

of the measure inconsistently denied to them the smallest share of practical control over the administration of the department. No single legislature, even notwithstanding the concession of this important principle, could have introduced further changes, however necessary, in a system, the very existence of which depended on its unbroken uniformity throughout the whole of the provinces. The head of the department, with enlarged authority, would have become more independent than ever of provincial control. He would, it is true, according to the letter of the law, be still subordinate to the Post-master General; but the authority of the latter would have been impaired, and the control which he is supposed to exercise, virtually abandoned in principle, would soon have become perfectly illusory in practice."

Rejecting thus decidedly the plan of provincial post-office legislation, and indeed regarding imperial legislation as not requisite, in view of the large powers vested in the Lords of the Treasury and Post-master General by the imperial act of the 3rd and 4th Victoria,—the Commission was, however, far from satisfied at the state of things which it found existing, or inclined to leave it unamended.

According to the Report, the "leading defects" in the constitution of the department, were two in number: the one, "the want of uniformity in the principles upon which it is conducted by two Deputy Post-masters General, of co-ordinate and independent authority;" the other, "the absence not only of responsibility to the executive or representative authorities in the colonies, but of all real responsibility to the head of the department in England." The detail given in the Report, of the thousand-and-one incongruities of practice prevailing in the Halifax as compared with the Quebec charge, most unquestionably bears out the first count of this indictment. And for the second, it is enough to observe, as the Report does, that the commissions and instructions of the Deputy Post-masters General, recognized no local authority to whom they should report, or from whom they should receive instructions; that although they may have sometimes in practice communicated somewhat more with the provincial authorities than the theory of the system would suggest, such communication was always of an irregular and unsatisfactory character; and their responsibility to their chief, the Post-master General in London, could not but be in effect nearly nominal, their ordinary proceedings not admitting of real supervision by so distant an authority, and his decisions even upon larger matters,—appeals from and complaints against them not excepted,—from a sort of necessity of the case, proceeding upon their statements and suggestions, in the main, if not altogether.

To remedy this two-fold defect, the Commission proposed, in the first place, that the whole Post-office Department for British North America should be put under one Deputy Post-master General, resident (of course) ordinarily at the seat of government in Canada, with a sufficient staff of Post-office Surveyors under him, one of whom should be stationed at the seat of government of Nova Scotia, and another at that of New Brunswick; and, in the second place, that there should be introduced into his commission or instructions, a clause "requiring him to obey, in all things lawful, the orders of the Governor General, as well as those of the Lords of the Treasury and the Post-master General,"—a clause under the authority of which, the Governor General would, of course, secure, as well for the executives of the other provinces as for that of Canada, an administrative control over the department within their respective limits, which would suffice to subject the whole system and its officers, to a thoroughly efficient oversight, and yet could not possibly clash with that of the imperial authorities, or interfere with the general uniformity of the rule required for the well-working of the department.

The practice of remitting a surplus post-office revenue to England, is also unreservedly condemned. "This is a point," says the Report, "on which the public wishes have been so decidedly expressed, that we should have no hope of any arrangement from which this principle (the giving up any such surplus to provincial uses) was excluded, being satisfactory to the people of British North America."

On the other hand, however, the counter-project that has been entertained by many, of distributing such surplus between the provinces, as an item of their revenue, is equally condemned. The Commissioners considered that no attempt ought to be made to obtain from the department any surplus whatever. The Post office, in their view, *should support itself, and no more*. To extend its operations permanently beyond its means, so as to make the department dependent on other taxation for its maintenance, they argue, would not be safe; to keep them so far within its means as to derive a revenue from it,—in other words, to levy a tax to be applied to other uses of Government, upon correspondence by mail,—they argue, would be unwise in the extreme.

With this view of the general position of the department, as "a self sustaining institution," it follows, of course, that they rejected the project of a uniform rate of postage for all distances. To be uniform, a rate must be low; for nothing but a low rate can be levied, from the necessity of the case, for short distances. In Great Britain the uniform rate fixed upon was accordingly one penny. But there, the whole average cost of a single letter was

proved, before the change was made, to be less than *one farthing*. In Canada, on the contrary, the Commission found from the returns made to it, that the average cost of each single letter was (in currency) about *five pence halfpenny*. The lowest existing rate—complained of with reason, as too high for short distances—was *four pence halfpenny*. To raise it was out of the question; and to take a uniform rate below it—on the principles laid down by the Commissioners—not less so.

The scale recommended by the Commissioners was the following:—

Under 30 miles,	2d. cy.
From 30 to 80 miles,	4d. "
From 80 to 200 miles,	6d. "
From 200 to 300 miles,	9d. "
Over 300,	1s "

And with this scale they recommended the adoption of the weight system, as already established at home. The adoption of the two changes they regarded as not likely to cause any material loss of revenue, even for the time, and as almost certain before long to raise the revenue of the department beyond its former amount.

Newspaper postage they proposed, of course, to bring into the general revenue of the department—from which it never ought to have been diverted; and they recommended a uniform rate of a halfpenny currency on each paper, to be prepaid or not, at the option of the parties. For other printed matter, they proposed a uniform rate of a penny an ounce within the Provinces; and if from Great Britain, some rate greatly lower than the letter postage charge actually levied on it.

SHIP CANAL TO NEW YORK FROM THE UPPER LAKES.

We have much pleasure in giving to our readers the following extract from a letter received from a gentleman in Oswego, N.Y., whose opinions are entitled to the highest consideration:—

OSWEGO, 13th November, 1846.

To _____, Esq.

SIR,—I take the liberty to draw your attention to the route from the St. Lawrence, for propellers and sailing vessels of the size now used on the Upper Lakes, to New York city. Please look at the map, and at a glance of the eye the feasibility of a ship canal 8 or 9 feet deep, from Lachine to the deep waters of Lake Champlain, and from Whitehall to Troy, will be perceived by you, and that too at a cost within the reach of an incorporated company, if permission can be obtained from Canada and the State of New York, to construct such a work.

The every day increasing commerce of the West, will soon require all the avenues to market that can possibly be opened, from the Rocky Mountains and beyond, no route can compete with that via the Lakes, in safety, cheapness, and promptitude. If the propellers can reach Montreal and New York, freights to both places will be cheaper than by any other route, and Montreal, as a market, will become the popular destination of western produce.

I need not point out to you that this work would secure you a very great income for your Canadian canals, and greatly benefit your Province, but particularly the City of Montreal.

Please reflect on these hints, and excuse the liberty I have taken in addressing them to you.

Very respectfully yours,

C. J. B.

We fully agree with the above, that every possible avenue to the ocean from the West will be required, and that the present mode of transit by the Erie Canal is quite inadequate for the business which the impetus of England's Free-Trade policy will give to the production of agricultural produce in the West. No one who has not travelled through the Western States can form the least idea of what the fertility of its soil and the energy of its inhabitants are capable of producing. We are of opinion, however, that the Portland Rail-Road, if properly constructed upon the wide-gauge principle, will successfully compete with the proposed Ship Canal from Lachine, provided the said road can be connected by means of a Bridge across the St. Lawrence, with our Canals. The relative distances of each route will be as follows (as nearly as possible from recollection):—

BY THE ERIE CANAL.	
From Cleveland to Buffalo,	150
Buffalo to Albany (Canal),	362
Albany to New York,	145
Two transshipments, 362 miles by Canal, cargo 700 brls.	657

BY LAKE CHAMPLAIN.	
Cleveland to Welland Canal,	150
Welland Canal,	24
Thence to Lachine,	390
Lachine to St. Johns,	18
St. Johns to Whitehall,	140
Whitehall to Albany,	78
Albany to New York,	145
No transshipment, 156 miles by Canal, cargo 3500 brls.	915