

experiment of more than doubtful value from a financial point of view.

With Christmas week of this year, it will be just half a century since the first telegraph message was sent from St. John to any point beyond the province, or to any point within the province. The first telegraph message in the world, between Baltimore and Washington, was sent in 1844, and there is living in St. John a man who saw the first telegraph wire stretched in the city of New York, in the spring of 1846. This gentleman is Mr. Thomas M. Robinson, well known as a veteran in the service, and who is very well informed as to the early days of telegraphy.

Taking the history of the existing telegraph systems in the order of time, this paper would have to deal with the agitation for a line between Quebec and Halifax, in 1847, but as the purpose is rather to show what was actually accomplished, this branch of the subject must be passed over. At a meeting held in Halifax on February 10, 1847, it was agreed to form a company to construct a line to Amherst, to connect with a line in New Brunswick, with the branches to St. John and Fredericton, the estimated cost of the line to Amherst being £4,000. New Brunswick, however, had not then awakened to the necessity of the new invention, and nothing was done in this province until the following year.

In July, 1847, a private letter received in St. John from New York, stated that Mr. F. O. J. Smith, (who was later known as "fog" Smith) was about to visit St. John to arrange for placing that city in telegraphic communication with New York. So far as appears, Mr. Smith did not come, but soon after this Col. J. J. Speed undertook to form a company in New York to build a line from Portland, Me. to Halifax, there being already communication between Portland and New