

The Monetary Times

Trade Review and Insurance Chronicle

38th Year—No. 45.

Toronto, Canada, May 5, 1905.

\$2 A YEAR
IN ADVANCE

CONTENTS

	Page		Page		Page
Prince Edward Island	1477	Montreal Letter	1481	Canadian Municipal Conditions...	1486
Wholesale Grocery Trade.....	1478	Our St. John Letter	1481	A New Industry	1488
Life Assurance in Canada.....	1478	Banking and Financial	1482	Old Times on the Lakes	1488
British Schools and Colonial Edu- cation	1479	Fire Insurance Matters.....	1483	Our Halifax Letter	1488
Mr. Gooderham's Death	1480	Trade Notes	1483	Amherst Board of Trade.....	1490
Manitoulin Island	1481	Clearing House Figures	1484	Toronto Markets	1499
		North of England Letter.....	1486	Montreal Markets	1500

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

The claim of the province of Prince Edward Island to improved communication with the main land of Canada is one that ought to be treated with respectful consideration. That interesting little province of 2,184 miles area, so luxuriant in sheaf and fruit and flower, so attractive to the fisherman, the bicyclist, the bather from June to October, suffers painfully in severe winters from isolation by reason of floating ice swept here and there by the tide. It is often true that neither small boats nor large ones can navigate thence to the main land with safety. This was the case during the last severe winter; as a matter of fact there were fifty-nine days of the winter of 1904-5 when no navigation was possible, and when thousands of tons of merchandise destined for her ports inward and outward could not be moved. This was bad enough for exporters of her own farm produce, but still more serious because the inhabitants were suffering for lack of supplies.

It is a natural question, has all been done that could be done to overcome these difficulties of navigation? We know that great efforts have been made by the Dominion Government, and a great deal of money spent, within the last quarter century, to provide boats that would make the passage of twenty to thirty miles from the main land of New Brunswick in all weathers. But these have not proved adequate. The forces of Nature have proved too strong for even the ice-breakers. And the people of the island are crying out in their distress for what was promised them when they joined the Confederation in 1873, namely, "efficient steam service, to effect continuous communication with the Intercolonial Railway, and the railways of the Dominion."

In these circumstances the project of a tunnel has been revived. And from recent enquiries and borings made and engineering opinions given it seems

no longer so forbidding a task as in 1885 or 1895 it was considered to be. Scientific men of prominence have declared its construction and ventilation feasible; and a contractor has within the last month even named a period during which he will undertake to build it and a price he is prepared to accept. Let us see, therefore, what are the conditions. Rev. Father Burke, who has come from Charlottetown, and addressed various Boards of Trade in leading Canadian cities in advocacy of the scheme, thus outlines it in an interview with the Monetary Times:—

The route contemplated is from Money Point, Westmoreland County, N.B., to Carleton Head, P.E.I., six and one-half miles, where sub-aqueous tunneling must be done. An approach of three-quarters of a mile on the Island side and one of one-half mile on the New Brunswick side makes the total length of the work say seven and three-quarter miles. Happily, the stratification is undisturbed. Borings at various points show red sandstone on the Island and some conglomerate. Two hundred feet down red clay shale is found which extends under Northumberland Strait at the point in question, and this is well adapted for the necessary borings. Below it is grey carboniferous sandstone, which, however, it is not necessary to touch. The New Brunswick end shows no insurmountable subterranean difficulties. Artificial ventilation will, of course, be necessary, but this has been successfully applied to tunnels three and four miles in length, and there is no strong reason to doubt that this can be applied in the present case.

Now to look at the matter on its financial side, which has been supposed to be the most appalling. The cost of the present system of operating steamers across the Strait is estimated to have been \$150,000; the insurance upon them, 10 per cent. on a million dollars, \$100,000; annual depreciation, \$100,000; interest on a million of property at three per cent., \$30,000; (i.e., already invested or about to be), subsidy in summer, \$20,000; present cable service, which would be no longer necessary if the tunnel were built, \$7,500; running ice-boats, \$10,000. Then there is \$30,000 yearly interest on a million dollars claimed by the Island and allowed by the Federal Government because of inadequate ferry service.