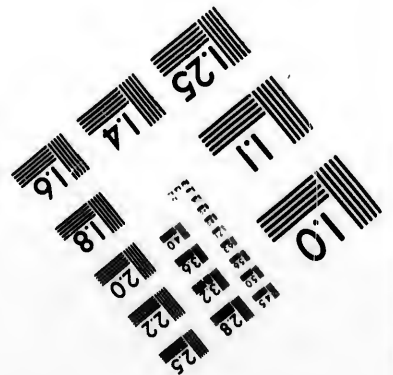
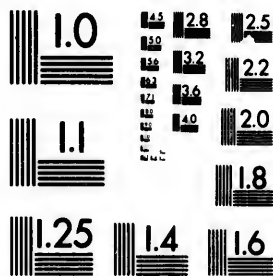


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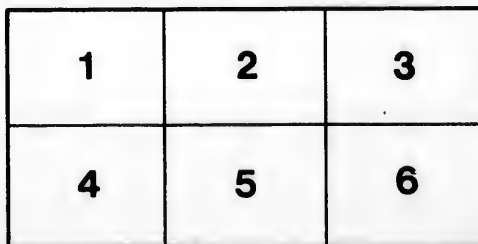
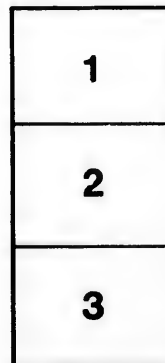
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OFFPRINT FROM QUEEN'S QUARTERLY.

Steamship Service

Between

Canada and Great Britain

BY

SANDFORD FLEMING, C.E., LL.D., C.M.G., Etc.

KINGSTON, OCT., 1896.

1896

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NOTE ON OUR ATLANTIC STEAMSHIP SERVICE.

THERE have been various proposals before the public for several years back, having in view the improvement of the steamship service between Canada and Great Britain. The subject has been discussed frequently in the press, it has engaged the attention of Parliament, and large subsidies have been voted in order to secure a Canadian line of steamships, not inferior in build and speed to any on the ocean.

The means of communication between Canada and Great Britain is a national question, and every individual who has a word to say, who has a fact to produce or an opinion to express, should not hesitate to give expression to it in some form. It is surely of high importance to the Dominion and the Empire that we should take the fullest advantage of the geographical position which Canada occupies on this Continent.

In common with every Canadian I feel a lively interest in this question. My interest is not lessened by the fact that I have crossed the Atlantic a great many times, at all seasons of the year, in every kind of weather, and by every route usually travelled; that I have witnessed, throughout a period of more than fifty years, the development of transatlantic steam navigation from very small beginnings to the magnificent passenger-ships of today; that I have myself crossed the ocean in all kinds of craft, from the old Quebec timber ship up to the Great Eastern; that I have made the voyage in the first half of the century at an average speed from port to port of less than three miles an hour, and within the present year at more than twenty miles an hour, the voyage in the one case occupying six weeks, and in the other less than one week.

It having been my privilege to enjoy opportunities of becoming familiar with the ocean voyage, I feel it my duty to submit the views I have formed, in order simply that they may be added, as my contribution, to what is known on the subject.

We all recognise that the river and estuary of the St. Lawrence

is the great natural highway of the Dominion. The St. Lawrence during the summer is reached from the ocean by two channels, the Strait of Belle-Isle to the north of Newfoundland and Cabot Strait to the south and west. The gulf and River St. Lawrence admit the passage of ocean steamers to Montreal, a distance of 900 miles inland from Belle-Isle. Of the two routes to the open ocean that by the Strait of Belle-Isle is the most direct from the cities on the St. Lawrence to Europe. It is not used by the shipping of other nations unless they are engaged in Canadian trade; it is therefore practically and essentially a Canadian route of immense value to Canada and Great Britain.

We cannot correctly estimate the value of the Belle-Isle route without referring to certain peculiar climatic conditions which impose a limit to its utility. During the winter the St. Lawrence is not available as a means of communication. Navigation closes by the end of November, and when Spring returns, although the river and gulf may be sufficiently free from ice in May to admit of ships entering by Cabot Strait to ascend to Quebec and Montreal, Belle-Isle remains practically closed until a later date. The more northern entrance is not generally available for ships until the last half of June, and the regular mail steamers do not attempt to pass before July 1st.

The explanation of this late opening of navigation by Belle-Isle is well known. It is due to the fact that in the spring months the Arctic current descends from the north along the Labrador and Newfoundland coast, laden with innumerable icebergs which extend a long way to sea and drift into the Straits in the earlier months of summer so as to impede navigation. The ice-drift varies from year to year. It may leave its source at an earlier or later date than usual, and as a consequence its arrival opposite Belle-Isle varies a few weeks: but late or early, vessels cannot enter the Straits until the icebergs have become sufficiently reduced in number to admit an easy passage in open water between them. The Arctic current gradually carries the ice southerly into warmer latitudes where it is melted, and hence it is, that as the summer months advance the icebergs largely disappear. In clear weather steamships have seldom much difficulty in finding their way through the Belle-Isle passage, but it is not so easy during fog. All winds from the southward bring

up fog, and during its prevalence the greatest caution has to be exercised in order to insure safety. For a distance of 200 miles east and 100 miles west of Belle-Isle, the icebergs may be looked for; occasionally they have been seen much farther to the east and west of the Straits. Within these limits the track of steamers is rarely entirely free from icebergs, although their number greatly diminishes in the later months of summer. Fog and foggy weather is, however, the serious difficulty to be encountered in the ice belt. When fog appears, as it often does, every captain who has a due regard for life and property, at once "slows" his ship. If the speed be 13 knots it will be reduced to one-half; whatever the ordinary speed of the ship, it must be reduced according to the density of the fog; in the densest fog the engines must be stopped altogether in order to insure safety. Capt. W. A. Smith, of the Marine and Fisheries Department, to whom I am indebted for much information, gives it as his opinion, the result of long experience in command of the Allan steamships, that "in dense fog or snow storm, when a ship is within the limits of the ice track, the only method to adopt is to stop the engines entirely, and station extra men around the vessel's deck to look out for ice drifting towards the ship from windward, or the ship being set towards other masses to leeward." Unlike rocks and shoals, icebergs drift with the ocean currents, and their exact position cannot be shown on charts, hence the great anxiety they cause navigators in thick weather.

Icebergs are often very numerous in July. By September the conditions are generally improved both with respect to fog and icebergs. In October few icebergs are usually seen and sometimes none whatever. In clear weather, which nearly always prevails with a north wind, a steamship may then pass at full speed with safety. In November there is an occasional northeasterly snow-storm, otherwise the Straits are about as easily navigated as in October. Fog is not always absent, but it is not so common in these two months, and generally there is less cause for anxiety. Before the end of November, navigation by the waterway of the St. Lawrence is practically closed.

With respect to the duration of fog on the Belle-Isle route, some judgment can be formed from the records kept at the steam

fog alarm stations. I have been unable to obtain returns for the station on Belle-Isle, but I have been favored with copies of the records for three years at Greenly Island, Forteau, Cape Norman and Cape Bauld. These stations are in the Strait, the two first near the western entrance on the Labrador side, the two last near the eastern entrance on the Newfoundland side. According to the returns the duration of fog at each station in each month of the season open to navigation for 1892 '93 and '94, was as follows :

FOG TABLE.

Giving the maximum, mean and minimum duration of fog at four steam fog alarm stations in each of the five open months of 1892, '93 and '94 :

MONTHS.		GREENLY ID.	FORTEAU.	C. NORMAN.	C. BAULD.
		<i>Hours.</i>	<i>Hours.</i>	<i>Hours.</i>	<i>Hours.</i>
July	Max.	233	245	219	309
	Mean	192	225	173	167
	Min.	159	212	140	93
Aug.	Max.	143	326	200	262
	Mean	126	251	164	203
	Min.	113	170	112	166
Sept.	Max.	137	244	110	110
	Mean	122	184	90	99
	Min.	105	120	53	80
Oct.	Max.	115	161	125	215
	Mean	61	121	114	155
	Min.	22	70	107	110
Nov.	Max.	35	56	89	105
	Mean	27	40	41	68
	Min.	22	12	6	32

The facts adduced show that there is the greatest possible necessity for vigilance and prudence in navigating these waters in thick weather ; that the comparatively slow vessels (from 12 to 14 knots) which have heretofore passed through the Strait, have frequently to go at half-speed, and under certain circumstances to stop altogether until the weather clears. It follows that if swifter steamers were placed on the route, they would be compelled to reduce their speed to the same requirements. Such being the case, it is obviously impossible for fast steamers under ordinary circumstances to maintain a high rate of speed. With perfectly clear weather, when the icebergs borne by the Arctic current have been dispersed, it might be possible for a 20-knot steamer to make a " record passage," but such an event would be

at rare intervals. Experience goes to show that there is small probability of making such passage in the first half of the season and seldom in any season. A 20-knot steamer could easily maintain her speed on that part of her voyage between the iceberg region and the British coast, but through the 300 miles or more, in which ice and fogs prevail, the average speed could scarcely be reckoned at a higher rate than 6 or 8 miles an hour. For the remaining 800 miles to Montreal, I fear it would not be possible to maintain full speed on much of the distance. In day-light and clear weather there would be nothing to prevent a 20-knot steamer running at full speed ; but it is not always clear, and in a river with rocks and shallows in each side, with steamers and sailing craft passing frequently, with intricate turnings in at least portions of the channel, the speed would very often have to be reduced, and indeed it would be fortunate if at times the engines had not to be stopped. For these reasons I am inclined to think that a considerable reduction from full speed must frequently be expected. It is quite true that steamships constructed to run swiftly would always have the advantage over slower vessels, and that whenever an opportunity offered they would have it in their power to proceed at the height of their speed, and in part make up lost time. I have already said that, with a combination of favourable circumstances, rapid passages could be made on this route. With no fog, no ice, no snow, with fair weather and a clear sky, the swiftest steamer could run at full speed, and it would under such circumstances be possible to make wonderfully quick passages.

The conditions of the route from the St. Lawrence to Great Britain by way of Cabot Strait are not in all respects the same as those referred to. This route is available nearly two months earlier in summer than the Belle-Isle route, but it is considerably less direct. There are from five to six months when the navigation of the St. Lawrence is practically closed. In May the field ice which has since February accumulated on the banks of Newfoundland begins to disperse, and icebergs appear in considerable numbers, the advance guard of the stream of icebergs borne south by the Arctic current. These icebergs drift some distance westerly after passing Cape Race. In occasional years very few are seen. Fog is not uncommon. Steamships can avoid much ice by taking a southerly course across the banks, but field ice may

be looked for early in May on the approach to Cabot Strait, and in some years in the Gulf. In June very little field ice remains, but during this month icebergs begin to appear off Newfoundland in numbers, rendering it necessary for ships to proceed with caution in foggy weather. In the Gulf, as elsewhere, southerly winds invariably bring up fog, and ships for Quebec require to observe caution and reduce their speed according to the density of the fog.

The reasons given for reducing the speed of steamships on the Belle-Isle route apply to the Cabot Strait route, although in a less degree, as there is on the latter route more sea-room on much of the distance, but the length of the voyage from Quebec to the United Kingdom by way of Cabot Strait is considerably lengthened.

It will be obvious that the two routes from the St. Lawrence to Europe are closed for half the year ; and that when they are open, the navigation for more than one-third the distance from Montreal to Great Britain is frequently unfavorable to rapid steaming. On some portions of the distance, great speed if attempted would be a perilous proceeding.

The act confederating British North America extended Canada to the sea and created a new Dominion, with physical as well as political features entirely different from the old Province. The St. Lawrence was the only highway to old Canada, but on the day that the Confederation act became law, provision was made for creating new highways from open harbours on the Atlantic coast line. We cannot easily estimate the importance of these ocean harbours. Their value is priceless, providing as they do, the means of communicating by steamship with all parts of the world at all seasons of the year. What would Russia exchange to-day for a harbour like Halifax in any part of Europe? Would not the Czar risk a great war and expend millions to possess a port on the Atlantic coast, equal to any one of our Canadian harbours?

St. Andrew's, St. John, Halifax, Louisburg and Sydney are the best known harbours on our seaboard. They are each connected by railway with nearly all the Provinces of the Dominion. Sydney and Louisburg are the nearest ports to Europe, but both are open to objection as terminal points for trans-Atlantic steam-

ers. Sydney is liable in the early spring months to be blocked with drift ice. Louisburg has a limited capacity for large vessels, and its entrance is somewhat exposed. Moreover, both ports are situated on the island of Cape Breton, separated from the mainland by the Gut of Canso. To cross the Gut a ferry involving more or less inconvenience would be necessary.

Halifax comes next in order. This is the most easterly available harbour in Canada, indeed on the Continent. Nautical men are united in the opinion that Halifax is "one of the best in the world," and that it is "easier of access and egress than any other large harbour on the coast." From this harbour steamships of any class may leave, at any condition of the tide, to cross the ocean every day of the year. Fogs are not unknown on the coast and are frequent at some seasons. Fog is a difficulty experienced by navigators along the whole of the North American coast; it is a common accompaniment of southerly winds. The approaches to Halifax are however of such a character that the largest steamships can gain access to or egress from the port with greater ease than at New York or Boston. With additional automatic buoys, electric lights and signals, the approach to the harbour of Halifax can be still farther improved. Unlike New York the entrance channel is not tortuous and winding, and the passage across the bar does not depend on the condition of the tide. indeed, at Halifax there is no bar to obstruct the entrance. Ships of any size can enter or depart at any hour by day or night.

The direct course to Great Britain passes Cape Race. This course would be followed by steamships for eight months in the year, but in the spring months, when navigation on the banks of Newfoundland is more or less impeded by ice, it would be best to follow the southerly course, taken by the New York steamers, until the banks are passed. The deflection would somewhat lengthen the voyage and make the passage about half a day longer, but it would obviate danger and all possible delays.

A question has from time to time been raised in the United Kingdom as to the most eligible port in the British islands for the arrival and departure of trans-Atlantic steamers. The question is not without importance, and it should be considered not in the interest of localities but in the general interest. Many steamships now make Liverpool the terminal port, some go to Southampton,

others to Scottish and Welsh ports. The New York mail steamships touch at Queenstown, the Canadian mail steamers at Merville. Those of us who have travelled by the latter vessels are familiar with the detention at Merville and the loss of time to both passengers and ship. As far as can be seen, there is no sufficient reason for the delay, which in some instances is nearly half a day in the case of outgoing steamers, and any supposed advantage can be more than gained in another way without any detention. If the chart be examined it will be noticed that there is a harbour on the track of the steamers to Liverpool, named Loch Ryan, which possesses every advantage claimed for Merville without any of the drawbacks. The chief reason given for steamships calling at Merville is to accelerate the forwarding and delivery of London letters; with this object in view the mail bags are transferred from the incoming ship to the Irish railways and forwarded *via* Dublin and the Irish Channel to Holyhead, thence by the North Western Railway to London. By landing the mails at Loch Ryan in place of Merville, London letters could be delivered five hours sooner, and other advantages would be obtained. Loch Ryan is on the coast of Wigtonshire, Scotland, a well sheltered inlet from the North channel; it is about seven miles in length to the town of Stranraer, where railway connection is made with all the trunk lines of England and Scotland. The best water for large ships is found at no great distance from the entrance, where it would be quite possible to bring the trans-Atlantic steamship and railway side by side. Compared with other well-known seaports now used or proposed as terminal ports, there would be a reduction in the length of sea voyage in favour of Loch Ryan. The actual distance from Canada to Loch Ryan is:—

30 miles less than	to	Milford Haven.
81	“	“ Holyhead.
90	“	“ Southampton.
125	“	“ Liverpool.

Loch Ryan is in fact the nearest eligible harbour in the island of Great Britain to the American Continent, and to my mind presents great possibilities in connection with trans-Atlantic travel. The following table will show that, with a single exception, by no other port could Canadian letters be carried to and from London in less time than by way of Loch Ryan. The ex-

ception is the harbour of Blacksod Bay in Mayo on the coast of Ireland. A mail route by Blacksod Bay would however be open to the same objection as the Merville route, that is to say, the inconvenience inseparable from the packet service between Dublin and Holyhead with the double transfer on the crossing.

ROUTES BETWEEN LONDON AND HALIFAX.	SEA VOYAGE.		TIME TO LONDON.		
	Distance, Sea Miles.	Hours at 20 knots.	Hours via Dublin and Holyhead.	Hours, rall only.	Total hours between Halifax and London.
<i>By Irish Ports :</i>					
Merville	2264	113	17	....	130
Blacksod	2113	106	17	....	123
Valencia	2155	108	18	....	126
Queenstown	2225	111	17	....	128
<i>By other Ports without calling at Ireland :</i>					
Liverpool	2465	123	....	4	127
Holyhead	2421	121	....	6	127
Millford	2370	119	....	6	125
Southampton	2530	127	....	2	129
Loch Ryan	2340	117	....	8	125

In the table the speed is reckoned at 20 knots an hour at sea, and the time between the several points and London is estimated on the basis of the speed at present attained by railway trains on land, and by steam packets between Dublin and Holyhead. A lower speed than 20 knots at sea would obviously give a somewhat greater difference in time in favor of Loch Ryan than above stated.

The table brings out the fact that mails from Halifax could be delivered in London via Loch Ryan in five hours less time than by the Merville route, and in two hours less than by direct steamship to Liverpool. If such be the case, it is perfectly clear that the establishment of a trans-Atlantic mail service by way of Loch Ryan would be the means of accelerating the delivery of letters to every portion of England and Scotland, more expeditiously than by any existing route. Manufacturing centres in Yorkshire, for instance, would gain from 3 to 5 hours; other parts of England 6 hours, while Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Scotland generally, would gain 10 hours in connection with every outgoing and incoming trans-Atlantic mail.

Although Loch Ryan is in Scotland, it is in close proximity to Ireland; the sea passage across the North Channel is less than half the distance from Holyhead to Dublin. Belfast, the most

important centre of Irish industry and commerce, is the nearest city in the United Kingdom to Loch Ryan, much closer in fact than the nearest Scottish city. There is at present an excellent steam ferry across the narrow channel between Ireland and Scotland, by which Belfast is brought within little more than two hours of Loch Ryan. By this ferry the trans-Atlantic mails could be delivered in Belfast from Loch Ryan in considerably less time than they are now delivered from Merville, and thus, paradoxical as it may seem, Ireland would share in the general advantage which would accrue from transferring the mail service from Merville to Loch Ryan.

The foregoing remarks bear on the practicability of a fast Canadian steamship service more than on the policy of establishing one. The evidence adduced goes to show that the great river of Canada with its affluents penetrating so far into the continent, is, and always will be of immense value as a highway for conveying under certain limitations, the staple products of the country. But our national waterway is, I fear, but ill-suited for a fast service. We find in the western half of the voyage between Montreal and Liverpool natural and unalterable conditions which forbid the running of ships at a uniform high rate of speed with safety. If we had no ice, no fog, no snow, if we had always daylight or clear nights, there would be no difficulty in maintaining at full speed on the route the fastest steamships now or hereafter to be constructed. To every Canadian, it would be no little gratification to have, on our St. Lawrence route, the fastest mail service between the two continents, but we must recognise that the essential conditions to attain it are wanting. If the ocean is to be crossed rapidly with any degree of regularity from the Dominion to the Mother country and at the same time with safety, every fact and all experience goes to show, that it will be expedient to leave the St. Lawrence to its proper functions, and seek a more suitable route for a fast service from one of the splendid open harbours on the Atlantic seaboard.

In considering this phase of the question, we must recognise certain underlying principles which to a large extent govern the transportation of the two great divisions of traffic. In passenger traffic, *speed and regularity* are held to be primary considerations, while in the transportation of freight, *economy* in transit is the first

consideration, and speed takes a secondary place. These principles have long been recognised on railways, and they are now beginning to be considered in steamship navigation. Rapidity of transit is not attained without enhancing the cost, and the ratio of increase is greatly enhanced as the speed is accelerated, especially at sea. There are few articles of merchandise that can profitably be transported at express passenger train rates, and few persons, when they can avoid it, desire to travel by slow freight trains.

That these principles will in the end govern in the Atlantic steamship service, there can be no doubt. Hitherto it has been the practice to combine passenger and freight traffic by the same ship, but all the circumstances point to the desirability of a change of system. The combination is not necessary for speed or the comfort of passengers, and it in no way lessens the cost of transporting merchandise. A ship constructed for the combined traffic is a compromise; as such it is either too slow for passengers, or too fast for freight, or it suffers from both objections and consequently is unprofitable and unsatisfactory. So long as passengers were content to travel at the low rate of speed suitable for freight, the combination was justifiable and ship-owners had no incentive to improvement. Travellers are no longer satisfied, and there is a pressure to have the speed increased, but to accelerate the speed and at the same time continue to carry freight with passengers would obviously be a mistake.

In the ferries between Holyhead and Dublin, between Dover and Calais, and between many other points, the traffic is properly classified. Passengers and mails are carried in one steamer,—goods and merchandise in another. The Atlantic crossing is every year partaking more and more of the character of a ferry, and the same reasons for classifying traffic as carried on in the smaller ferries apply with equal if not greater force to the ocean ferry.

It is of the first importance that we should have on the St. Lawrence route, steamships for the transportation of freight at the lowest cost. As in vessels trading with the sister colonies in the South Pacific, these steamships should be provided with the best means of carrying perishable products, such as but-

ter, fruit, beef, mutton, poultry, game, so that they might be placed in the British markets in perfect condition. Our geographical position would give us an immense advantage over Australasia in respect to the transit of all such products. No tropical region has to be passed through, the voyage would be comparatively short, and there would be no necessity for carrying such products at extraordinary speed; their preservation in good condition would be as easily secured in a slow as in a fast steamship, while the slow steamship would offer the advantage of admitting their conveyance at a minimum expense. We have no product which requires to be conveyed at the speed demanded by passengers. If Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania can send enormous quantities of fresh butter, mutton, beef and fruit on a six or seven weeks' voyage across the torrid zone, there should be no difficulty in sending similar products on a voyage of two weeks or less across the North Atlantic.

If the principles laid down are recognised as sound, and we consider them in connection with the fact that the conditions imposed by nature are unfavourable for rapid transit by the St. Lawrence route, we are irresistibly led to these conclusions :—

(1) That any attempt to establish on the St. Lawrence route a line of fast trans-Atlantic steamships to rival those running to and from New York would result in disappointment.

(2) That our great waterway will always be employed to the greatest advantage in conveyance of staple products and all ordinary cargo merchandise at the lowest possible rates, and that to secure low rates, it must be carried in steamships of moderate speed.

(3) That steamships suitable for the trade of the St. Lawrence in summer, would at the close of navigation find an open harbour at St. John, New Brunswick, the nearest eligible Canadian seaport for the cities on the St. Lawrence.

(4) That if we desire to establish a Canadian line of passenger steamships, equal in power and speed to any on the ocean, it will be necessary to make it an "all year round line" from one of our best Atlantic sea-ports.

(5) That there is no more eligible harbour on the western side of the Atlantic than Halifax in Nova Scotia, or on the eastern side

than Loch Ryan in Scotland ; and that between these two points will be found the shortest available route across the ocean, which can be used by fast steamships at all seasons of the year.

It is our common interest that the freest intercourse should take place between the people of Canada and our fellow-subjects in the United Kingdom. One of the best means of attaining that end, is to have fast passenger steamships, good accommodation and the lowest charges. In my view, a person in Winnipeg, Toronto or Montreal, should be able to purchase a passage ticket by the Canadian line, which would enable him to reach England, Ireland or Scotland, at any season of the year, in less time and at less cost, than by any other route. This important object can be attained by establishing a line of steamers specially designed for passengers and mails between Halifax and Loch Ryan. To secure speed, regularity, accommodation, and low charges, a subsidy would be required, and it must be generally admitted that there are few objects for which public money could be more wisely expended. It is not necessary that the steamships should be richly appointed or profusely provisioned. Everything should be done to secure safety; there should be reasonable comfort; and the passage tickets should be reduced to a uniform standard price; those who desire luxuries, should be required to pay for them, precisely as travellers on railways pay extra for Pullman or parlour cars.

The trans-Atlantic passenger and mail traffic has acquired enormous proportions, and it is increasing yearly as improved facilities are provided. Estimates by well-informed authorities, place the number of persons travelling between the two continents, so high, that if evenly distributed through the year, it would give an average of about 7000 each way weekly. The best, the safest and the swiftest steamships, invariably attract the best traffic. The steamships running from New York draw Canadian passenger traffic away from the St. Lawrence route, because these vessels are much better than our own. Scarcely a steamship leaves or arrives at that port without having many Canadian travellers, both first and second class, on board. The condition would be changed if we had a good service on the route, between Halifax and Port Ryan ; and I am satisfied the passengers by this new Canadian

route, would not be confined to our own people; large numbers would be attracted to it, by the reduction in the sea voyage from 3004 to 2340 nautical miles, and a corresponding reduction in the time at sea.

In general passenger traffic, minor circumstances, considered by all but railway managers as of no great moment, often turn the scale in favor of a newly established route. The shortening of the sea voyage by 664 miles would, with a 20-knot ship, give 33 hours less at sea, itself an important consideration to not a few, to whom sea travel is a continuous time of suffering. It is quite true that Loch Ryan is further than Liverpool is from London, the great objective point of most travellers. But London can be reached by way of Loch Ryan sooner than by way of Liverpool. Moreover, London is not the only point of attraction; there are historic places in all parts of the United Kingdom of deep interest to very many from the United States, as well as from Canada. Loch Ryan is centrally situated; it is connected with Ireland by the shortest steam ferry; it is in close proximity to the English lake district; it is within the sphere of scenes made memorable by deeds of valour, and by the literary works of gifted men. Loch Ryan is on the margin of the land of Burns, of Scott and Carlyle, to which travellers make their pilgrimages in increasing numbers year by year. Then the fact, that Loch Ryan is already connected with the great railway systems of the three Kingdoms, will give it more than ordinary importance as a terminal port for trans-Atlantic steamships. The principal railway companies will each be interested in a proposal, which, if realized, would considerably augment their traffic; and it need scarcely be remarked that if it benefited the railways, reciprocal traffic advantage would be conferred on the steamships.

The St. Lawrence is of the highest value to Canada as a great national highway for the transportation of merchandise of all kinds, and it would be a wise policy to develop it as a freight route to the fullest extent. Investigation has satisfied me, however, that it would, be unwise to incur a large expenditure in attempting to establish a fast passenger steamship service by this route. I have formed this view, I confess, with great unwillingness, and only from the conviction that such an attempt

would most certainly be disappointing, and if persisted in, would be attended with no small peril.

No one disputes the necessity for abandoning the St. Lawrence as a maritime highway for traffic in winter. Equally its climatic conditions will prevent this route being used by fast steamers in summer. I am fully in sympathy with those who are reluctant to take this view, and, unwillingly abandon the hope of securing a successful fast service on the St. Lawrence route. The facts, however, are uncontrovertible, and the climatic conditions are unalterable.

The Canadian Government has constructed one railway, and assisted in constructing a second railway to Halifax. The expenditure on both lines has been for national purposes. Is it not in the public interest that these railways should be utilized to the fullest extent for national needs? Would not a line of fast steamships constituting a regular ferry from the shores of Canada to the shores of Great Britain so utilize them? May we not correctly view such a line of fast steamships in the light of a corollary to the railways? Is not the ocean ferry wanted to complete the means of communication and make closer the connection between the Dominion and the Mother country?

