

To this amount should be added the cost of the battery on Ocean Beach, estimated at £3,000. It is possible that the purchase of additional guns for the field forces can be paid for out of the vote for arms and ammunition in this year's estimates.

Before I can detail the steps necessary to be taken—in order to give effect to the recommendations contained in this report—a decision will have to be given on the whole question of defence; but it is desirable that authority should be granted for the preparation of the designs for the proposed batteries, as the drawings will take several months to complete. Meanwhile the surveys of the sites which I have selected for the works are in progress.

Steps necessary to give effect to recommendations in report.

I further advise immediate action in respect to the torpedo boats, for—in the event of war breaking out before the defensive works are completed—a considerable degree of protection would be afforded by the torpedo boats alone. Designs, prices, and the fullest information on the subject generally should be procured from England; and enquiries made as to the suitability of any steam launches that may be now in use at the several ports of the colony.

P. H. SCRATCHLEY,
Colonel R.E.

Melbourne, 1st March 1880.