

postage rate, that is, reducing it from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  c. per lb. Notwithstanding the reports to the contrary, it is not believed that the Government will suspend the paper duty.

#### THE DUTY ON PAPER.

The difficulty which confronts the Government on this particular point is not a slight one. To suspend one item in a tariff arbitrarily, is a line of policy which very few Governments would care to adopt. As to there being a combine, it is pointed out, in opposition to the statements printed in our last issue, that two large mills, namely, those at Cornwall and Georgetown, as well as several smaller mills, are not in the association at all and that the Canadian market prices are not the result of the association being in existence, but are really higher than the rates agreed upon by the members of the association. This, according to some minds, proves that there is no combine, and, besides that, the prices of paper in the United States at present preclude the hope of free trade in paper bringing any immediate relief to the Canadian publishers. However that may be, it seems to us that the removal of duty on paper is a rather desperate remedy, and that the Government could hardly respond to the demand in this respect. Paper-making is one of the natural industries of the country. It is only now beginning to take the position which the natural resources of the country must ultimately enable it to take, that of a great article of export to the principal consuming countries of the world. As long as there are tariff duties at all it would seem rather extraordinary to strike at paper and leave a long list of other articles untouched. It is a very serious matter to the newspaper publishers of Canada. No doubt the paper mills have endeavored to act (as far as capitalists can be expected to do) with an eye to the interests of their customers as well as their own. The Laurentide Co., for example, undoubtedly relieved the situation by turning their machines on to Canadian orders. The Canada Paper Co. also devoted four or five of their machines which they usually employ in the making of superior grades of paper to making news print, but the price asked for news print made on these expensive machines is pretty high, and there is no comfort in being able to get a supply of paper if you feel yourself unable to pay for it. Altogether, unless the situation is relieved in a short time by some means, which we do not clearly foresee at this moment, the policy of protection at a time of this kind will be regarded with some disfavor by a very powerful body of consumers, that is, the newspapers. While the suggested reduction in the postage rate may satisfy some publishers, it is said others are not going to be satisfied with anything less than the removal of the duty, and are going to fight tooth and nail for that.

#### POSTAGE AND THE ZONE QUESTION.

The postage question has come up in the most unexpected manner again. It is said that there have been laid before the Government two propositions, or perhaps three: To abolish the rate altogether, to reduce it, or to levy it equally upon dailies and weeklies. There can be no doubt that the Postmaster-General will refuse to abolish the rate altogether, as he doubtless feels it would be impossible to get it on again if he once consented to its withdrawal.

The pressure is pretty strong. In addition to the daily press, the religious publications, notably those of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, are also protesting and have passed resolutions embodying their views. As to halving the rate, while that would be accepted in some quarters as a partial relief, it will not, as we have said, satisfy all. With regard to the zone system, its objectionable features seem principally to consist in the fact that it is, on the face of it, a discrimination against one class of publications in favor of another. As a matter of public policy, however, it is believed that the proposal to tax the weekly press would produce so little money that it is hardly thought worth while. The thing is figured out in this way: There are, roughly speaking, about 1,000 weeklies in the Dominion, and the average circulation of these is placed at about 800 copies per week. Only about half are mailed. A rough estimate places the weight of the weekly papers which are mailed through the post at 40,000 lb., and this weight at  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. per lb. would yield about \$200 a week to the post office or in the neighborhood of \$10,000 a year. For this comparatively small sum it is contended it would not be worth while to impose the rate on the weeklies, seeing that the mail bags used for local purposes throughout the country are seldom more than one-half or one-quarter full, and that the carriage of such weekly papers that are mailed through the post office does not entail the use of a single additional mail bag. We understand that it is by a process of reasoning of this kind that the Postmaster General defends the zone system and refuses to impose the rate on the weeklies.

#### THE C.P.A. EXECUTIVE IN SESSION.

A meeting of the executive of the Canadian Press Association was held in Toronto on the afternoon of Friday, May 18, to discuss the questions arising out of postage and the price of paper, as well as the proposed reception to the Western Press Association. A lengthy discussion took place upon the intimation given that the Government proposed to relieve the situation for the newspapers by reducing the postage rate one half. The impression has been conveyed that this action would not be officially declared unless the publishing interests were prepared to accept it as a satisfactory move. It was pointed out at the meeting that the association in February last had passed a resolution declaring itself in favor of a  $\frac{1}{4}$  c. postage rate and the abolition of the zone system. The executive, therefore, was not authorized to recede from the position of the association on the zone system. A resolution was accordingly passed, expressing the satisfaction of the executive at the proposed reduction of the rate, but making no reference to the zone question.

Another discussion took place upon the papermakers' combine and what ought to be done with reference to it. The subject was considered in all its bearings and owing to the very strong feeling which exists, both among daily and weekly publishers, owing to the very high prices now asked for paper, it was decided to memorialize the Government. A motion was offered and unanimously passed to the effect that the executive have reason to believe in the existence of a Canadian paper combine, are ready to submit evidence to the Government in connection therewith