

William
Montebello, Vt.

Aug 28, 1876.

(Monday)

My dear Father,

In answer to your enquiries about Ernest Harris, I will try to state what I know of him.

As to himself personally he is most steady & well principled, although he has rather deep & metaphysical views on religious subjects. He seems to have been a good deal influenced by Swedenborg's works & views, & is quite convinced that his way of interpreting the Bible is the only true one. He is a tea-trader practically, although it is rather from choice than principle. His manner is somewhat reserved, with a touch of the patronizing about it. Perhaps I should rather call it, a confidence in his own opinion; but it is only slight

and not always apparent. He is very pleasant & sociable, but not at all talkative.

He was educated at the "Institute" at Boston, & holds its degree of C.E. I believe. He is therefore well up in the methods taught there, & in American practice. You know, I think, what the course there includes. Since then he has been on work on railways in Nova Scotia, & also on the Intercolonial; on which I understand, he had charge of a Division Section. This gives him a great advantage as it gives him an acquaintance with the very best class of work yet constructed in this country, & the plans & drawings which he will have in connection with it, would be very useful to his classes.

He was offered a Professorship in the Cooper Hill Institute of London the one at which the Engineers are trained &

for the Indian Civil Service, but he declined the offer. He had previously been requested to set some questions for the exams & to read the papers which he had done. The reason he gave for not accepting the situation in a letter I had from him, was simply that he preferred to work in this country rather than to settle in England.

I do not know anything of his powers of teaching, but I should think he would probably be able to do very well. It would be a pity, I think to offer ~~him~~ the situation permanently to any one before giving them a trial, as that is really the only way of being certain. I should think him as good a person as could well be found for the place as he is a Canadian, & has worked here & understands the country.

I am intending to go to Ottawa before returning to Montreal, but I am afraid it would be rather early for me to leave, as soon as you speak of. I could see you if you came by the day boat, although it would only be for a moment at the wharf, unless you were to stop here. The evening boat passes here about 1 A.M. I might be able to get to Ottawa before you leave; but would like to stay here till the end of the month (Thursday) if possible, as there is a good deal going on to do tomorrow & perhaps the day following in making up the estimate for the month. If you would like me to go at present, I please telegraph & I can arrange to do so. I wish to see Mr. Page, & also about the Dominion Land Surveyor question.

There is very little rock cutting, & all there is, is sandstone quartzite & diorite.

Yours affectionately

William