

The following is a Copy of a Letter that Mr. Buchanan addressed to Lord Aylmer in relation to suggested improvements in the Navigation of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Sea adjacent, which Letter His Lordship subsequently submitted to the present Governor-in-Chief the Right Honorable the Earl of Gosford, for his Excellency's consideration:—

Office of His Majesty's Chief Agent for Emigration
to Upper and Lower Canada.

Quebec, 1st August, 1835.

MY LORD,

I have the honor to submit to your Excellency the accompanying Chart, illustrative of my plan for rendering more safe the Navigation of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, to which I alluded in my general Emigration Report of last year that I had the honor to lay before your Lordship.

In an Essay I wrote on Practical Emigration in the year 1827, I offered some remarks as to the advantage that might be expected from the establishing Light Houses in proper situations in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, with a view not only to additional security in the navigation thereof, but also for the greater safety to the many thousands of Emigrants that were destined to these fine Colonies; and having had the satisfaction of observing that my humble suggestions on the subject were corroborated by others, and since for the most part acted on, I have in consequence been prompted to devote much thought to the subject which I now most respectfully submit to your Lordship's consideration.

The result of my observations, and which is strengthened by the testimony of many able Navigators and persons of great practical experience, is, that to establish a Light House on the Island of St. Paul's would be to materially increase the danger complained of in regard to that ill-fated spot. This Island as well as the adjacent sea is, from April to October, subject to thick foggy weather, in an average of four days out of seven; consequently, a light could rarely be observed, and the fact of a light being on the Island would induce the doubtful and unskillful Mariner to run for it. Many Shipmasters who come to Quebec and Ports in the Gulf, are so much accustomed to steer their course by the aid of Light Houses in the North Sea and English and Irish Channels, that they are from habit exceedingly anxious to avail themselves of every opportunity of observing one, if in their track, and not infrequently they will go some distance from their course to see a light, with a view to correct their Reckoning.

In consequence of the frequency of Fogs about St. Paul's, as before stated, and the uncertainty of seeing the light, many Mariners might be led into errors, and being unable to obtain soundings from the almost fathomless depth of the sea and uncertain currents round the Island of St. Paul's, they would be brought in contact with its foaming rocks and perpendicular cliffs without the least chance of safety; besides it will be found that nearly all the disastrous shipwrecks of late years, as also that of the ship William B. King from Londonderry, the present season, on the Island of Scatari, took place in foggy weather, when under full sail, and the vessel running with a strong breeze before the wind on the rocks; thus affording a melancholy evidence of the want of every attention on the part of the masters of such vessels and affording strong proof that some Beacon is wanted to warn the careless Mariner of his approach to danger, which Beacon should be stationed in a safe situation, easily found by the aid of soundings. I will here remark, that when foggy weather prevails about the entrance of the Gulf, the wind is generally from the Southward, which is a fair wind for vessels bound in; when the winds prevail with any Northing, and between East and West, fogs are rarely experienced.

I am prepared to expect that the objections I advance against a Light House on the Island of Saint Paul's, may on first view not find that advocacy that I anticipate will ere long be given to it, when the subject is better understood by persons of practical experience in such matters.

Having thus ventured to state to your Lordship my objections to a Light on St. Paul's, I feel myself called on to submit a substitute, and therefore crave your Excellency's particular attention to my plan, as shewn in the Chart, as a preventative against shipwreck, not only on St. Paul's, but on that fatal and dangerous Island, Scatari, near Cape Breton.

I propose therefore that a Floating Light be stationed on the Western End of the Green Bank, in about 35 fathoms depth of water, on a parallel due East from the Island of Scatari 135 miles, and from the Island of St. Paul's about S. E. by E. $\frac{3}{4}$ E. 160 miles, and from the Island of St. Peter's S. 48 miles, to be provided with a large bell, to be tolled in foggy weather, and a cannon, to be fired occasionally.

A reference to the Chart will at once shew your Lordship the situation to which I have referred, and the objects contemplated by the adoption of a Light Ship, to be run for by ships bound for the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, and from whence a safe course could be steered, if bound to Quebec and up the River as high as Cape Mont Pelée, passing mid-channel between St. Paul's and Cape Kay, and giving the Easternmost Bird Island a berth of five or six miles.

Should the proposed Light Ship be adopted, it is presumed that commanders of vessels bound to the Gulf and River St. Lawrence would in general be anxious to make it, which even in foggy weather they could easily do, from the aid of regular soundings; and having seen the light, nothing but the greatest ignorance and neglect could bring them in contact with the fatal Islands of Scatari or St. Paul's afterwards; the occurrence of any disaster under such circumstances, upon either of the beforementioned Islands, should for ever disqualify the Captain from the command of a ship in future.

I also submit, that to render more effectual the benefits I anticipate from the Floating Light, a Light House be erected on the Eastern Bird Island, to exhibit a stationary Light to distinguish it from the present Light on the South West point of Anticosti.

The expense of the Floating Light would not be found to exceed £2,000 in the outfit, and the annual disbursement would not amount to one halfpenny per ton on the tonnage trading to the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, on the average of the last three years, as also that of the proposed Light on Bird Island.

The authorities of Halifax might be entrusted with the management of the Floating Light, and in placing the Vessel at her proper moorings in April, and removing her again in October in each year, and the Government of New-Brunswick would be the most proper to take charge of the Bird Island Light. The soundings round the Bird Islands being very regular, from 25 fathoms four leagues off, to two fathoms within a cable's length of the rocks, added to the whitish appearance of the water, rendering the approach thereto, with proper attention, unattended with any serious risk. The great neglect of mariners is, a want of due attention to land and lead. Many fatal accidents might have been avoided had the lead been cast every two hours when approaching the land, and having the ship put under snug sail.

Submitting the whole to your Lordship's consideration, and soliciting the honor of your transmitting this Letter and the accompanying Chart to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonial Department,

I have the honor to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant,

A. C. BUCHANAN,

H. M.'s. Chief Agent for Emigration in U. and L. Canada.

To His Excellency
Lord AYLMER,
Governor-in-Chief,
&c. &c. &c.

NOTE.—The Chart referred to in the preceding Letter to being Lithographed,—when finished, Mr. Buchanan intends to distribute a number of Copies to the proper authorities here and in the Sister Provinces.