



The Tay Navigation Company had no easy time building the first canal; given no monetary assistance from the government, the entire project had to be financed privately, and several obstacles made this even more difficult than it would at first seem. The amount of money that the TNC could raise by share output, as granted by the Crown in their incorporation, was only £4000; far less than was required. As well, they had to collect money from investors on a subscription basis; if their shareholders were not happy with the progress being made, they could pull out at any time, depriving the TNC of money that may already have been allotted or spent. Unfortunately, problems with these systems did lead to significant delays as they had to wait for more money to come in at each step of the construction. Consequently, these delays caused a lack of confidence in the project among shareholders, resulting in many refusing to give continued support, or in some cases, refusing to pay outright. (*"The Statutes of the Province of Upper Canada [1792-1831]"; pg. 558*) (Larry Turner *"The First Tay Canal in the Rideau Corridor, 1830-1850"; pg. 21, 30-32*) (George Raudzens *"The British Ordnance Department and Canada's Canals, 1815-1855"; pg. 176*)

After building Lock 3, an unexpected complication arose: the TNC decided that an additional, fifth lock was necessary to prevent large amounts of private property from being flooded. This was added to the plan when the canal's construction was already well over-budget, and didn't help to assuage any concerns about the project. Eventually, though, by 1833, the canal was nearing completion, with only lock gates remaining to be hung at locks 1 and 4. The gate at the first lock proved to be quite a problem for the engineers of the canal. While it was the first lock on which construction started, by the time it was all but finished in 1832, the dam at Poonamalie had raised the level of Rideau Lake to such an extent that it was backed up against the lock at Port Elmsley, making it nearly impossible to complete. The other 4 locks were already in use once they were constructed, but this problem delayed the completion of Lock 1 until late 1834. (Larry Turner *"The First Tay Canal in the Rideau Corridor, 1830-1850"; pg. 44*)

It also didn't help that the projected cost of the project seemed to raise exponentially over time. Rev. Bell reported that the initial estimate for the canal's cost in 1830 was £1000. However, by 1831, this estimate had raised to £3000, then to £5000 by 1833, and eventually was estimated to have had a total cost of £7000 in 1846. While this was a significant amount to have raised for a private enterprise, it should be noted that this amount would not have even afforded the construction of one lock on the also over-budget Rideau Canal, which totalled at £822,000 for 47 locks and 52 dams. The £7000 total for the Tay Canal built 5 locks and 6 dams. (It should also be noted that 2 swing bridges are reported to have been built during its construction, but history has not recorded where these bridges once stood, or what specifications they had. (Larry Turner *"The First Tay Canal in the Rideau Corridor, 1830-1850"; pg. 21, 47*) (Rev. William Bell *Diaries; pg.*) (The Rideau Route?) (G. Attar-Hassan et al *"Rideau Canal Preliminary Site Study Series, Tay Canal Branch, Beveridges - Perth"; pg. 51*)



Due to the extreme budgetary restrictions on the TNC, they had some tough compromises to make. The 5 locks on the Tay, what were known as "gunboat locks", were built much smaller than those on the Rideau, which could accommodate even the largest steamboats. While it was clear that these specifications limited the canal's use to some degree, they had to make do with what money they had, and those large steamboats were not plying the Tay to begin with; at least these affordable locks would open a more stable navigation route up to the barges that were already traversing the river, and to some smaller steamboats.

There was much contention over some of the Tay Navigation Company's practices during this time, as well. While it is difficult to delineate between the public's opinion and reform-minded opposition that was largely political in nature (contrary to the TNC's very conservative board of directors), there was nevertheless a considerable amount of resistance from without, especially over the company's dealings involving Cockburn Island, in Perth. *(Larry Turner "The First Tay Canal in the Rideau Corridor, 1830-1850"; pg. 35-26)*

The company was granted the land by the Crown, to excavate a basin at the end of the canal, and to sell tracts of land to gain finances to recoup ballooning costs of construction. In his diary entry for 21 April 1832, Rev. William Bell commented on this development in his typical dramatic style:

The island in the middle of town had long been reserved for public purposes, but now Morris and his fellow despots got a grant of it and were selling it out in building lots, applying the proceeds to the Canal, or putting them in their own pockets, for the Canal was their private property. I asked the reserve of a small lot for a school house, which was granted, but I was told you may buy a part of it for that purpose. *(Larry Turner "The First Tay Canal in the Rideau Corridor, 1830-1850"; pg. 55)*

The fact that this land, which was considered public, was now being sold wholesale by the directors of the TNC certainly didn't sit well with many people; this sentiment was also held by Donald Fraser, a reform politician and rival of William Morris. Fraser accused the TNC of using the Cockburn Island sale for their personal benefit in a letter to the Executive Council from October 1832. Morris, however, denied any misdeeds involving the sale of the island:

So wholly groundless is the insinuation that I defy not only Mr. Fraser but the whole community to show that one single farthing of the lots in question ever came into my hands or afforded me, directly or indirectly, the smallest personal pecuniary advantage. Nay, more I put it to him or to any other individual to show on the part of any one director the slightest deviation from the most disinterested probity and honor in the management of Tay Navigation Company, and I will further add that, notwithstanding the vast labor and loss of time, as well as expense, that have fallen on a few of the individuals who conduct the business, not one penny has or ever shall be charged against the company for these services.

Ultimately, the Council sided with Morris, and the Cockburn Island sale went on unimpeded. *(Larry Turner "The First Tay Canal in the Rideau Corridor, 1830-1850"; pg. 58-61)*