

The Colonial Herald,

AND

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND ADVERTISER.

Vol. VI.

CHARLOTTETOWN, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1843.

[No. 290.]

STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY.

The First Annual Meeting of the Shareholders of the Prince Edward Island Steam Navigation Company was held in the Court House, Charlottetown, on Tuesday last, pursuant to public notice, and in conformity with the 7th Section of the Act of Incorporation—the Hon. Charles Hensley in the Chair.

Previous to the reading of the Report, the Hon. the Chairman addressed the Meeting to the following effect:—

"Gentlemen; As we have much business to transact, and as the Report touches upon most of the particulars which are likely to interest you, it will not be necessary for me to detain you long; but you will permit me, perhaps, to recall your memories to that period when, in consequence of repeated disappointments, by the non-arrival of the Mails, a Requisition, most numerously and respectfully signed, appeared in the Papers, summoning us to meet together for the purpose of considering of the formation of the present Company. You will also recollect, that when we assembled here, we were much disheartened by the discovery that very few of those who had signed their names to that Requisition were in attendance, to give their aid and assistance, and but very few of those who did attend exhibited any very earnest desire for its promotion. Notwithstanding these discouraging circumstances, you thought it right to appoint a Provisional Committee, who were instructed to possess themselves of such useful information as might be required, in the event of the project reviving. That information you will, perhaps, recollect was obtained by inquiry in open Court, and was published in the Island papers—not only for general information, but to challenge contradiction and correction, if any of its statements should be found to be incorrect. As no one appeared to question them, they were deemed worthy of all confidence, and all our calculations were based upon the expectations held forth in them. That the result of the past season should be found to be somewhat at variance with those statements, might perhaps have been expected, from the disastrous state of affairs around us; but that they should differ so widely as they actually do, is to me very surprising, for I find it difficult to understand how practical men could make statements so wide of the facts; and if we had not been able to exhibit something like a corresponding reduction in the expenses, our position as a Company this day would certainly be very unpromising. Happily, however, we are able to calculate upon a reduction in the expenses of more than £500, and by the examination of the comparative statement, you will see that by carrying on the experience of our receipts and expenditures during the 16 weeks the *St. George* was in operation to the full season of 26 weeks, we may reasonably expect to be able to pay a dividend of from 2 to 3 per cent. upon the shares; but if, as I think we have every reason to anticipate, our application to the Legislatures of the several Provinces be received in a liberal spirit, and the trade of these Colonies should revive, then I think we may look to a dividend of a more encouraging character. Why do I dwell upon these particulars? Is it because I believe you are Shareholders in this Company from entirely selfish motives? Far from it. I believe, Gentlemen, that you embarked your capital in this Company with the laudable view of rendering this Island altogether independent of others for its means of communication, thereby raising her to a station of dignity and importance, in the eyes of the surrounding Colonies, which she had not hitherto enjoyed. It is by such efforts that a people obtains the respect of other countries. It is by an enormous aggregate of kindred enterprizes that our great country stands so pre-eminently elevated above other nations. It is by an independent reliance upon our own resources and energies that we shall at length attain a name and a place among them. But, whilst we highly appreciate the lofty motives which have influenced many to become sharers in this enterprize, and desire to recognize and encourage their diffusion, we, as the responsible Directors of this Company, must be content to address ourselves to the administration of its affairs, with a due regard to those more ordinary and every-day motives which are found to influence a great portion of mankind. We have, therefore, felt it to be our duty to endeavour, by every reasonable economy, to reduce our expenditure as much as possible, assured of this, that if we can but show a fair balance of profit, we shall have little difficulty in procuring the capital necessary for perfecting the extended scheme of operations which our Report contemplates."

REPORT.

The Directors are happy in the opportunity which the occasion of your first Annual Meeting affords them of submitting to you the following Report of their proceedings; and although it may not altogether realize the expectations of some, they still trust that there will be found in the conclusions arrived at in it no occasion for despondency.

The duties which you entrusted to them they have found to be of a more arduous and difficult nature than they had anticipated; but they have been encouraged and sustained in the performance of them by the conviction, that the public generally of these Provinces were deeply interested in the successful issue of this undertaking; and they have, in consequence, laboured earnestly and zealously to fulfil the demands and expectations of the different Legislatures; and it is with much regret that they have been compelled to declare their opinion of the utter impossibility for any one Steam-boat to accomplish all the conditions imposed upon the Company by them—that, in truth, it is not possible for any one vessel to make, without intermission, the various voyages which the conditions of the grants of the respective Legislatures impose upon them.

But, whatever may have been the opinions of the Directors themselves, upon the most judicious course for conducting the operations of the *St. George*, they still felt themselves bound to comply with the Act of the General Assembly, as by so doing they would be enabled to satisfy the Legislatures and the Shareholders, as to the judgment with which the voyage had been marked out—its advantages and disadvantages—and, what is of most material import to all parties interested, the probability of its proving profitable or otherwise to the concern; and, as facts are always better than arguments, they have appended to this Report a statement of the expense of the voyage to each place, and the return of freight and passage-money accruing therefrom, by which it will be seen that some of the voyages have been always performed at a considerable loss to the Company, without affording any compensating accommodation to the public.

From the short period in which the *St. George* was in action, the general slackness and embarrassment of mercantile affairs throughout these Provinces, during the past year, and the unusually stormy and tempestuous season, this Report ought not to be received as affording any fair ground for forming an accurate judgment of the reasonable prospects of the Company in future years, if taken by itself. The Directors have, therefore, felt it to be their duty to ask your attentive consideration of other points likely to aid and assist you in coming to some satisfactory conclusion upon this head.

The operations of the *St. George*, during the few months she was in employment, must be taken as an experimental fragment of a season; perhaps something adverse in itself,

but bearing the "precious jewel in its head," by which we may, if permitted so to do, so arrange the future voyage of the *St. George* that her powers may not be exhausted in futile efforts to accomplish that which the past trial has shown to be impracticable.

As in another part of this Report it is the Directors' purpose to make some further remarks upon the points referred to in these prefatory observations, they now beg your attention to the following detail of their proceedings.

The Directors, deeply impressed with the necessity of taking prompt proceedings, met together on the day following the General Meeting, and having elected the Hon. T. H. Haviland to the office of Treasurer, they determined to make forthwith a call of £25 per cent., to become due on May 5th, and a second call of £25 per cent., payable on June 4th. They then proceeded to take into consideration the best, and, at the same time, the most economical course to be adopted for purchasing a sound and efficient Steam-boat; and having happily been enabled to secure the able services of Francis Longworth, jun. Esq., they requested him to proceed to England for that purpose by the first opportunity. Mr. Longworth was furnished with such necessary funds as the Directors possessed, and with instructions to enable him to proceed in the arduous duty he had so kindly undertaken with promptitude and confidence; and it is known to you all that he lost no time, but proceeded to England by the Steamship of May 18th.

This preliminary step dispatched, the Directors entered into a correspondence with a Committee of Gentlemen at Miramichi, who had addressed the Provisional Committee for information of the objects and proceedings of the P. E. Island Steam Navigation Company, and desiring to ascertain what shares remained undisposed of, and making enquiry of the proposed voyage, &c. &c. It is unnecessary to trouble the meeting with the correspondence, as, from the unpromising state of affairs at Miramichi at that time, it produced no satisfactory results. Neither is it necessary to detain you by detailing the correspondence which it was deemed right to hold with Mr. Longworth, upon the report reaching these shores that the *John McAdam* was in forwardness for this station—that alarm having happily passed away.

Towards the conclusion of the month of July, the Directors received a letter from Mr. Longworth, informing them that he had succeeded in purchasing the *St. George*, of the *St. George Steam Packet Company*; that he felt assured that she would prove to be a purchase equally satisfactory to the Company as it was to himself; that the *St. George* had about eight months previously been made nearly equal to new, at an expense of £3,580 Stg., having had new boilers and new decks—been newly coppered, new sails, and in every other respect put into thorough and efficient order and repair; that she had been built at Liverpool, by Messrs. Wilsons, who were esteemed among the best Steam-boat builders in England; that her frame was of a large size, all of English Oak, and as sound as when put together; that when new, including outfit, she had cost £11,000. Mr. Longworth also informed the Directors, that it was his intention to bring out the *St. George* under steam, and mentioned the 10th of August as the probable time of his arrival.

Upon the receipt of this letter, the Directors made the necessary arrangements for bringing her into activity at as early a period as possible. On the 13th of August, Mr. Longworth reported the arrival of the *St. George* in the harbour of Charlottetown, after a good passage of 14 days from Cork, having touched at St. John's, Newfoundland, and brought some passengers and freight from thence.

Mr. Longworth having thus ably and successfully fulfilled the trust reposed in him, the Directors felt it incumbent upon them to express their sense of it in the following unanimous Resolution:—

"That the warmest thanks of the Directors of the P. E. Island Steam Navigation Company be presented to Francis Longworth, jun. Esq., for the promptitude, ability and excellent judgment with which he has executed the arduous duty entrusted to him, of searching out and purchasing a most efficient Steam-Vessel for the service of these Colonies, and also for the diligence and zeal exhibited by him in conducting her, under circumstances of much anxiety, to the successful conclusion of her voyage out to this Island."

In consequence of the intemperate habits of the Captain and Steward, and the discontented state of some of the crew, it was found requisite to make many changes, and some days were necessarily occupied in these alterations. They were happily able to engage the services of Captain Matheson, to take command of the *St. George*, in whose hands they could place her with perfect confidence; and although they had but short space to appoint and select the other officers of the Company, and of the *St. George*, they have much pleasure in reporting to the Proprietors that those officers have zealously and efficiently performed the duties entrusted to them.

The *St. George* sailed upon her first trip for Pictou, on Wednesday, August 18th, at 8 a. m.—and the Directors desire to express their thanks to those public spirited shareholders and friends of the enterprize whose lively zeal induced them to encourage, by their presence, and that of their families, the first start of this truly national undertaking. The *St. George*, you are aware, was kindly welcomed at Pictou—was honored with a salute—and received assurances of approbation and good will from its most respectable inhabitants.

On Monday, Aug. 22d, she was dispatched on her first voyage to Miramichi, and as some of the Directors were able to devote a part of their time to the service, they proceeded in her to Miramichi, that they might make arrangements, and ascertain and meet, as far as possible, the wishes of the inhabitants. It is known to you all that the *St. George* received from our friends at Miramichi the same demonstrations of good-will and assurances of support as had distinguished her entrance into Pictou.

The experience of that voyage was sufficient to convince the Directors that the demands of the several Legislatures tasked the powers of the *St. George* too inordinately; they made, in consequence, certain alterations in her weekly course, by which they hoped to ease the vessel and crew as much as circumstances would admit of, and which they have reason to believe, if the weather had been moderate, would, under such favourable circumstances, have enabled her to complete her weekly circuit with some regularity.

The 17th of November concluded the voyages of the *St. George* to Miramichi for the season, as the necessary insurance could not be effected for a later period but at a most exorbitant premium, and she was finally ordered to be laid up for the Winter, on Dec. 7th.

Two circumstances graced the closing of the season of the *St. George's* activity, which, apart from the mere pecuniary advantage accruing to the concern (and which the Company are justly entitled to claim, in compensation for services performed and risks incurred), must afford the purest gratification to the Shareholders, and speak volumes as to the importance of keeping such an efficient Steamer as the *St. George* upon these coasts—these are, the being instrumental in saving from imminent danger of shipwreck the *Orient*, a ship of 500 tons, and towing her into the harbour of Georgetown, with six feet of water in her hold, the Captain being in ignorance of his vessel's position, and with his crew in a

state of exhaustion from continual labour at the pumps; and the bringing of the *Lady Wood* into this harbour, after she had been on the rocks, having lost her rudder and being water-logged. These are services upon the performance of which we feel entitled to congratulate the proprietors and the public, and we trust that the underwriters and the owners of the vessels will, when well advised of the circumstances under which they were afforded, duly appreciate their value.

The Directors have now an exceedingly painful duty to perform; but in justice to the Company, and to the Shareholders who have duly paid up the instalments which have been called for, they feel obliged to remark on the conduct of those Subscribers who have neglected to do so, thereby imposing a necessity on the Company to pay interest on several sums of money, from time to time advanced. This interest will, of course, be charged, in due proportion, against the parties in default, and legal measures taken to enforce payment.

The Treasurer's and other Accounts, brought up to the present year, which will be read to you, and will lie for your examination, exhibit, as you will most likely have anticipated, not very flattering results for the past season; indeed, the *St. George* may be said to have done little more than pay her expenses; and when all the circumstances of the past year are taken into view, little more could have been reasonably expected.

We also submit an account of the average expense of the voyage to each place, and the returns of freight and passage, money accruing, by which you may see which are profitable and which are unprofitable voyages.

The Directors have also made a careful comparison of the returns from the different ports, with those estimates which were submitted at the meetings previous to the formation of the Company.

We have thought it right to place these several statements before you, that you may be able to understand the present position and future prospects of this national enterprize, undertaken in a patriotic and enlightened spirit, highly honorable to the parties embarked in it, and justly entitled to the support and favour of the public, and the Legislatures of these approximating Colonies, as likely to exercise a most beneficial influence upon their commercial intercourse, by promoting more constant and intimate communication between them.

Having submitted these statements to your consideration, it may, perhaps, be asked, what are the expectations of the Directors, as to the ultimate success of the Company, and upon what are those expectations founded? To which they would answer, that they see no reason to doubt of the success of the Company, if the experience of the past is permitted to be beneficially used, as a correction and guide for the future; if they are authorized to direct the operations of the *St. George* to the maintenance of the Mail and commercial communications of the principal ports of Pictou, Charlottetown and Miramichi, without being clogged and frustrated in their efforts by the restriction to touch at regular periods at minor ports, out of the direct course for maintaining these important communications; if they are not compelled to perform voyages without hope of profit, which bring no compensating advantage to the public, and to lose sight of the great objects for which this national enterprize was originated, in a fruitless attempt to grasp with the same effort the minor and less important ones; if, in fact, they are permitted to regulate the voyages of the *St. George*, from time to time, proportioning her visits to the above named ports, not according to a before arranged plan, but to the information they may receive of the real wants and demands of the several places, exercising, indeed, that discretion in the performance of their duties which the chosen Directors of a Company are generally supposed to possess.

In a letter received soon after the arrival of the *St. George*, from a Gentleman of acknowledged judgment and great practical experience in the powers and capabilities of Steam-boats, the following remark is made, which, as it coincides remarkably with the experience of the past year, is well worthy of the attentive consideration of all parties interested:—

"I also fear that you expect to do too much. In my opinion, you should only attempt to make one trip to Miramichi, and two to Pictou and Charlottetown, in the week, leaving out Georgetown and Bedouque. If you attempt too much with a Steamer, you will certainly fail. You must take time to clean and keep the machinery in order."

The powers of the Steam Engine have been pourtrayed to the imagination of the uninitiated in such exaggerated terms, that few are prepared to expect the careful cleansing and attention which it constantly requires. The inflated language in which its qualities are usually described seems to have blinded the eyes of those who have no experience in its management to the common-sense conclusion that the more extensive and various the power, the more assiduous and constant is the superintendence required to maintain it in its perfection.

The Directors are anxious to obtain the attention of the Shareholders and the public to the foregoing observations, as they have come to a decided conclusion, that no one Steam Vessel (let her speed be what it may) can perform the conditions imposed in the time required—the necessary rest for the crew, the taking in freight and coals, and the requisite attention to the cleansing of the Engines and boilers, &c., being duly considered.

In forming our judgment of the future prospects of the Company, it is also necessary to take into consideration that the past year has been one of great mercantile suffering throughout these Colonies, and it is unreasonable to expect that the Company should not share in the general embarrassment. The *St. George* came into operation at an unfavourable period; she experienced much bad weather, and it was not likely that she should at once enter upon a successful trade, it being mostly found necessary gradually to accustom the public to a new and more convenient means of conveyance before it is brought to its habitual adoption. That traffic may be seen by the returns of the later voyages, that traffic was steadily increasing by our vessel, and we think there is little reason to apprehend that when once accustomed to a quick and certain delivery, it will be likely to revert to the slow and uncertain transmission by sailing vessels. Neither will the Directors permit themselves to anticipate that the Legislatures of these neighbouring Provinces will suffer an enterprize of such moment to languish for want of sufficient encouragement, but in that sound and liberal spirit which first instigated them to vote sums for the establishment of Steam communication upon these coasts, will enlarge those sums to an extent that will be sufficient to hold forth to the Proprietors a fair prospect that their capital will not be wasted in fruitless efforts for the public advantage.

We feel assured, that if the Legislatures of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are fully impressed with the importance of preserving the services of such a vessel as the *St. George* upon these waters, they will not hesitate to extend their grants for a year or two, until the experiment has received a fair trial; and if it is indeed found that the population and commerce of these Colonies is not sufficient to give profitable employment to a single Steamer, they can then withdraw their support, and the Proprietors must seek employment for her in some other channel.

In conclusion, the Directors desire to submit a few observations. It would be vain for them to pretend to be ignorant

that there does exist in the minds of some of the proprietors a feeling of dissatisfaction that the *St. George* does not possess, in its fullest perfection, one of the very desirable qualities of a Steam Vessel—speed. The Directors have no hesitation in allowing that the *St. George* would be the better for an increase of her speed, and they join in the wish that it could be accelerated; but they recommend to the Proprietors to take the *St. George* as a whole, with her excellent accommodations, her substantial qualities, as exhibited by her in the tempestuous weather which prevailed at the latter part of the season, her capability for freight, and stability and strength of structure, so necessary for the service for which she is destined—the sound and perfect state of her engines and boilers—and the low price at which she was purchased—and then we think that they will readily acknowledge that we have been exceedingly fortunate in our purchase.

Had it even been in the power of the Directors to instruct their Agent to purchase none but a vessel of a certain power and speed, and keeping those objects in view, to be indifferent as to price, it is not unlikely that a superior vessel might have been procured; but as they were limited in their means, their choice was necessarily limited also, and their belief is, that, under the circumstances, there is much to congratulate themselves and the proprietors upon, in the possession of so good and sound a ship as the *St. George*.

The foregoing report is most respectfully submitted to the Legislatures and public generally of these Provinces, in the lively hope that it will receive from them a deep and impartial examination; and the Directors are persuaded, that a due consideration of its contents will influence their minds to the following conclusions:—

1st. That no Boat can perform all the conditions at present imposed upon the Company.

2d. That to render the circle of the Company's operations more complete, it is most desirable that a small Steamer should be employed, in conjunction with the *St. George*; by which means a more extensive range might be embraced, uniting more closely various other parts of the several Provinces, including Cape Breton, and thus the general communications essential to their relative commercial prosperity would be materially extended.

3d. It is scarcely to be expected that the extension of the Company's capital, necessary for the accomplishment of the above object, can be procured without the assured aid and encouragement of the several Legislatures; and they hope that they are not unreasonable in respectfully soliciting from them the most efficient co-operation and support.

Finally, the Directors desire to impress upon the public the immeasurable importance to the interests of these Provinces of establishing a regular communication, by steam, all along the Gulf Shores, and on to Halifax, calling at the most important places in the route; and although they see no immediate prospect of its accomplishment, they will not despair of its ultimate success.

An Account shewing the cost of the Steamer *St. George*, at the date of her arrival at Prince Edward Island, Aug. 14th, 1842.

Amount of Purchase money, - - - - -	£4,200 0 0
Incidental Expenses, - - - - -	207 15 6
Provisions, - - - - -	160 15 8
Ship's Stores, - - - - -	99 16 3
Engineer's Department, - - - - -	224 12 1
Coal, Oil, Tallow, &c. - - - - -	259 9 8
Wages, - - - - -	133 14 4
Copper and Nails, - - - - -	127 12 4
Sundry small disbursements, - - - - -	29 18 3
	1,343 14 1
	£5,543 14 1
Less, - - - - -	
Passage money from England and } Newfoundland, received, }	77 4 10
Net cost, - - - - -	£5,466 9 3

Statement of Amount of Purchase Money of Steamer *St. George*, and Materials, and amount received from Shareholders, to February 14th, 1843.

1842.		
Aug. 14.—To amount of Purchase Money and Materials, including Outfit, Stores and Expenses, to Prince Edward Island, as per Account stated, Stg.,	£5,466 9 3	
" " " Premium, 32½ per cent., and Exchange,	2,581 7 8½	
1843.		
Feb. 14.—Interest paid on Bills purchased to 1st January,	30 6 0	
	£3,078 2 11½	
1843.		
Feb. 14.—By Amount paid by Shareholders to the Hon. T. H. Haviland, to this date,	£7,158 15 0	
" " " Ditto, Ditto,	51 15 0	
	£7,210 0 0	
" " " Balance sheet, paid by Shareholders, to complete amount of purchase,	£267 12 11½	
	£3,078 2 11	

Abstract of Treasurer's Account, to 14th February, 1843.

Amount paid by Shareholders, to this date, - - - - -	£7,210 0 0
Amount handed him by T. Owen, - - - - -	627 0 0
	£7,837 0 0
By Amount paid for Bills remitted to England, and for disbursements, - - - - -	7,745 7 8
Balance in Treasurer's hands, - - - - -	91 12 4
	£7,837 0 0

Abstract of Receipts and Expenditure, between the 14th August and 31st December, 1843.

To Amount of Labour and Disbursements, including proportion of Reserved Fund,	£1,736 19 2½
By Amount received for Passages and Freight, including £300 for conveying Mails, and £173 12 2 for towing Vessels,	£1,093 9 2

Abstract of Debts owing by the Prince Edward Island Steam Navigation Company, Jan. 1843, and the available and contemplated funds to pay them.

Due to the Hon. C. Hensley, for Bills purchased from him, - - - - -	£607 6 5½
Due to the Albion Mining Association, payable the 1st March, - - - - -	105 11 5
Due for Insurance effected in Halifax, - - - - -	151 10 3
Due to T. Owen, Manager, - - - - -	14 1 11
Due Mr. Haszard, for Printing, Books, and Stationery, - - - - -	14 1 11
Amount of Stock on hand, - - - - -	£221 9 6
Amount due by Mr. B. Davies, payable 27th Feb., - - - - -	400 0 0
Amount secured on the Ship <i>Orient</i> , £50 Sterling, - - - - -	73 12 2½
Due by Shareholders, on Shares subscribed for, - - - - -	60 0 0
In the hands of the Treasurer, - - - - -	91 12 4
Contemplated to be obtained from the Province of Nova Scotia, - - - - -	
Contemplated to be obtained from the Province of New Brunswick, - - - - -	