

merce of the whole world. Germany and England, having identical interests in that part of the world, can, Mr. Balfour, acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs, believes, work harmoniously together. Russia, too, had given assurances, but they do not persist: the only thing that is constant with her is to work for new acquisitions in China. For this policy of virtual division of China, Russia has succeeded by being content, in the meantime, to share with France and Germany. But these two latter powers once seated in their new acquisitions, will help to create a new balance of power, in the East; and when Russia is ready to make further advances in the direction she is now taking, the other nations interested in the trade of China may find it to their interest to oppose her.

When the question of opening a wagon road from Edmonton to the Yukon was brought up by Senator Carling, in the Senate, Senator Mills reiterated the opinion that Lake Teslin route is the best for present purposes. This opinion being still adhered to by the Government, we may expect that they will do something in the way of a substitute for the defunct Mackenzie-Mann contract. If anything is to be done, it is clear that tenders must be called for and the best offer taken. The Senate would not be likely to negative this proceeding. What it objected to was the nature of the provisional contract; and that once out of the way, a road is open to begin anew. Not much time would be lost by the action of the Senate, if a new plan were acted upon without unnecessary delay. As an all-Canadian route, the projected road from Edmonton has distinct advantages in its favor. It would run through the fine agricultural district of the Peace River valley, and the southern end of it would be necessary for that purpose, if the Klondyke gold prospects were to vanish at once and for ever. But as a present means of getting to the Klondyke, its great length makes it unavailable. The idea of a wagon road, by that route, is neither new nor antagonistic to the Lake Teslin route. When it was supposed that the latter project would be carried out under an existing contract, the wagon road from Edmonton found advocates in all parts of the country, and the present movement in its favor is but a continuation of that, not the setting up of a new route in opposition to that of Lake Teslin.

OUR POSTAL SYSTEM.

The proposed restoration of newspaper postage is a demand of payment for service rendered; the service costs money, and when the money is not repaid by those who receive the direct benefit of the service, it must be paid in part by others to whom none of the direct benefit goes. One objection made to the proposal is certainly not valid; the weight of the burthen, it is said by way of complaint, will fall on Ontario, where the great bulk of the newspaper matter circulates. The innuendo is that some other Provinces ought to pay a part of the cost of sending newspapers through the post-offices for Ontario consumption. In the plan itself, which makes a restoration of postage partial, there is a patent defect; all newspapers within a radius of ten miles of the office of publication are to go free. This is a discrimination in favor of the local journals, and against the journals which have a general circulation. This discrimination requires justification, which we apprehend it will be difficult to make. On what principles are local journals to be carried free, while the other must bear the cost of their own carriage? The only ground on

which, so far as we remember, free newspaper postage has been defended is, that newspapers have an educational mission or effect. But even so, free newspaper postage is liable to the same objection that is often brought against a State Church; one man is made to pay for the propagation of opinions which, far from having an interest in disseminating, he utterly disbelieves and abhors. The analogy of the French practice of paying all churches is nearer to free postage than the payment by the State of one church. But refinements of this kind have not been much thought of. Publishers and readers of newspapers have tacitly conspired to get a benefit at the expense of other people who got nothing in return, and who were simply dubbed dullards and fools for not reading what, for any reason good or bad, they do not want.

The Postmaster-General dwells on the enormous weight of newspaper bulk which, in these latter days, is being carried free of charge by the Government. The discovery of new materials out of which to make paper, and the consequent cheapening of the product, have had much to do in bringing about this result. If paper had remained dearer, the contents of the lesser sheets issued as newspapers, might have had a tendency to improve rather than to increase of bulk. However this may be, the fact of an enormous increase in the weight of newspapers going through the post, causes free postage to present itself to the Postmaster-General as an abuse, which he hastens to abate before it assumes the dimensions of something like a scandal. But while he is about it he should make a complete job of the business, by restoring newspaper postage entirely. There is no charm in the ten mile radius which should entitle it to exceptional immunity.

In the proposal to reduce letter postage from three to two cents, we fear the future may reveal a premature move. The aim should be to make the Post-Office Department self-sustaining; and we fear that even the partial restoration of newspaper postage would not fill the gap which the one-third reduction of letter postage would cause, besides covering the existing deficit. It might be better to defer the reduction on letters, till we are sure that the state of the postal revenue will permit of it. From the statement of the Postmaster-General, it would seem that the question of guaranteeing the safe carriage of valuables, by insurance, has been considered and rejected, on account of the cost, which is put at \$2,000,000. If insurance were to be undertaken, the business is on a scale sufficiently large to warrant the Government in becoming its own insurer; and in that case, the cost would be the actual damage paid. There is one dangerous practice extensively indulged in, which, if continued, will some day lead to extensive loss to somebody. The practice of sending large parcels of bank bills through the post-office was a danger that would lead to robbery almost any day on which thieves could assure themselves that the booty is awaiting them. These parcels are merely registered and not distinguished as containing valuables. At numerous points, from the moment they leave the post-office to that of their arrival, a robbery is possible. There are no special guards, no adequate precautions. The bags go through the streets in wagons without other guard than the driver. The senders may, in the light of Mr. Mulock's statement, come to realize that the valuables practically go at their risk. Either senders of money in large amounts should be required to specify the nature and amount of it, and when received at the post-office, it should be placed under special protection; or it should be refused carriage, or taken only on the distinct understanding that it is at the risk of the sender.