

No.

Office of the P. M. S. S. Co.'s
Special Agent for China and Japan,

220

PER STR.

Yokohama Jan 16 1875

John Robertson Esq.

Dear Sir.

In reply to your enquiries

to day I beg to say.

I do not feel authorized to name a price at which the P. M. S. S. Co would sell their property & good will of their Branch line, nor is it possible for the same to be sold to any party other than the Japanese Government, and not to the Govt. unless the Government of the United States would agree that their through mail from San Francisco should be transported in Japanese Steamers, owned either by the Japanese Government or citizens of Japan.

The idea of selling the Steamers of the Company running through the Inland Sea, originated with myself, notwithstanding that branch of our service has ^{been} and still continues to be one of the most profitable for the amount of Capital invested, I have thought it advisable that the

Company should sell it, provided it could be done at a fair price, and to the Japanese Government only.

Without attempting to furnish you with a detail statement of either the property or the business of that branch of our service, I will state the line is composed of the following ships to wit: The "Verado", "Golden Age", "Catalpa", & "Oregonian"

They are all, not only in complete order & fine condition, but with them would be included everything at Yokohama, Nagasaki & other necessary to facilitate business operations of these ships.

Before either naming a price at which the ships of the Co & good will of the business, established by the Co, would be sold at, several important points would first have to be settled.

- 1.° Would the Government of Japan agree to transport the United States through mails from San Francisco, arriving at Yokohama, to Shanghai & vice versa.

2° It would be necessary to obtain the Consent of the U. S. Government, to allow the Government of Japan to do so.

3° Would the Government of Japan be willing to enter into a Contract to pro-rate with the P. M. S. Co for all through Cargo from Shanghai, and Yokohama & vice versa, at a fair rate. If not the P. M. S. Co would not sell at any price.

The through Cargo business is a very large portion of the business of the Main Line Ships, & you must be aware that our Main Line cannot be worked successfully without an Inland Sea Connection. - In regard to passengers a similar arrangement would be necessary to be made, for the transportation of all through passengers.

Our gross earnings on the Branch Line for the year 1874 amounted to nearly \$900,000. & our net earnings were over \$450,000.

I presume it is almost needless to say to you, that this business is capable of being increased threefold

4.
Our great drawback is that we have only two ports in the Inland Sea, to enter.

With these ships under the Japanese flag, they could enter other ports than ~~Higo~~ ~~Kagasaki~~ on the Inland Sea route & compete successfully with any ships in the world for the largest portion of the trade in Japanese Waters.

I cannot conceive (with proper organization and fair management) a finer piece of Capital than a line on the Inland Sea, to enter all the ports of Japan from Tokodama to Kagasaki.

The Japanese have at this time many very good ships, for instance the "Kuroda", "Behar", "Madras", "Charles Albert" & others, which I feel confident, if run in connection with ships at present owned by this Co. tri-weekly, would have as much business as they could do.

We are, from force of circumstances, handling freight at unusually low rates on our French ships. If we were without competition, the difference between our present rates and what could be charged, (always having a fair tariff) would amount to a sum equal, in my opinion

to one fourth our present earnings.

I regard it useless to dwell, at any greater length at present, on this subject. In conclusion I have only to say, if the Japanese Government are disposed to make the purchase, and are willing to assist us in overcoming any difficulty with our own Government in regard to the through mails, & also to enter into a fair arrangement with us for our through business, at a fair compensation, then I see no difficulty in my arranging the matter of price &c.

Yours very truly,

James Hart

Special Agent

千ヨシロベルトソン君

君の御返書に謝する

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條件を訂するに如何なる御答に謝する

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