

sudden and rapid streams. This is in favour of its navigation, and for such a small embouchure a bar of five feet at low water may be considered as a favourable entrance, and in my opinion, with due care, may be made available for the purposes of transporting cargo in safety from Port Victoria to Christchurch.

Having witnessed the heavy and generally impassable bars along the west coast of these islands, upon which we have lately been employed, and upon which we could scarcely look for an opportunity of crossing in a boat, I may in comparison state that we crossed the Sumner Bar the day we wished to do so: that the following day we were engaged almost entirely upon it; and that two days after (the day it was most convenient to return) we also again crossed it without a break in our open boats. This was viewing it under favourable circumstances, and why should any vessel attempt it under any other, when there is a port within three miles, and judgment upon the feasibility of entry can be ascertained before leaving? It therefore appears to me, that if cargo is wet or damaged, upon the Sumner Bar, it must be due to recklessness.

The bar is certainly exposed to occasional gales, but is exempt in a great degree from the hindrances of the west coast, constituting a continual break even in calm weather.

The great difficulty, however, in this river appears to be getting out, and the danger of being set through the rocks at the entrance, but it is possible in sailing vessels to avoid this, for we find that by keeping close to the north spit, a vessel would not be set through the rocks, but out in the channel.

In conclusion, Sir, I cannot recommend any money being laid out beyond a perch at the elbow, and leading marks over the bar. I consider it as at present an available channel for the transport of goods by decked vessels from Port Victoria, when commanded by competent persons, who are acquainted with it, and should establish the safety of carriage, by enquiries into the character of the vessel, the stowage, and the Master's efficiency.

Throughout these suggestions, I have been desirous of preventing the Province from entailing expenses, which will, I think, appear to you (as to me) of doubtful advantage; but, Sir, it appears to me that this rising Province will not long be satisfied with the present communication between the Port of Lyttelton and Christchurch, and I think the establishment of a small short substantial paddle-wheel-steamer will be found an invaluable (indeed necessary) adjunct to the prosperity of Canterbury, and there is ample room for such a vessel to turn. A small tug would answer admirably.

I also beg to suggest the propriety of appointing a nominal Pilot to the Sumner, in doing so I do not think it necessary that he should be at present a salaried Pilot, but that the nomination should be given to a person who might in consideration of present or future fees and emoluments, hold the situation, and as conservator of the river, to remove snags and other nuisances as occasion requires; he would also place beacons for leading over the bar; he could prevent mischief being done in the discharge of ballast in the river, etc., by being empowered to prevent it.

In connection with this recommendation, I mention Mr George Day's name, whom you appointed to accompany me, and

whom I find an intelligent active man, and who, although occupied on his own account upon other duties, is frequently here, and would be willing, and is quite competent to act, if I may use the expression, as honorary pilot or river conservator.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Commander and Surveyor,

BYRON DRURY.

## SHIPWRECKS AT SUMNER

I am indebted to Mr Athol Hunnibell for the following review of shipwrecks at Sumner.

(1) 9th January, 1856. Steamer "ALMA."

While crossing the Sumner Bar on January 9, 1856, the small steamer "Alma" struck heavily and sank. The vessel was broken in two, by the attempts to raise her. It was supposed that one of the chains placed underneath the steamer for that purpose, cut through the bottom, as a noise was heard resembling the tearing of a sheet of paper, and immediately afterwards the punts rose.

(2) 23rd October, 1863. Ketch "WATER LILY."

The ketch "Water Lily" went ashore on the Sumner Spit, on 23rd October, 1863, and became a total wreck.

(3) 18th November, 1863. Cutter "CHARLOTTE."

The cutter "Charlotte" of 40 tons register, was wrecked at Sumner about 18th November, 1863, with the loss of all hands. The body of the cook was found in a dinghy on the beach, and later, portions of the wreck, and clothing, recognized as having belonged to the mate of the cutter, were washed ashore. About three days after the loss of the "Charlotte," her hull, floating bottom upwards, and with the mast broken off near the deck, was picked up off Pigeon Bay. It was supposed that the cutter had capsized during the gales which had prevailed. The cutter was owned in Auckland.

(4) 10th February, 1864. Paddle Steamer "AUGUSTA."

On 10th February, 1864, the paddle steamer "Augusta" was stranded on the Sumner Bar. She was eventually refloated, and later sold and renamed the "Eleanor." The "Augusta" was a vessel of 58 tons, and as the "Eleanor," was totally wrecked at Greymouth on March 15, 1866. The "Eleanor" was bound from Greymouth to Hokitika, and was washed up on the north beach, three miles above the river. The "Eleanor" was well known on the West Coast, having been a constant trader for many months.

(5) 4th August, 1864. Schooner "FAWN."

The schooner "Fawn" was wrecked on the Sumner Bar on 4th August, 1864. She was insured for £600.