

the modern Cabinet) approved the purchase of *Rescue* and *Michigan*.<sup>81</sup> The ministers were evidently impressed by Wyatt's credentials, for right after the meeting William McDougall, the marine minister, informed him that he had been appointed as the government's "agent ... to negotiate for the hire or purchase of certain steamers to be used as Gunboats on the Saint Lawrence River and the Lakes." He was in fact to have wider authority including "employment of such crews, engineers, pilots, etc as may be found requisite."<sup>82</sup> His compensation was to be five dollars per day, plus reimbursement for expenses, when he was conducting government business.

Wyatt faced a hurdle in concluding the terms of purchase from the hard-driving owner of *Michigan*, who now demanded \$25,000 in US currency, the equivalent of \$16,787.50 in Canadian currency. This was considerably more than the asking price of \$12,000 in Canadian funds elicited by Wyatt's first inquiries. Still, Wyatt advised, the increased price was more economical than continuing *Michigan*, whose services were urgently needed, at the high rate of daily charter. Indeed, there was no point in prolonging the negotiations, as within a few weeks the daily charter rate would fully account for the additional \$4787.50. On 17 July, Executive Council approved the purchase of both *Michigan* and *Rescue* (whose price Wyatt was able to reduce by a thousand dollars from the original offer, to \$21,000).<sup>83</sup> He suggested a name change for *Michigan* to avoid confusion with the USS *Michigan*, the sole American naval vessel on the Lakes. Lord Monck, the governor general, dubbed the province's new ship *Prince Alfred*, for the second son of Queen Victoria, who had entered the Royal Navy at the age of fourteen in 1858 and was known as the "Sailor Prince."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Executive Council Minutes, 6 July 1866, RG1 E1, vol. 91, pp. 592-3, LAC.

<sup>82</sup> McDougall, "Acting Minister of Marine," to Wyatt, 6 July 1866, RG9 IC8, vol. 8, file numbers 1-20, LAC. On the draft, the "Provincial Secretary" letterhead is scratched out and replaced by "Minister of Marine Department." See also McDougall, "Memorandum on the Steamer 'Royal'," 19 September 1866, file numbers 63-109, RG9 IC8, vol. 9, LAC, in which McDougall notes he was appointed "Acting Minister of Marine" in early July 1866.

<sup>83</sup> Wyatt to McDougall, 13 and 14 July 1866, RG9 IC8, vol. 8, file numbers 1-20, LAC; Executive Council Minute, 17 July 1866, RG1 E1, vol. 91, pp. 608-14, LAC. The account in MacDonald, *Gunboats on the Great Lakes*, 86-8 does not mention that *Michigan*'s owner's demand for \$25,000 was in US funds, and that the equivalent in Canadian funds was \$16,787.50, the amount Wyatt recommended accepting and which the government paid: Munro, accountant, Bank of Montreal to Wyatt, 25 July 1866, RG9 IC8, vol. 8, file numbers 1-20, LAC.

<sup>84</sup> McDougall to de Horsey, 15 September 1866, RG9 IC8, vol. 9, file numbers 63-109, LAC; MacDonald, *Gunboats on the Great Lakes*, 87; John Van der Kiste, "Alfred, Prince, duke of Edinburgh (1844-1900)," (online version, 8 January 2009), <https://doi-org.libproxy.wlu.ca/10.1093/ref:odnb/346>; "The Naval Brigade Dinner," *Globe*, 27 December 1862, 2. The US government had dispatched USS *Michigan* from her home port of Erie, Pennsylvania on 31 May 1866 to Buffalo to interdict the Fenian attack on Fort Erie; it arrived too late, but did prevent