

Whatever inconvenience therefore might ensue from the prohibition of Sunday labour in the Public Departments, the Committee respectfully submit, that justice to the officers of Government, and a due regard to public morality, justify the demand made by the petitioners, and that their prayer ought to be acceded to. But the Committee are far from apprehending that the measure would entail any serious inconvenience. The proposed reform aims at three objects,—closing all Post Offices, stopping the dispatch of Sunday Mails, and closing the Canals. In opposition to the first point, there are two great objections offered; it is said that closing the Offices in the Cities and large Towns, would be injurious to the Mercantile interest, and that closing them in the Country places would seriously incommode persons who come a great distance to Church on that day, and have no other opportunity of getting their letters. It would be difficult to conceive how, in an age of Railroads and Telegraphs, any Merchant could suffer by receiving early on Monday morning letters which arrived on Sunday, so long as he stood on an equal footing with every other Merchant; and it is to be observed that not one witness has pointed out a single practical evil which could result from it. The evidence, on the other hand, (to be found in the Appendix) of leading Merchants throughout the Country—of men largely engaged in business, and keen and successful in its pursuit—that they have not opened a letter on Sunday for many years, and never suffered in any way from the deprivation, is not to be resisted. And the fact that in the Mercantile Emporium of Great Britain, the Post Office has been closed for years on the Lord's Day, proves how unnecessary is the practice in the Towns of Canada. As regards the Country Offices, the argument of convenience, however forcible it may have been at one time, has had little or no force since the Post Office Department came under Provincial control. Since the 6th April, 1851, the Offices have been increased from 600 to 1026. They are now thickly studded over the Country—and wherever the public convenience demands it, a new office is immediately opened. The rapid improvement of the roads, too, and the increasing wealth of all classes, render a visit to the Post Office during the week, by the settler in the forest, a very different undertaking from what it once was; and the injustice of compelling 2,500 persons to labor on the Lord's Day on this ground, is seen by reference to the small amount of this description of business transacted. In the last week of March, 1852, a return was kept of all the letters and papers received at the several Offices; by this it appears that the whole postage of the week was £1,673 2s. 10d., of which £672 3s. was received at the five Cities. £1,224 15s. 5d. was received at 106 City and Town Offices—and the whole receipts at the remaining 700 Offices were but £448 7s. 5d., or an average amount, *for the whole week*, of about 12s., or 1s. 8½d. per day.

As regards the despatching of Mails by steamboat or stage on Sunday, little doubt can exist. The fact that no mail leaves the City of London on that day, proves clearly that the business community of Canada could not suffer very seriously from the total cessation of this practice. And indeed, the limited number of Sunday mails despatched at present, proves the safety with which all might be dispensed with. No mail is despatched between Quebec and Montreal on Sunday, in summer; Why then should one be despatched in winter? No mail is despatched in summer between Kingston and Toronto; Why then should one be despatched between Kingston and Montreal? Habit alone seems to sustain this abuse on the routes where it now exists.

The plea of public convenience for opening the Canals on the Lord's Day, is still less defensible; it is enough to say that the Welland and Lachine Canals have been closed for years, without one complaint reaching Government, to show the propriety of closing them all. It is very obvious that any inconvenience which could result to the mercantile interest from closing the St. Lawrence Canals on Sunday, must have been experienced with far greater force on the Welland; and it is equally clear that if any serious inconvenience had been felt, it would have been represented to Government long ere this.