

will be made by War steamers. The English Admiralty are well informed on the subject, and have accordingly made large depots of coal at several of the Bahama Islands, at the Havanna and other points in the Gulf of Mexico, and it is somewhat singular that our War steamers have been compelled to purchase from the English, at some of the points of deposit, large quantities of coal at the high price of eight or nine dollars per ton.

An act of Congress recently passed, authorises the locating of depots of coal, and I have no doubt that this important subject will soon be acted on, and the necessary appropriations made for the purpose.

The Revenue service will also require a large supply. Iron Revenue cutters are now building, and they will no doubt be soon put in commission.

The quantity of coal now consumed at all the Navy Yards must increase, as each yard requires four or five Steam Engines constantly in operation, pumping dry docks, sawing, and other operations. I have used the Cumberland coal for some time in the Laboratory, and work-shop attached to my department, and require no better coal.

The peculiar fitness of this coal to generate Steam will be admitted by all. Its perfect adaptation, and the necessity of its use in all boilers made of copper, will at once recommend its universal use for all Marine Engines. The consumption of coal of the large number of English and French steamers which are already built, and about to visit our shores must be very great, furnishing an immediate market for large quantities.

There are other important items—not the least is Iron—its consumption is daily increasing, and the mineral products of the State of Maryland would find a ready market in the work-shops of our Navy Yards.

From a careful investigation of this subject, I am induced to believe that it would be a safe estimate to say that the United States for the purposes above mentioned, would on an average for the next ten years, become the annual consumer of at least one million of tons of coal, iron, &c., the products of the mineral region of the valley of the Potomac, provided the same would be delivered at Tide-water, from whence these products could be easily distributed to all our naval depots and yards.

All the particulars and data upon which the above calculations are predicated, are at your service.

And also, the report of this department, in reply to the resolutions of the House of Representatives above mentioned.

I am respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

G. L. THOMPSON,

*Engineer in Chief United States Navy.*