner is driven inside by stress of weather, she always remains as close to the Heads as possible, so that in the event of a vessel approaching she may be able to signalize her as to the best course to take.

The Signal station at Point Lonsdale can also do this as effectively as the Pilot schooner; and it must also be borne in mind that a prudent ship-master *will not run his vessel into a cul-de-sac* in such weather that it would be impossible for a Pilot to board him.

In addition to all this, it is not likely that the Pilot schooner on the outer station would come inside without having sufficient cause for so doing, as owing to the competition always existing between the two companies, who are paid by their respective earnings, the second Pilot schooner is always on the alert to run out and pick up any vessels which may come up before the first schooner can get out again.

It is also stated in the same report that "the men who were in their prime in 1854 must soon become unfit for active duty, and that no satisfactory system has yet been adopted to ensure a supply of efficient juniors."

The Board beg to submit that this statement is without foundation, as out of the twenty-two Pilots now forming the sea service no less than ten have been appointed within the last six years, and that the average of their ages at the date of their respective appointments to the service has been thirty-three years.

The regulations require that upon any vacancy occurring in the Pilot Service, notices shall be inserted in the *Government Gazette* and the daily newspapers in order to secure publicity, and so afford the opportunity of obtaining the best men for the service.

This has always been done, and has been found to work well. There has never been a dearth of suitable candidates for the position, nor is it likely that there will be in the future; whilst, on the other hand, any attempt to introduce the apprentice system, so strongly advocated by some persons, would inevitably fail, as owing to the very limited number of Pilots in the service, and the number of years that frequently elapse without a single appointment being made, it would be extremely unlikely that good men would enter as apprentices, or remain in the service if they did so, for although, as already stated, there have been ten appointments within the last six years, the appointments made during the previous nineteen years were very few and far between.

In the choice of Pilots, the Board are very careful in examining the qualifications of the various candidates, and, unless in some very exceptional cases, do not appoint any person to the service who is over thirty-five years of age at the time of the application, whilst, other qualifications being equal, the Board have always selected the youngest men for appointment.

The Board consider that the subject of a reconstruction of the Pilot Service would not have been kept so prominently before the public as it has been, were it not for the persistent agitation of a few individuals, the majority of whom are scarcely entitled to speak authoritatively upon the subject.

Letters, most of them anonymous, reflecting upon the Pilot Service have been frequently published in the newspapers, in which the facts have been exaggerated or distorted, and in some cases even have been purely imaginary.

Amongst other things, it has also been sought to impress the public mind with the idea that the members of the Pilot Service are old and decrepit, men who are past their work; and to so great an extent had this idea gained ground, that the Pilots, by the recommendation of the Board, and in order to prove the fallacy of the insinuations, presented themselves for examination by the Chief Medical Officer, from whom they obtained certificates of their physical ability to perform their duties as Pilots, and he further expressed his surprise at seeing such a stalwart body of men, their strong and hearty appearance being so different from what he had been led to expect.

The Board also desire to point out that, although the shipping returns show an increase in the amount of tonnage entering and departing from the colony, there is not a corresponding increase in the *number of vessels*—on the contrary, the number of vessels has slightly decreased. This fact is attributable to the number of large ocean steam and sailing ships which have entered the trade of late years, the former more particularly, and the numbers of which are still increasing, to the exclusion of many of the smaller vessels. There are, consequently, no more vessels to pilot than there have been for some years past, and therefore no more Pilots required.

Taking all these things into consideration, the absence of any complaints on the part of owners or agents of foreign-going ships, the very small number of casualties of any kind occurring to vessels in pilotage charge, the diminution in the number of vessels arriving and departing from the Port, together with the fact that Pilot vessels do not cruise outside any of the other large Australian Ports at all, the Board cannot see that there is any necessity for the appointment of additional Pilots, or for the maintenance of a third Pilot boat.

They consider the service to be thoroughly efficient and fully adequate, not only to the present requirements of the Port, but likely to be so on its present basis for some years to come.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
(Signed) CHARLES B. PAYNE,  
President of the Pilot Board.

The Assistant Commissioner of Trade and Customs.

### VICTORIA.

#### *Tonnage of Vessels Entered and Cleared from 1873 to 1878, both inclusive.*

Year.	INWARDS.		OUTWARDS.		TOTAL.		TOTAL CASUALTIES.		
	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.		Vessels.	Tons.
1873	2,187	756,103	2,226	762,912	4,413	1,519,015	Sea Pilots, Harbor Pilots, and Exempt Masters Combined.	21	8,591
1874	2,100	777,110	2,122	792,509	4,222	1,569,619		20	14,158
1875	2,171	840,386	2,223	833,499	4,394	1,673,885		16	9,396
1876	2,086	810,062	2,150	847,026	4,236	1,657,088		15	11,210
1877	2,192	939,661	2,219	935,324	4,411	1,874,985		22	9,626
1878	2,119	951,750	2,173	961,677	4,292	1,913,427		24	16,146
...	...	...	...	...	25,968	10,208,019	...	118	69,127

#### *Casualties of all kinds which have happened to Vessels in Pilotage Waters during the period.*

Year.	SEA PILOTS.		HARBOR PILOTS.		EXEMPT MASTERS.		TOTAL.	
	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.
1873	7	3,315	5	1,957	9	3,319	21	8,591
1874	8	7,274	5	3,018	7	3,866	20	14,158
1875	5	4,792	2	1,345	9	3,259	16	9,396
1876	9	8,661	4	1,798	2	751	15	11,210
1877	3	2,331	9	4,786	10	2,509	22	9,626
1878	4	6,781	9	5,004	11	4,361	24	16,146
...	36	33,154	34	17,908	48	18,065	118	69,127

#### *Memo. for Capt. Payne, R.N.*

SIR,

The number of Exempt Certificates entered in the book up to 31st August 1879 is 1,142, but of these many are duplicates; while, on the other hand, there is a gap from June 1858 to December 1860 without any entries at all, but during which time there were probably from 100 to 150 more issued.

Pilot Board Offices,  
Williamstown, 27th October 1879.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
(Signed) JAMES REID,  
Secretary Pilot Board.

The Honorable the Commissioner writes for a report from the Chief Harbor Master on this proposition.

(Signed) J. CHATFIELD TYLER.  
24/10/79.

I entirely agree with the views submitted by the Pilot Board ; and looking to the fact that it was proposed to extend the Exemption Certificates of masters trading beyond the Australasian colonies, which, if approved, will further reduce the necessity of extra Pilots, I am of opinion that the proposed increase of number of Pilots is not required. It must further be remembered, that to properly maintain a station it will necessitate *eleven extra Pilots* being made if a third company is started, which under the present circumstances of our trade would be preposterous.

(Signed) C. B. PAYNE.  
3/11/79.

95 Collins street west,  
Melbourne, 15th October 1879.

SIR,

\* Sic in orig.

We have the honor to request that you will favor \* with a reply to our application *re* formation of a third Pilot Company.

We have, &c., &c.,  
(Signed) T. R. BROWN,  
CHAS. A. POOLE,  
JNO. BROWN.

The Honorable  
The Commissioner of Trade and Customs.

D. 79/1574.

Department of Trade and Customs,  
Melbourne, 25th November 1879.

SIR,

Referring to the letter addressed by yourself and others to the Honorable the Chief Secretary, on the 31st July, with respect to the formation of a third Pilot Company, I am desired by the Honorable the Commissioner of Trade and Customs to acquaint you that he has ascertained from the Pilot Board (which is appointed under an Act of Parliament, in the interests of ship-owners and the public) that there are strong objections to organizing another company of Pilots ; and that to increase the number of Pilots would only decrease the earnings of the Pilots (who apparently are not overpaid), as it cannot be expected that any larger amount of pilotage dues will be received, especially as it is now under consideration to extend the exemption from pilotage of vessels owned in Victoria arriving from Foreign Ports which are in charge of exempt masters, and have not been more than six months out of Victorian waters. Under all these circumstances, Mr. Lalor is unable to take any action in the matter.

Mr. John Campbell,  
c/o. John Nimmo, Esq., M.P.,  
Emerald Hill.

I have, &c., &c.,  
(Signed) J. CHATFIELD TYLER,  
Asst. Commissioner.

SIR,

85 Chancery lane,  
Melbourne, 4th December 1879.

I have the honor to request, on behalf of a number of sea captains, who are desirous of having an interview with you in reference to the Pilot Service, whether you could conveniently receive a deputation of their committee, at some time on Monday next, or as soon thereafter as you may be pleased to appoint. I shall be glad if you would kindly communicate your pleasure to me.

I have, &c., &c.,  
(Signed) J. V. M. HITCHINS,  
*Per* F. W. T.

The Honorable Commissioner of Customs.

D. 79/1669.

Department of Trade and Customs,  
Melbourne, 5th December 1879.

SIR,

I am directed by the Honorable the Commissioner of Trade and Customs to state that he will be happy to see the sea captains, in reference to the Pilot Service, on Friday next the 12th instant, at noon, at this office.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
(Signed) J. CHATFIELD TYLER,  
Assistant Commissioner.

Mr. J. V. M. Hitchins,  
85 Chancery lane, Melbourne.

[Presented by the Deputation, on 12th December, introduced by Messrs. Nimmo and  
L. L. Smith, M.P.'s.]

SIR,

Melbourne, 11th December 1879.

We beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of 25th ultimo, in reply to ours of 31st July last, with reference to formation of a third Pilot Company.

You state that to increase the number of Pilots would decrease the earnings of the present Pilots. This we admit ; but, on the other hand, we respectfully submit that it is a matter of

urgent necessity that a Pilot boat should be stationed at or near Cape Patton, and in support of that view we forward herewith memo. signed by masters of vessels in the foreign trade, also letter addressed to you signed by the shipping firms of this Port.

As regards the earnings of the Pilots, we are informed that for 1878 the gross amount of pilotage collected was nearly £23,000, or a little over £1,000 per man. During this year it is estimated that the amount will be larger, and for 1880 it is probable there will be a considerable increase, owing to the fact that the Orient and P. and O. Company are each sending out a large steamer fortnightly. The pilotage payable by these two lines of steamers will amount to over £6,700 per annum; and Messrs. Wigram's steamers will in future pay double the amount of pilotage they formerly paid, as they now go on to Sydney.

If the number of Pilots be increased to thirty (which number would be sufficient to work three boats), and the amount of pilotage be not much increased, their earnings would even then amount to about £800 per annum, but there is every probability that this estimate is far below the amount that will be actually received.

We wish to draw your attention to the fact that the agents of the three companies mentioned above have signed the letter addressed to you.

We have the honor to request that you will favorably consider our application, and grant us the licenses required.

We are, &c.,  
(Signed) T. R. BROWN,  
and eight others.

Melbourne, 15th November 1879.

We, the undersigned masters of vessels trading to the Port of Melbourne, do hereby certify that, in our opinion, if a Pilot boat were to be stationed at or near Cape Patton or Cape Otway, such Pilot vessel would be of great service to all, but more especially to strangers visiting the Port for the first time, and we hope soon to see a vessel on that station.

Signed by JOHN TAYLOR, barque *Colorado*, 526, Glasgow,  
and twenty-five others.

SIR,

Melbourne, 27th November 1879.

We, the undersigned, being informed that certain qualified persons are applying for licenses to act as Pilots at this Port, with the intention of placing a suitable vessel outside the present Pilot limits, do respectfully request that you will grant the licenses required, as such Pilot vessel would be of great advantage and assistance to masters of vessels trading to this Port.

Signed by BRIGHT BROS. AND CO.,  
and nineteen others.

To the Honorable  
The Commissioner of Trade and Customs.

For the remarks of Captain Payne.

(Initld.) J. C. T.  
13/12/79.

The actual earnings of the Pilots for the year ending—

31st August 1878—No. 1 Company	...	...	£501 11 9
No. 2 Company	...	...	£478 16 10
31st August 1879—No. 1 Company	...	...	£435 16 3
No. 2 Company	...	...	£450 13 7

Looking at the hazardous nature of the Sea Pilots' duties, I am of opinion their incomes are not excessive, also bearing in mind that at any moment they may be called upon to bear heavy expenses, in case of the wreck or damage to any of their vessels. Pilots have also to pay extra premiums on insurance. The urgent necessity for a Pilot boat being stationed at or near Cape Patton has not been shown from any facts brought under the notice of the Pilot Board, and, in my opinion, will be altogether impracticable; and, as I pointed out in my previous report, no shipmaster will take a Pilot for his ship in open water, free from any danger. I have already recommended, for the security of all vessels approaching Port Phillip Heads, that a light should be placed at Split Point. If this was done, it would be of immense advantage both to our over-sea and coasting trade. With reference to the anticipated large increase of shipping during 1880, it furnishes an argument for reducing the charges on shipping instead of increasing them by making additional Pilots.

(Signed) C. B. PAYNE.  
15/12/79.