

No. 16.

Lord Hill to Lord John Russell.

My Lord,

Horse Guards, April 17, 1841.

WITH reference to my letter of the 8th instant, returning the papers relating to the defence of Canada, and transmitting a memorandum from the Duke of Wellington on that important subject, I beg leave to lay before your Lordship the copy of other communications from his Grace, containing some further information with regard to the inland navigation, and offering several important suggestions with a view to improve it, and to accelerate the traffic on the St. Lawrence by the employment of steam tugs, and so render the communication more rapid, and consequently the defence of the country more easy and certain.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) HILL.

Inclosure I in No. 16.

The Duke of Wellington to Lord Hill.

My dear Hill,

Strathfieldsaye, April 12, 1841.

SINCE I sent you my memorandum upon Canada, I have seen a person who has lately travelled by the Inland Navigation from Montreal to Kingston and back again.

It appears that the canals between Montreal and Bytown, that is the La Chine and Grenville, and those to assist the navigation of the Ottawa, are not so wide as the Rideau Canal from the Ottawa to Kingston.

The locks on the former will not admit the vessels required and employed to navigate the latter. The consequence is great delay in the communication by the inland navigation from the Rideau, that is Bytown to Montreal.

The difference of level between the River Rideau and the River Ottawa is considerable, and the locks by means of which the communication is kept up are numerous; this of course takes time, and is inconvenient. But there is no remedy. The inconvenience is vastly increased by the necessity of removing the passengers or cargoes from one description of vessel to another, at the very moment of making this ascent or descent.

It would be very desirable, therefore, that all the canals from Montreal to Bytown should be widened as soon as possible to the size of the Rideau Canal, their locks, &c. This work was always reckoned upon, and was estimated.

Much of the communication from Bytown to Kingston is carried on in the same vessels that navigate the canal, across lakes in some instances, and across submerged and overflowed land in others, but it is complete.

It would be very desirable, and would greatly accelerate this communication, if steam tugs were placed upon each of these lakes or pieces of water by which the land is submerged or overflowed, and over which the vessels pass, in order to tow the same from formed canal to formed canal. I should propose the use of steam tugs even upon the canal itself, only that I should apprehend injury to the banks. None can be done to the lakes, or to the water by which land is overflowed or submerged.

I would likewise call your attention to the communication between Quebec and Montreal. You will recollect that when I gave you a paper on the military operations which would be necessary in consequence of the rebellion in Canada, I recommended that steam tugs should be sent out to the St. Lawrence, in order to tow the vessels by which it might be necessary to keep up the communications on that river. I draw your attention to this same point at present. The difference in the facility and celerity of communication, particularly up the stream, would be enormous, and might be of the greatest consequence, in the event of extended military operations in North America.

There are many of these steam tugs in the Thames, and as I understand