

Willems

July 82

McGill College,
Montreal.

Saturday,
22 July, '82.

Dear Father,

At Mr. Peterson's sug-
gestion I went to see Mr. Job-
Abbott, President of the Toronto
Bridge Co. I called three times
at intervals of an hour before Mr.
Peterson could spare me ten min-
utes; & five times at the Windsor
before I found Mr. Abbott in.
This took up all yesterday. I
had a long talk with Mr. Abbott
in the evening. He is not only
President, but does most of the de-
signing, & appears to be largely in-
terested in the Co. as well. At

kind enough to explain to me
the technicalities involved, and the
facilities offered by one Province to
another which I will mention to
Mr. Abbott. I was afraid of Ontario's
influence; & also of the influence
of iron-producers here as they im-
port material from Scotland. There
are no bridge firms that can pre-
sume to oppose them, nor would
they have ground to do so in
any case; & I am told there
is nothing to fear in the other
directions either.

This is the case as it stands.
Then as to offers. Mr. Abbott offers
me the position of Assist. Engineer
as soon as the works commence
here. I told him I preferred office
work; for I can see the other wd
leave me open to the chances of
continued change which I am trying

Toronto, ~~there is a~~ ^{the} position next to
Mr. Abbott's is occupied by the Sub-
intendent of Construction who is
out on the work that is being e-
rected; then an Assistant Engineer
who helps to the office, makes work-
ing drawings from Mr. A's sketches
&c, &c.; and under him draughtsmen
to superintend construction, a rough
man is required, who does not mind
bullying the men and working on
Sunday if need be. The Co. has
at present the whole of the Can-
Pacific Bridges to make, & has
also furnished some at least of
those on the sections constructed
by the Gov^t; it seems to command
the whole trade of this country,
& with the present system of tariff
& draw-backs can undersell the
American manufacturers abroad to
a considerable extent. The Company

to now intend to erect works here,
& Mr. A. has come down to select
a site. He seems to favour Longue.
The only difficulty is that they hold
only an Ontario charter, but have
applied for a Dominion one. The
application is forgotten to-day and
it will be six weeks before it will
be granted — the time required during
which public notice must be given.
They expect to commence work in
September, get in the foundations,
put up a shed with sufficient
machinery to manufacture the
roofs of the permanent buildings
during the winter, & erect them
in the spring. I have seen Mr.
Ferrier about the chances of applying
to their obtaining a charter, and find
he thinks there is no question about
it in the case of a Company already
incorporated. That has also been

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to avoid. I suggested to him that it would be to his interest as well as mine that I should go into the works at Toronto for the intervening weeks to get a knowledge of things there, to be prepared to make a start to better advantage there here. Thereupon he thought for about five minutes; and found he agreed with me. He will give me the designs of the buildings to make, so that I may be better able to superintend their erection, & sundry other work that does not come quite within the scope of his present staff, and will allow me a nominal salary of \$50 a month in the mean time.

With respect to permanent salary, I told him I thought I ought to be worth \$200 a month; but he considered that if I got \$150 a month at the end of the first year, I ought to be satisfied. I did not wish to agree to this, nor to make any definite arrangement, for I think I will be better able to do so after being a time in the works. It appears to me that I had better take advantage of the provisional arrangement I suggested. If delay occurs, I can still keep afloat, & am gaining an experience that will help me to get a position elsewhere even if this falls through. When the work does begin here, I can take hold of it from the very first, and do the Land Surveying

and everything else right through. The first bridge to be made here is the one across the Lachine Rapids. Mr. Peters or thinks I will gain as good an experience in this for \$2 as in any, although some of the American ones are on a larger scale. Mr. Abbott, appears to be a man thoroughly up in the work, and to understand all its details. He was formerly in the Burton Bridge Works, Ohio; and is a Yankee in manner, and does not hesitate to throw in an occasional epithet into his conversation. He comes to-night for Frout, & I have to give him a decided answer this evening. He is going West at the end of this month, and I must therefore be in Frout as soon as possible. I

shall probably leave Tuesday evening.
I will have time to finish the
labels, part of which are now done;
but I hope you will not hurry
back on my account, & I hope
to be down again in September.
Mr. Ferris asked me to say that
he was very anxious that you should
take time for a thorough rest.
No letters of importance have arrived.

Your affectionate son,

William.

P.S. I have seen Mr. Abbott
again, & arranged to go up to
Toronto next week. He has given me
a further insight into his plans, &
they appear to me more definite and
satisfactory, as I understand better
what he is aiming at in establish-
ing works here.