

LIFE-BOATS.

LETTER.

FROM THE

SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

IN REFERENCE TO

*Life-boats on the coasts of the United States.*

MAY 3, 1852.

Referred to the Committee on Commerce.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
*April 20, 1852.*

SIR: I have the honor to report that, of the appropriations of 28th and 30th September, 1850, of ten thousand dollars each, made by Congress, for the locating of life-boats on the coast of the United States, the sum of \$10,000 has been expended in pursuance of the law, under the direction of the Life-saving Benevolent Association of New York, by authority of this department, in the building of boat-houses, purchase of boats and life-cars, and other articles, for saving of life and property from shipwreck, on the coast of Long Island, Fisher's Island, and at Watch Hill, in Rhode Island; and that of the remaining ten thousand dollars, the sum of \$8,534 has been expended on portions of the coast of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and Texas. The balance of the appropriation, amounting to \$1,466, will be consumed in the erection of houses for the preservation of the boats and appurtenances already located.

The reports received by the department show that many hundred persons have been rescued from imminent peril, from shipwrecked vessels, by means of these boats, located at different points, a large portion, if not all of whom would probably have perished, but for the means of safety thus placed at command, under the authority of Congress. Much property, that otherwise would have been lost, has also been saved through the instrumentality of these boats, and the duties accruing thereon paid to the government.

There are numerous applications, from different points, for the location of similar boats, and many places along our extensive sea-coast where they would be advantageously placed, and would, in all probability, be the means of saving many valuable lives and much property; and the department would, therefore, strongly urge upon the attention of Congress the propriety of making, during the present session, a further appropriation of twenty thousand dollars for this purpose.

The department has adopted the plan of having all these boats made of galvanized iron, which possesses not only the advantage of much greater durability than wood, and consequently much less expensive in point of repairs, but also that they are always in a proper state for immediate service, which would not be the case with wooden boats, after lying for weeks or months in a boat-house, by which their timber and sheathing become warped or cracked, and their seams open.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THO. CORWIN,  
*Secretary of the Treasury.*

HON. LINN BOYD,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*