

That on the initiation of the steam mail service to America, there were no doubt cogent reasons why the United States ports should be the ultimate destination of the British steamships, and Canada never complained of her interests being overlooked in these original arrangements; but of late years it has become painfully manifest to the whole public of the Province, that the continued operation of the large subsidy to vessels plying to New York and Boston was exceedingly detrimental to Canada, and far overbalanced the convenience of the mail service; and so strong did the feeling become, that the Provincial Government felt compelled to undertake a direct mail service with Liverpool from the St. Lawrence, fortnightly in summer, and monthly to Portland (United States), the terminus of the Grand Trunk Railway, in winter.

That this line of steamers has been in successful operation for three years, and has proved so satisfactory that the Canadian Government has contracted for a weekly service during the entire year, at the heavy cost of 55,000 l. currency annually.

That the operation of the Canadian line has conclusively shown that the St. Lawrence is the shortest and most direct route to Canada and the Western States; and it was the confident expectation of Canada that, when the period arrived for considering the continuance of the contract for the mail service performed by the Cunard line, communication would have been had with this Colony on the subject, especially as it had been shown by our acts that the existing arrangements were not satisfactory either for the mail service or commerce of this important Dependency of the Empire; and that, in view of Canada's having established a direct line at a heavy expense (although only about one-fourth of the amount paid for a similar service to the Cunard line by the British Government), and in view of the fact that the British Government has, in regard to all other Colonial Dependencies of the Empire, evidenced a desire to foster and protect their interest by granting large subsidies to lines of steamers established partly with a view to the extension of their commerce, and partly for the purpose of facilitating postal communication, no renewal of the contract would have taken place without negotiations to which Canada might be a party.

That we learn, with much regret, that it has pleased your Majesty's Government to renew the contract with the Cunard Company till 1867, without any opportunity having been afforded to the Government of Canada to urge such arrangements as would have been conducive to the prosperity of the Colony.

That the British Government has granted subsidies to the following lines, viz. :-

The line to the West Indies	-	-	-	-	-	£. 270,000
The line to the Mediterranean	-	-	-	-	-	244,000
The line to the Australian	-	-	-	-	-	185,000
The line to the South American	-	-	-	-	-	25,000

That the Cunard line now subsidised by the British Government, although touching fortnightly at Halifax, is essentially a line to the United States, and prejudicial to Canada, the overland route *via* Quebec and Halifax having, for a length of time, been partially and being now entirely abandoned as a channel of communication between Great Britain and Canada.

That the said line is, in fact, wholly devoted to the trade between the United Kingdom and the United States ports of New York and Boston, in opposition to the British Colonial ports of the St. Lawrence; thus placing the mother country in the invidious position of fostering foreign interests in preference to those of her own Colonies; and that even if the grant were made distinctly for the conveyance of the United States' correspondence, Canada is prepared to show that the St. Lawrence forms the best and most rapid means of transmitting these mails in summer, and that the most expeditious route in winter is by Portland, and will be so until the intercolonial railway between Halifax and Quebec is constructed.

That we cannot conceive it possible that the British Government desires to create any invidious distinction between this country and the other Colonies of the Empire; and as there appear no other means by which impartial justice can be afforded to Canada than by extending assistance to the line of steamers plying to the St. Lawrence ports, to which line the Province has already contributed as liberally as its revenues warrant, and there exist very grave doubts whether the St. Lawrence steamers will be able to continue their services against the advantages obtained through the subsidy to the Cunard line of steamers, we humbly pray that no renewal of the Cunard contract be made; that no subsidy be granted to any other transatlantic line, until Canada shall have had an opportunity of urging such arrangements as will conduce to its prosperity; and that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to extend to the Canadian steamers such assistance, by way of subsidy, as will place them upon an equal footing with other lines of steamers plying between British and Colonial ports.

Legislative Council Chamber, Canada,
Toronto, Wednesday, 2 March 1859.

(signed) N. Y. Belleau,
Speaker, L. C.

Legislative Assembly Hall, Canada,
Toronto, Friday, 25 February 1859.

(signed) Henry Smith, Jun.,
Speaker.