

I should say a wooden steam vessel of 400 tons, with engines of 80 or 100 horse power, schooner rigged, with three masts, would be the best description of vessel for the coast of New Zealand; the above is considerably more power than is usually given to vessels of such tonnage; but when the heavy winds and strong tides of Cook's Straits are taken into consideration, I do not think less power would enable her to make head way against them; if economy is to be considered, I should give it in favour of clipper schooners.

7. Will you state any suggestions you may have to offer to this Committee on the best mode, in your opinion, of maintaining such a communication?—I would recommend that a steamer of 400 tons, and 100 horse power, should be procured. The vessel, I think, should be Government property, and carry nothing but passengers, mails, and light packages. Such a vessel, with her expenses, would cost as follows:—

Cost of a Steamer of 400 tons, with engines of 100 horse power.....	£18,000
Wear and tear, 5 per cent.	900
Insurance	900
Interest	900
	£20,700
Commander's pay, per month.....	£25
Chief Officer	16
Second ditto.....	10
First Engineer per month	26
Second Engineer, per month	15
Four Firemen, at £12 per month	48
Eight Men, at £8	64
Two Boys, at £3	6
Cook	12
Steward	11
Wages per month	£233
Wages per annum	£2796
Victualling	£800
A vessel of this description would burn, say ten or twelve tons of coals per day—18 days under steam per month, which would give 216 tons per month; at £2 per ton—£432 per month for coals;—per annum	
Cost of oil and tallow, per annum.....	£5184
Sundry ship's stores, sails, &c.	80
Cost per annum.....	£9160

The number of passengers such a vessel would probably carry per month would be about 60, which, at an average charge of £7 per head, would give £420 per month, or £5040 per annum, independent of the saving to Government of the passages of the Governors, Members of the General Assembly, Judges, &c., which would reduce her actual cost per annum to about £4000. If each Province was to have its own two clipper schooners, one leaving each of the ports for the other on fixed days (wind and weather permitting), a fortnightly communication between Canterbury and Auckland might be effected at a cost of about £700 for each vessel per annum.

RETURN, shewing the longest, shortest, and average Passages, made by H. M. Colonial Brig "Victoria," between the various Ports in New Zealand, from January, 1846, to July, 1853, inclusive.

	No. of Passages.	Longest Pass.	Shortest Pass.	Average Pass.
From Auckland to Wellington	20	19 days.	6 days.	11 days.
„ Wellington to Auckland	17	22	6	11
„ Nelson to Wellington	16	7	1	4
„ Wellington to Nelson	19	10	16 hours.	3½
„ Wellington to Port Cooper	6	7	3 days.	4
„ Port Cooper to Wellington	6	11	3	5
„ Auckland to New Plymouth	4	11	7	10
„ New Plymouth to Auckland	3	9	5	7

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