

ments have adopted metric measures. The value of Messrs. Halsey and Dale's book is that the facts they bring out will warn us against being over-sanguine of revolutionizing in a single generation all the trade rules and customs of the Anglo-Saxon world by the official adoption of the metric system. But this need not deter us from working for a change which will simplify in an immense degree the commerce of the whole world, and enable all nations to come together and understand each other, in some respects at least. The reasons we have faith in the metric system are, among others, that since it was adopted in France it has so commended itself to other nations that forty-four of them have, of their own accord, adopted it, and that as time goes on it is being used by a greater number of the people of those countries, to the gradual disuse of the local measures referred to; that it is already all but universal in the scientific world and in some special industries, such as the chemical industry, and that educationists as a body commend it for its greater simplicity and for the time that would be saved if it were universally adopted. As we have before said, the reason why the English-speaking people have not adopted the system before now is that heretofore they have held such a predominance in manufacturing, especially in the textile and engineering trades, that their measures have not only been understood by almost all the world, but have governed the system of measures even in metric countries. But the Anglo-Saxon peoples no longer hold a monopoly of manufacturing, and this fact is becoming thoroughly appreciated in Great Britain if not in the United States. It will be appreciated in the latter country as soon as its foreign trade reaches nearly the proportions of that of Great Britain.



TELEPHONES IN RAILWAY STATIONS.

The decision of the Board of Railway Commissioners in regard to the applications of the municipalities of Fort William and Port Arthur for permission to connect their telephone systems with the C.P.R. depots in the towns named is one which interests all other cities and towns which may in the future adopt either municipal or independent telephone systems. It is true that the permission asked is conceded, but the decision of Chairman Blair that compensation must be paid by the applicants renders the concession valueless. The claims set forward by the "Bell" that the voiding of this clause in their agreement with the C.P.R. would involve a loss of \$100,000 is too absurd to be seriously considered for one moment. But admitting that such a loss was involved, in the opinion of able lawyers the agreement under which it is claimed is one which comes under the heading of restraint of trade; and furthermore, the clause inserted in the Railway Act last session was intended to give competitive telephone systems connection with railway stations, without compensation, this view being confirmed by all the members of the Railway Commission, the chairman excepted.

If it be true, as asserted by a correspondent in the Toronto World, that the stock of the New Brunswick Telephone Co. is practically in two blocks, one being held by the Bell Telephone Co. and the other by the chairman of the Railway Commission, that gentleman's decision in opposition to the view of the other members of the Commission should not be allowed to interfere with the carrying out of the obvious intention of Parliament in inserting the clause referred to in the Railway Act.

The companies are apparently desirous of compro-

misg the present case by granting the facilities asked for without compensation, but it must not be overlooked that if the two municipalities consented to this, the whole matter would have to be fought out again by the next municipality or company establishing a competitive exchange. While it is most unfair under the circumstances to force the matter into the courts, now is the time that the matter should be finally settled. The very fact that the companies are anxious to compromise implies a doubt on their part as to the chances of the courts interpreting the clause in their favor.

It is surprising that a corporation like the C.P.R. should ever have agreed to a condition which, sooner or later, might result in loss of freight to their line and serious inconvenience to their shippers. The agreement with the Bell Telephone Co. was no doubt intended to provide for free transportation, in exchange for free telephone service, and as such was perfectly legitimate. It is difficult to comprehend that the railway company obtain any real advantage under this agreement, as it would appear that the value in train mileage for the transportation of the large staff of the Bell Telephone Co. would reach a much larger sum than that of the telephone service received in return. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Grand Trunk and other railways are introducing a system of long distance telephony over their telegraph systems. This will, no doubt, be more economical and satisfactory to the railway companies than any combination with the telephone monopoly.

The railway systems of Canada have been built very largely with the money voted by the people; that being so, the companies operating them should act in harmony with the needs of the public, and avoid entering into contracts intended to restrict the use of public utilities, or some day they may find that when they most need the assistance of the people it will be denied them.



INDEPENDENT TELEPHONY.

The subject of telephone competition has, during the past month, been a prominent factor in municipal politics, and the present indications seem to herald the advent of aggressive competition in more than one of our larger Canadian cities at an early date.

The city of Toronto has under consideration applications from two companies for a telephone franchise; the first offering services at flat rates of \$36 per annum for business and \$24 for residence; the second company promises service at \$6 per annum and one cent per outgoing call, with a total maximum charge per annum of \$35 for business and \$15 for residence, with an increase to \$40 and \$20 respectively when 10,000 subscribers are reached.

Dealing with the first offer, although the rates proposed are lower than the present "Bell" charges, they are not low enough to effectually compete with the monopoly, or to meet the altered conditions existing in Canada. It is necessary to point out that when telephone competition began in the United States the "Bell" rates left such a wide margin between the amount charged and the cost of operation that independent promoters were enabled to fix the rates high enough to allow them to create a large body of watered stock and pay the cost of construction out of bonds. In other words, in most of the large cities the cost of the independent plant is covered by the bond issue, the share capital being what is known in slang parlance as "all velvet."