

No. 7.

The HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR CANADA to COLONIAL OFFICE.

9, Victoria Chambers, London, S.W.,

DEAR SIR ROBERT HERBERT,

March 12, 1886.

I BEG to send you, for the information of Lord Granville, a memorandum I have prepared on the subject of the steam communication between Prince Edward Island and the mainland, in reply to the letter from Messrs. Sullivan and Ferguson to his Lordship, dated March 1st, in which they comment upon the report of a Committee of the Privy Council of Canada, upon the joint Address of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island, to Her Majesty the Queen.

No instructions have reached me from my Government upon the subject, and the views expressed in the memorandum are based upon my own knowledge of the facts of the case, but I venture to transmit it in the hope that Lord Granville may be able to peruse it before the meeting which takes place this afternoon.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) CHARLES TUPPER.

Enclosure in No. 7.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

MEMORANDUM by Sir CHARLES TUPPER on the observations submitted by the PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND DELEGATES to EARL GRANVILLE in their Paper of March 1, 1886.

The rejoinder, addressed to Earl Granville, of the Prince Edward Island Delegates, Messrs. Sullivan and Ferguson, to the report of the Committee of the Privy Council of Canada respecting the memorial to Her Majesty on the subject of the communication between the island and the mainland, commences by a general justification of the memorial in question.

They then quote from the report of the Committee of the Privy Council, Messrs. McLelan and Campbell, "that it is altogether improbable that any man who had seen the Straits of Northumberland, or had any knowledge of ice obstruction in mid-winter, could have supposed it possible to construct a steamer capable of crossing when the ice is at its heaviest in that season." They do not, however, comment upon this statement, or deny it, but content themselves by remarking that the offer of continuous steam communication, summer and winter, was entirely a voluntary act on the part of the Dominion, and they submit that it should be carried out. They do not contend that it is practicable to do so, but merely repeat the language of the memorial to Her Majesty that "no sufficient disposition has been shown by the Dominion Government to fulfil their obligations towards the island in this matter." Then they state the failure of the first vessel employed in 1874 and 1875, the "Albert." The unsuitability of the "Northern Light," put on the service in 1876, is also commented upon, and it is added that "she was not specially designed for the service." The report of Messrs. McLean and Campbell gives a clear answer to the allegations so far mentioned. In the first place they point out, very fairly, that prior to Confederation there was a regular service during the summer season, but that for five months or more, during the latter part of the autumn, the winter, and the early spring, there was no steam service at all, the mails, and presumably passengers, being carried by ice boats from Cape Traverse to Cape Tormentine, and thence by sleigh to Amherst, the land carriage being 52 miles, and the distance from Cape to Cape 9 miles. This appears to demonstrate very clearly that the Island Government had not found "continuous steam service" practicable during the winter season, otherwise the assumption is that they would have adopted it before Confederation. But they appear to imagine that all the difficulties which to them had been insurmountable, should have entirely vanished when the island joined the Dominion. In the circumstances, the phrase "continuous steam service" might fairly and properly have been accepted with the qualification "as far as practicable," and the obligations have been carried out by the