

vessels; while some of the ports of Chile offer in this respect almost equal advantages.

In conclusion I may be allowed to state, that a broader or more promising field for steam operations than that which the Pacific affords, does not exist in any part of the world. The prevailing south winds, the calms, and the currents of that ocean render navigation by sailing-vessels tedious and uncertain in the extreme; while the nature of the whole country, from Valparaiso to Guayaquil—presenting a succession of mountains and deep ravines, intersected by sandy deserts—offers every imaginable obstacle to land travelling: and yet there are four millions of inhabitants, within the proposed line of intercourse, ready to participate, to a greater or less degree, in the benefits to arise from the proposed undertaking.

Nature thus seems to have intended for steam navigation that great line of coast, the physical difficulties of which oppose an almost insurmountable barrier to any other mode of prompt communication.

WILLIAM WHEELWRIGHT.

London, Oct. 22, 1838.

*Letter from Captain Fitz Roy, referred to in the preceeding observations.*

31, CHESTER STREET, OCT. 1, 1838.

Dear Sir,—In answer to the questions contained in your letter of the 25th of September, I send the following brief remarks:

With respect to the general project, I have no doubt whatever of its utility, or of the facility with which it may be carried into execution.

The principal advantages which it holds out to the public, are a very important saving of time in communicating with Peru and Chile, together with a regularity of intercourse which cannot fail to cause a vast augmentation of trade, as well as a material improvement in the state of those countries.

Among the facilities offered for its successful accomplishment are, a sufficient supply of fuel, smooth sea, a regular trade wind, and a great number of safe ports extremely easy of access.

So far as I am competent to give an opinion of your statements relative to the intercourse which might be effected between Great Britain and Australia by a western route, I agree fully to what you have stated; indeed I cannot help expressing my admiration of the patience and candour by which you seem to have been actuated during the four years you have devoted to the preparations for this great undertaking.

In my own mind, there is no doubt whatever of the existence of coal in abundance at various places on the western coasts of South America; and that its quality is sufficiently good to make it available for steam-vessels.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

ROBERT FITZ ROY.

WILLIAM WHEELWRIGHT, Esq., London.

### III.

EXTRACT FROM THE PROSPECTUS OF THE "PACIFIC STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY," TO BE INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER. CAPITAL £250,000 IN 5000 SHARES OF £50 EACH. ISSUED NOV. 5TH, 1838.

The object of this company is to establish Steam Navigation along the shores of the Pacific, from Valparaiso to Panama, embracing all the principal ports in Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and the West Coast of New Grenada; and, in conjunction with Her Majesty's packets in the Atlantic, to promote a more rapid and regular communication with Europe by the Isthmus of Darien.

The undertaking was projected by Mr. Wheelwright, and sanctioned at public meetings of the British and Foreign merchants in Chile and Peru, convened and presided over by Her Majesty's Consuls General, at the express desire of Her Majesty's Government, to consider the best means of establishing a direct communication between England and the Pacific. The statements and calculations



of Mr. Wheelwright, exhibiting the most satisfactory pecuniary results, underwent a most minute and searching investigation by committees appointed for the purpose; and, at a subsequent general meeting, they were unanimously approved of. Mr. Wheelwright has obtained decrees from the Governments of Chile, Bolivia and Peru, securing to him and his assigns the exclusive navigation of the coasts by steam, with all necessary immunities and privileges (including an exemption from port-dues), for the period of ten years. These decrees, and the powers conferred thereby, have become the property of the company. Her Majesty's Government also, actuated by a sense of the benefits which will be conferred by this undertaking upon British commerce, has consented to grant the company a Royal Charter, by which alone the important objects of the company can be effectually attained.

Although the nominal capital for this undertaking is stated at £250,000, it is calculated that less than one-half of this amount will be sufficient to carry into full effect the operations of the company.

Mr. Wheelwright, now in this country, will return to South America as soon as the necessary arrangements are completed, for the purpose of superintending the company's concerns, in conjunction with such mercantile firms as may be appointed to act under the control of the directors.

W. P. ROBERTSON, *Secretary.*

*London.*





The Coasts of  
GUATIMALA AND MEXICO,  
from  
PANAMA TO CAPE MENDOCINO;  
with the Principal Harbours in  
CALIFORNIA.  
1839.





