

THE TUNNEL

influence of commercial activity can only reach us as the spent ocean billow rolls upon our beaches in listless wavelets and is done. There might be a plethora of products; there could never be a fortune for anybody in them; when lean years come, as come they must, there is no reserve to call on; and, consequently, distress is ever at the door; whereas equal or inferior effort elsewhere abundantly repays the husbandman's toil.

But how has Canada attempted to fulfil her obligations to Prince Edward Island? How has she satisfied the national honor, pledged in such clear terms, at the union? How has the little sea-girt province essayed to obtain her dearest rights?

Naturally, the first attempt to keep up communication with the Mainland, was by navigation. The people were used to that system in summer, whilst at or between the nearest points, a rude ice-boat service, which combined the nautical idea with the sledges of earliest transportation experience, was in vogue for many years. Then, in their disappointment, steam was invoked to fulfil the letter of the contract. It was of the rudest at first. Old flat bottomed, wooden, river hulks, like the *Albert*, were tried; and, although they were a dismal failure, they gave perhaps the faintest ray of hope, that in this way the problem might ultimately be solved. Then came the *Northern Light* in 1877. The Government in 1888, impelled by the provincial authorities, sent a naval expert from the Department of Marine, Ottawa, to Sweden, to study winter navigation there. As a consequence the ice-breaker *Stanley*, on the model of the *Gottenburg*, which plies across the Kattigat, was constructed on the Clyde. This was the first steel boat to attempt the navigation of the Georgetown - Picton route, which has been regarded as the most suitable field of operation, owing to its width, which is supposed to save it from congestion. The *Stanley* has done all that could be expected from her. She failed, however to keep up continuous communication. In 1901 the *Minto*, a 2400 horse power steel ship was launched in the Old Country, to take up this work with the *Stanley*. Needless to say, they have not been able to give us a service at all commensurate with our requirements as a province. We have been for whole months at a time—this winter 60 long days—without a crossing, except by the irregular, difficult and dangerous ice-boats at the Capes. Never, even under the most favorable weather conditions, have we enjoyed anything approaching continuous communication such as was assured to us at Confederation. Another and more powerful boat must now be built, not that this system can ever succeed perfectly, but to do the best that can be done till the remedy is applied in another way.