

THE CAPES ROUTE.

How the Winter Mail Service was Performed Sixty Years Ago.

A Wiry Scotchman carries them across the Straits on foot.

HOW THE WINTER MAIL SERVICE SHOULD BE PERFORMED.

With Powerful Tugboats, Well Equipped Iceboats, and Articled Boatmen.

An Interview with the Veteran Capt. Irving.

Messrs. Muttart and Irving, for many years contractors for the carriage of the mails across the Straits of Northumberland during winter, were in town a few days ago. Both bear their years well, notwithstanding the arduous labors they have, year after year, performed in behalf of the public.

"Have you any idea, Captain, how long the mails have been carried by the Capes?"

"Mail carrying by the Capes," said the Captain, "was begun previous to the year 1827. Boats were not then in use. The service in midwinter, at that time, was performed on foot by a wiry Scotchman named McRae. He started from Charlottetown with the mails, consisting of despatches from Governor Ready and a few English letters. Arriving at Cape Traverse he awaited fine weather and favorable ice. Then, crossing the Straits, he proceeded on foot to Amherst, and delivered the mails into the charge of His Majesty's couriers, who conveyed them to Halifax. The midwinter mail service was in this way performed until 1827 when a courier named Campbell—who, by the way, died a short time ago at Nine Mile Creek—took charge of the mails at Charlottetown and carried them right through to Halifax. Campbell inaugurated the iceboat system. He had a boat's crew to cross the Straits and remain at Cape Tormentine until his return from Halifax. He made monthly trips."

"When were weekly trips via the Capes begun?"

"I believe weekly trips were first commenced about the year 1830. My brothers Montague and Phillips were then contractors. They landed weekly mails during the winter months at Cape Tormentine. These were taken by couriers to Amherst and distributed from that point. The weekly service was continued until 1861, when Hon. William Pope, then Provincial Secretary, changed them to semi-weekly, and afterwards to tri-weekly mails. This winter mail service was so continued until 1873, when the Dominion Government taking charge of the postal arrangements ordered mails to be carried daily across the Straits."

"Were mails ever carried, Captain, by any other route than the Capes during the winter season?"

"Yes; by Wood Islands. That was the recognized winter route up to the year 1828. The Government then found the Capes route safer and more expeditious, and therefore changed the mails to Cape Traverse. However, for several seasons afterwards, mails were sent by Wood Islands, but after the loss of many valuable lives that route was abandoned."

"Do you remember any particulars of the disasters on Wood Islands route?"

"I have a faint recollection. Judge Peters, I think in the year 1845, went to Wood Islands en route to the mainland. The weather was stormy and the craft on the route did not appear seaworthy. The Judge returned home, but the couriers attempted to cross. Shortly afterwards their boat was found bottom up. All hands were lost. In the next disaster, which occurred in 1865, Mr. Roberts, of London, Captain Campbell, of Belfast, and four seamen of Robert Longworth's brig James, lost their lives. They attempted to cross in a sail boat from Pictou Island to Woodville. A heavy storm set in, and they were not heard of until the following spring, when a bottle containing a note telling their sad fate was picked up on the Gulf Shore. Later, William Welsh, Esq., Hon. Daniel Davies, and Hon. J. C. Pope, attempted to cross from Pictou to Wood Islands, but after spending two days and nights in the Gulf, they were rescued by some farmers who saw their

perilous position. These are only a few instances of the many disastrous and hazardous passages made between Wood Islands and the mainland. It is, therefore, no wonder that route was abandoned."

"How many boats are now used on the Capes route?"

"We have, I think, twelve altogether. These boats were invented thirty-five years ago by Judge Peters, and have not been improved upon."

"Could you suggest an improvement?"

"I could not; the boats are all that could be desired as regards build, but they are badly equipped. They afford no comforts for boatmen and passenger's in case of stormy weather. All they ensure is safety."

"Are they not too cumbersome?"

"They are heavy; but lighter boats in that service would not stand any time. The boats on the route, I repeat, cannot be improved upon in any way, as regards size, weight, make or build. The only improvement I can suggest is proper equipment."

"Had you always a dozen boats on the route?"

"No. Up to the time Hon. L. C. Owen became Postmaster, we had only one boat. At that time the mails were fast increasing. Mr. Owen then put on another boat, and we continued with two boats until Confederation. The Dominion Government then took charge of the service and increased the accommodation."

"What time does the winter mail service generally commence?"

"Before the Northern Light commenced running eight years ago, we always began to carry mails when the packet or the Steam Navigation Co.'s boats stopped running between Pictou and Charlottetown, which was generally the middle or last of November. The Northern Light carries the mails via Georgetown, up to the middle of January, when they are transferred to the Capes, and continued there until the end of April."

"What is the longest season you remember?"

"I think 1876-7 was the longest season we had. In that year we commenced service the 10th of December, and the mails were transferred to the Pictou steamer about the 17th of May. The shortest season was 1879-80, when the mails were transferred from the Northern Light to the Capes on the 3rd of February, and continued then until the first of May. In the year 1882, on one occasion, the mails did not cross for eight days. If you remember, they were transferred from the Capes to the Northern Light, but after she had started for Pictou his propeller broke and the mails had to be returned to the Capes. At that time the water was clear and cold, a north-east gale prevailed, the gulf ice was blown against the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia shores, and a large stretch of rough sea was left between the Island shore and the gulf ice. It was impossible for our iceboats to live in this sea. Had we a powerful tug at Cape Traverse then, we could have crossed the stretch of water every day, land our iceboats on the gulf ice which lined New Brunswick, and awaited there until they returned again from Cape Tormentine. I remember a particular occasion when we were compelled to cross a rough stretch of sea when a tug boat would have helped us immensely. About three winters ago, Dr. Muttart, ex-M.P., Mr. Hackett, M. P., and Senator Montgomery, were en route to Ottawa. I crossed with them. The wind was blowing fresh from the south-west, the snow was deep, and we were all day on the gulf. The wind had packed the ice against the Island shore, leaving a large stretch of open sea between us and Cape Tormentine. It was nightfall when we reached the margin of the ice, and the roaring sea presented a desperately threatening appearance. We could not turn back. We reluctantly launched the iceboat, and after a terrible pluck landed at Cape Tormentine wet, cold, and famished. Had there been a tug boat at Cape Tormentine to meet us at the margin of the gulf ice and carry us over the rough sea, our passage would have been comparatively comfortable."

"Is this an unusual occurrence?"

"No; we often meet rough water in this way and are compelled to return, whereas if a tug met us we would have no difficulty making the passage."

"Then you are of opinion, Captain, that powerful steam tugs at the Capes are indispensable to the performance of regular mail service?"

"I am."

"Suppose tugs were obtained, would there be any difficulty in harboring them?"

"Not in the least. You see, a tug would not be required to move from either Cape unless open water or 'lolly' ice prevented the iceboats from crossing. While the Straits are full of drift ice the iceboats are equal to the service, and the tugs would remain safely harbored in the board ice."

"What wind causes the most open water in the Straits? and in case of open water how would you use the tugs?"

"I will explain this as clearly as possible. When the wind blows from the north-east the Gulf ice is packed against the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia shores, and a large stretch of open water and lolly ice is left between Cape Traverse and the ice so packed. Had we a powerful tug capable of standing a little jamming in the ice, and large enough to carry the iceboats, she could start from her harbor in the board ice at Cape Traverse, bring the men over the stretch

of water, land them at the margin of the gulf ice, remain there until they could return from Cape Tormentine, and land them and the return mails and passengers at Cape Traverse. In the same way a south west wind packs the gulf ice against the Island coast, leaving an open channel between Cape Tormentine and the ice so packed against the Island. A tug at Cape Tormentine could convey the iceboats and men to the margin of the ice, await their return, and convey them back to Cape Tormentine. The tugs should never be used in drift ice. Harbored in the board ice they would be as safe as in a city dock. I am firmly convinced that if a tug was so placed at Cape Traverse and another at Cape Tormentine, we would have no difficulty in carrying the mails, unless in exceptionally stormy and cold weather. The tugs would be equal to the difficulty of rough sea and lolly ice, which mostly forms on the Island side of the Straits with a north-east wind, while iceboats, well equipped, would not fail to perform the duty in drift ice."

"When the straits are full of drifting ice, and a strong wind blows, is there much danger and difficulty in crossing?"

"With a northwest wind, and the Straits full of running ice, there is no difficulty, unless it is very cold—coming from Cape Tormentine, because there is a long shore to strike on both sides of Cape Traverse. Going to Cape Tormentine, however, we have to be very careful lest we miss the Cape, be carried into the wide Gulf, and down the Wallace shore. When the wind blows strong from the Northwest, and the ice is good, we generally drive with the iceboats to Carleton Head—a projection into the Gulf three miles west of Cape Traverse—and there wait until the east tide is done. Then the opposite, or falling tide, holds the ice against the wind a few hours, and thus afford us an excellent chance to cross. We also take various other advantages of the wind and tide."

"You say, Captain, the iceboats have no equipment, and carry no comfort for boatmen or passengers. Is an outfit really required, and if so, what would you suggest?"

"An outfit is and has been a great necessity. A proper outfit for boatmen and passengers would be too cumbersome to place in the regular iceboats. A small light boat would be necessary to carry it. As an outfit I would recommend: (1) An improved oil stove. (2) A stock of provisions, canned goods, etc. (3) Frost and waterproof boots and clothing for men and passengers; and (4) A strong tent to cover the boats in case we are over-taken by night and have to remain in the gulf. With such an outfit we could live as well in the gulf as on shore. Then if we had tug boats in the service their whistles in case of a storm would serve as a signal for the guidance of boats in the Straits."

"Would not the service be better if it were out of the hands of contractors and carried on by the Government?"

"I am firmly convinced it would be better and more satisfactory if the service were in the hands of the Government and under the superintendence of a competent person. At present we are paid \$12 per trip—\$24 per round trip. The men are hired by the season and paid per trip. When they are detained at Cape Tormentine by storm they pay board, and in a consequence, return home in debt. They are scattered through the settlement—some living three or four miles away, and have to walk to the starting point. Consequently, they seldom arrive on time when a start is to be made, and owing to their absence, a crossing is often missed. Sometimes we cannot cross until late in the day, and the men having no place for shelter, stand about in the cold suffering exposure, and so become comparatively unfit for work when they are required to do it."

"But the boathouses now under construction will remedy this?"

"Yes, to a certain extent, or as far as shelter is concerned. Unless," said the Captain, "men are 'articled' for the season, after the fashion of seamen, and maintained in comfortable boathouses, no satisfaction will be obtained. They will as usual live at their homes, perhaps five miles away, and drop along just in time to miss the chance of crossing for the day. But if men were engaged for the season, were articled as seamen, equipped in the manner I have stated, and in command of a proper person, they would be ready to start when ordered, and the passengers and public would not be compelled to submit to the humbugging and waiting they have had to submit to in the past. The boats would go at a regular and convenient time, and in this way, and with the tug service, I feel certain the mail service at the Capes could be performed with the same regularity as it is performed in the summer months?"

"How many men and boats would, in your opinion, Captain, be required to perform this service?"

"Six boats, with five men to each boat, besides men for the outfitting boat, are all that would be required to perform the service efficiently."

"Then it is your opinion that if the service was in the hands of the Dominion Government; if two powerful tugboats were placed on the route, if the boats were properly equipped, if the boatmen were articled for the season, and if the whole service was superintended by an experienced and trustworthy person, the difficulties and dangers of the winter

mail route would in a great measure be overcome."

"They would, if not altogether." So saying, our representative thanked the veteran Captain for his valuable information, and wishing him a safe journey home, took his departure.

The Winnipeg Commercial says it is useless talking about the food supply of the Northwest, or even the coal supply, as these problems are already solved beyond question. But we may now safely look forward to, and make calculations upon securing our future supplies of certain classes of manufactured goods from the west. The discoveries of coal and iron during the past year make it now a certainty that as soon as the consumption of this metal in the province and adjoining territories is large enough, it will pay to commence the manufacture of iron. The statement may be an astounding one, but it is nevertheless true, and the company which was organized some two years ago for the development of the iron resources around Lake Winnipeg may soon appear in a less ornamental light than some were disposed to look upon it when it was organized.

The Telephone.

The attendance at the session of the Literary and Scientific Society, on Friday evening last, in the Y. M. C. A. Parlor, was quite large, and the array of intelligent gentlemen present gave a couple of hours close attention to the reading of Mr. A. E. Morrison's paper on "The Telephone; what it is, how it is made, and its uses," and the discussion which followed. Mr. Morrison's paper was replete with information respecting this wonderful and useful invention. He described its simple construction, and the methods by which it is worked, which he illustrated by detached parts, and a complete Telephone apparatus which was in connection with an office in the building, and with the main office in town. At the conclusion of Mr. Morrison's interesting paper, the President read a couple of extracts from a recent letter of Thomas A. Edison, the great electrician and inventor, in which he showed that Bell was the inventor of the receiving telephone, while he, Edison, invented the transmitter which is in use wherever the telephone is worked. Mr. Edison also says that the telephone is only now in its infancy; that the greatest difficulty in long-distance telephoning is the loss of current by static induction on the earth and wires in close conjunction. "If a single wire," says Mr. Edison, "could be placed sufficiently high to amplify clear all the mountain tops, one could whisper around the world with perfect ease; or if a wire could be stretched from the earth to the moon, the connection would also be adequate." Three hundred miles is therefore about the longest distance telephonic communication that can now be had; but Mr. Edison thinks that by means of repeating stations, conversation may be carried on all over the continent.

Mr. R. B. Angus, the special Agent of the Bell Telephone Co., on the Island, followed with interesting points respecting the invention; and a most animated discussion on sound followed, participated in by Mr. Francis Bain, of West River; Mr. W. A. Weeks, law student; Mr. F. R. Bowers, Mr. John Newson, Mr. S. A. Peterson, Mr. Alex. McKinnon, Mr. Jas. McDonald, and others. The whole developed the fact that what the speakers didn't know about the subject in hand, largely overbalanced the actual known facts. How the different tones of the human voice are carried over the wires, and the speaker recognized by the hearer, distant many miles away, is as yet undefined. The great fact remains that such is the case; but like many of the mysteries connected with electricity and magnetism, it is unexplained in our limited knowledge of the matter at present; but as Mr. Newson remarked, it is probable that, in view of the wonderful discoveries recently made, the human mind may yet be enabled to grasp and fully understand what is now mysterious about electricity, generally.

Our Advertisers.

Norton Bros. solicit orders from carriage builders, etc. W. & A. Brown & Co. are offering great bargains for the next thirty days. G. H. Hazard, Bookbinder, etc., is prepared to attend to all orders. J. B. Macdonald's advertisement of announcing great reductions in prices of goods will appear to-morrow.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Magic Healer.

Sir,—Your correspondent in Saturday's issue, on the "carrot and turnip cure" for persons who are frost bitten, must have had reference to the Magic Healer salve, which is so well known, that it is almost universally applied in all cases of skin injuries.

Thanking you for the above space, I remain

ONE WHO PROVED IT.

MARRIED.

At the residence of the bride's brother, Moncton, on the 28th January, by the Rev. T. J. Donistad, Mr. John C. Cook, of P. E. Island, to Miss Amy L. Boyd, of Moncton.

By the Rev. R. B. Kinslay, at Charlottetown on the 13th ult., Mr. John Sylvester Gregory, of St. Catharines, Lot 45, to Miss Kate Currie, of Ennabvale, Lot 30.

At Mill River, on 25th ult., by Rev. A. F. Carr, A. M., Allan Hunter, of Bloomfield, to Maggie, daughter of Peter Gard, Mill River.

At Alberton, on 25th ult., by Rev. A. F. Carr, A. M., Benjamin F. Melroe, Mill River, to Mary, second daughter of Hugh Forsyth.

Horsford's Acid Phosphate.

VERY SATISFACTORY IN PROSTRATION.

Dr. P. Gilmartin, Detroit, Mich., says: "I have found it very satisfactory in its effects, notably in the prostration attendant upon alcoholism."

CARRIAGE BUILDERS,

SEND IN YOUR ORDERS FOR LEATHER DASHERS

WE supply them at least one-third Cheaper than you can have them made, and warrant them NOT TO BAG. As the season is getting late, we offer special prices in all goods in the line, and have the:

Best Woodwork on the Island

Rims, Spokes, Hubs, Shafts, Hickory, Whitewood, Buggy Bows, Springs, Axles, Fifth Wheels, Clips, King-Bolts, Bolts, Screws, Nuts, Malleables, Pa'nts, Oils, Fillers, Varnishes, Leathers, Patent Sand-blast FILES (the best file made).

We guarantee our Wood Stock the BEST IMPORTED and, quality compared, you will find our prices lower than any of our competitors

PRICES ON APPLICATION NORTON BROS.

Ch'town, Feb. 9, 1885—2i wly 2i jour 2i

ROYAL CANADIAN INSURANCE CO. FIRE.

CAPITAL, \$2,000,000 HEAD OFFICE—Montreal. HALIFAX BRANCH—J. Scott Mitchell, Agent.

Risks Taken on Most Favorable Terms. AGENT FOR PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND:

F. H. ARNAUD, Merchants Bank of Halifax

DIED.

This morning, Sarah Jane, the beloved wife of J. Lemuel Phillips, aged 33 years. (Funeral on Thursday at 1.30 p. m., to Sherwood Cemetery by train.)

On the 16th ult., after a lingering illness, borne with Christian resignation, Mary H., wife of James Mills, Esq., of Little River, at the advanced age of 84 years.

At the Dominion House, Ch'town, on the 26th ult., of consumption, George Fairclough, in the 63rd year of his age. May his soul rest in peace.

At Stony Creek, A. C., on the 21st ult., of consumption, Annie M., daughter of Jesse S. and Mary Van Buskirk, aged 23 years.

At West River, on the 29th ult., of disease of the brain, Ernest Hamilton, child of Donald and Charlotte McMillan, aged 1 year and 8 months.

At Scotch Settlement, New Brunswick, Jan. 30th, of consumption, Sara A., aged 19 years, second daughter of Donald and Isabella Dunn.

LECTURE.

REV. GREGORY MACDONALD Will deliver a Lecture on "The Church in Council,"

Under the auspices of the CATHOLIC LITERARY UNION,

Benevolent Irish Society's Hall, (PRINCE STREET),

On Monday, Feb. 9th, 1885.

Doors open at 7.30. Lecture at 8 p. m. Admission 10 cents.

A. EDMUNDS, Asst. Secretary.

Ch'town, Jan. 31, 1885.

MRS. JARLEY'S WAXWORKS

WILL BE EXHIBITED IN ATHENAEUM,

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16th.

Reserved seat tickets, 50 cents; for sale at Watson's Drug Store, until Saturday. Reduction will be made for family tickets.

CHILDREN'S MATINEE.—Saturday, 14th inst. 4 o'clock. Admission 10 cents; tickets for adults in charge of children, 50 cents; which will also admit to Monday's entertainment.

Further particulars later. Ch'town, Jan. 26, 1885.

WANTS, LOST, FOUND, &c.

WANTED—A Situation, in a store or office, by a young man of good reputation. Apply at this office. li pd

LOST—On Friday evening, Jan. 30th, and Scott's Hall, a small silver Watch. The finder will be rewarded by leaving it at this office. feb 9 3c ood pd

WANTED—Shop and Cellar on Great George Street, occupied by E. H. Schurman; possession April 1st, 1885.—John Stambles. 2w ood

WANTED—A young man of good reputation desires a situation as Clerk in a store, office, or otherwise; good penman. Apply at this office. feb 7

TEA AND BAZAAR

WILL BE HELD In Aid of the P. E. Island Hospital,

ON Thursday, February 12, 1885.

Donations will be thankfully received by the undersigned ladies:

- Mrs. C. Palmer, President. Aitken, Mrs. W. H. Kennedy, Mrs. W. Anderson, Mrs. Prof. Laird, Mrs. Burwash, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Bartlett, Mrs. Matheson, Mrs. J. A. Blanchard, Mrs. Dr. McSweeney, Mrs. G. Ball, Mrs. McLeod, Mrs. G. Beer, Mrs. F. McNeill, Mrs. D. Beer, Mrs. J. McLeod, Mrs. G. Brown, Miss G. McKimley, Mrs. J. Bales, Mrs. McGowan, Mrs. John Coleman, Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. F. Cooke, Mrs. G. Moore, Mrs. F. W. Cundall, Miss P. McEwen, Mrs. Colvin, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. W. Davies, Mrs. B. Nicholson, Mrs. D. Duffin, Mrs. Jas. Palmer, Miss Ethel DeBlois, Mrs. Poole, Mrs. Diatin, Mrs. Pope, Mrs. P. Dodd, Mrs. Rice, Mrs. Fitzgerald, Mrs. Rankin, Mrs. Findlay, Mrs. Sterling, Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Col. Snaddon, Mrs. Hensley, Mrs. Unsworth, Mrs. Hensley, Miss Weeks, Mrs. R. Haviland, Mrs. Whitman, Mrs. Ings, Miss Johnson, Mrs. R. Worthy, Mrs.

Doors open at 2 p. m. Admission 10 cents; tea 25 cents. Hot oysters and soup served at 9 o'clock. Galbraith's new brass band will be in attendance.

MILLIE BEER, Secretary. July 16, 1884.—Jan.



Notice to Contractors.

SEALED TENDERS addressed to the undersigned, and endorsed "Tenders for Dominion Building, Charlottetown, P. E. I." will be received until WEDNESDAY, 25th proximo, inclusive, for the erection of a new Dominion Building at Charlottetown, P. E. I. Plans and specifications can be seen at the Department of Public Works, Ottawa, and at the office of Messrs. Sterling and Harris, Architects, Charlottetown, P. E. I., on and after Thursday, 6th proximo.

Persons tendering are notified that tenders will not be considered unless made on the printed forms supplied, and signed with their actual signatures.

Each tender must be accompanied by an accepted bank cheque, for the sum of Two Hundred Dollars, made payable to the order of the Honorable the Minister of Public Works, which will be forfeited if the party declines to enter into a contract when called on to do so, or if he fails to complete the work contracted for. If the tender is not accepted the cheque will be returned.

The Department will not be bound to accept the lowest or any tender.

By order, A. GOBELL, Secretary.

Department of Public Works, Ottawa, January 24th, 1885. Feb. 1885

JOE PRINTING of every description executed with neatness and dispatch at the EXAMINER JOB PRINTING OFFICE, 215 Water Street, Great West.