

# Continuous communication

## Transportation main problem

"And shall provide continuous transportation". Perhaps no phrase in history has caused more argument nor kept people in a turmoil for a longer period than the one above which was included in the terms of Confederation under which Prince Edward Island reluctantly became a province of Canada.

Though The Island has since become known as the Cradle of Confederation its own birth as a member of that union family was not celebrated with any of the joyousness to be found here as the 100th anniversary of the important meeting is being commemorated.

The subject of union was the cause of some of the bitterest debates the local Legislature ever knew and its proponents had to tread warily.

Many students of Island history and legislative verbal maneuverings have come to believe Prince Edward Island only joined the other colonies because those who wanted union were so tight a web there was no other escape for a debilitated people.

To accomplish their purpose they undertook the building of a railroad, a popular political move. But the railroad, in its building, proved to be like many of the legislative discussions and wandered joyously instead of following the shortest route.

The end result was a colony hopelessly in debt—with the Imperial Government determined, and perhaps conspiratorial, in refusing to make or guarantee a loan.

At this point new Confederation terms were offered The Island, and since they included taking over the debt of the railroad and finishing its building the people had no alternative but to accept.

In fact, it was the building of railroads in the Maritimes which really led to Confederation in the first place. Undoubtedly the colonies would have united eventually, but with the cascade provinces building better communications systems the idea of a maritime political union began to surge to the fore, and this tide brought Canada into existence much sooner.

When delegates arrived here to discuss the prospect the representatives from the Canadas, spearheaded by Sir John A. Macdonald, wasted no time in deciding to sit in on the conference and present their idea for a larger union. Their golden tongues, and island liquid hospitality, carried it the day.

Any newly emerging area faces tremendous challenges, and it was so in the once-glorious Island colony where winter isolation offered the greatest tribulation.

Many times weary weeks would pass without word from the outside world. The ice-bound Strait of Northumberland offered a barrier of times insurmountable. Efforts to conquer it cost numerous lives as determined travellers attempted to fight their way across what to become lost in blizzards or frozen to death under

the inadequate protection of the boats they were pushing or rowing over.

But the glowing promises of the Confederates appeared to offer an escape with the "continuous communication" phrase the locals lure.

It is true that efforts to keep the promise were made, but they never succeeded—not to this day. A variety of ships took on the impossible task of smashing through tremendous, thick or piled-up ice. One of them disappeared from the local scene.

**NEW FERRIES**  
In the second decade of this century, however, a new hope appeared with the arrival from the Clyde of the specially designed and reinforced S.S. Prince Edward Island. Deliberately built for crashing through heavy concentrations of ice this ship gave more than people had hoped for. Today, nearly fifty years later, she is still doing more than ever her builders dreamed of and gives to Islanders some sense of security simply through standing by.

In the last century and early in this a variety of routes were tried for winter travel. Ships met between Pictou, N.S. and Georgetown; between Summerside and Point du Chene, N.B. The Prince Edward Island opened a permanent route between Borden and Cape Tormentine.

When her age began to tell, a more powerful vessel, The Charlottetown, was constructed and put into service and it was an improvement, but a decade later it sank off the Nova Scotia coast while going to drovlock. The old P.E.I. again took up the task alone.

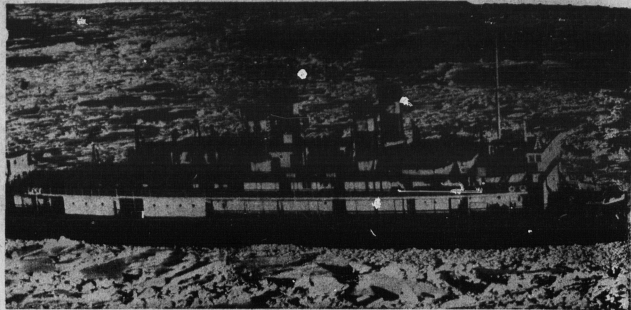
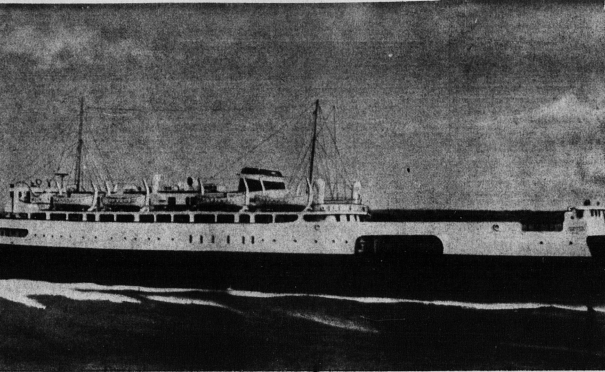
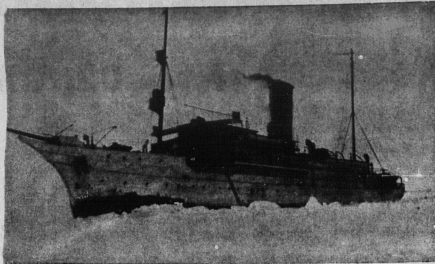
Years later the ultra-modern and then the world's most powerful ice-breaking car ferry, arrived as the MV Abegevit started battling the irreconcilable elements of nature.

In between times the ancient Scotia, a car ferry, helped out in summer to handle the growing movement of automobiles. Then the newest ship, the Confederation, was added to an already long list. She has proven adequate under normal conditions, but unable to handle severe winter conditions.

While weeks no longer pass without a crossing of the strait, it is not uncommon for days to go by even in the present.

So now Islanders wait patiently (they long ago learned the futility of traffic impatience) for the proposed causeway to at long last give them the promised "continuous communication".

**SET LOADING RECORD**  
MONTREAL (CP)—A wheat-loading record of 2,500 tons an hour was established at Montreal harbor Wednesday when the Ionian Mariner took aboard 20,300 tons of wheat, destined for Poland, in seven hours and 45 minutes. Six weeks ago the freighter Thera loaded 232,000 bushels of wheat in just under 48 hours. The 20,300 tons loaded to become lost in blizzards or frozen to death under



THESE FIVE SHIPS played a big part in helping Island overcome winter isolation. Old timers will recall the CGS Minto and CGS Stanley at bottom of the page. Top left is CGS Earl

Grey and immediately above the SS Prince Edward Island. Now carrying the load is MV Abegevit, to the left.

**Congratulations to Charlottetown!**

Beneficial, on the occasion of its own 50th Anniversary, takes pleasure in congratulating the City of Charlottetown as host in commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the First Confederation Conference.

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One hundred years ago today, 23 men warmly agreed to found a new nation. And just three years later that dream was realized. Canada was born.

On that September day it was those people—men of vision—who made the difference between Canada remaining fragmented or becoming a nation united.

On the Centennial of the First Conference on Canadian Confederation The Toronto-Dominion Bank is proud to salute the people who created this country; and the people who have helped it grow.

Canada today is proof indeed that people do make the difference.

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