

lbs. in St. John. A certain kind of grass-seed weighs 14 lbs. in Ontario, and 56 lbs. in New Brunswick; malt weighs 36 lbs. in Ontario and Quebec, and 39 lbs. in Nova Scotia. Still more remarkable is the fact that in Halifax a bushel of foreign barley is 52 lbs., and home-grown only 48 lbs. In Toronto, rye is bought sometimes at 56 lbs.; and often at 60 lbs. to the bushel. Coals are measured in Quebec by an imaginary measure, styled the "Imperial Winchester" bushel; in Nova Scotia, 2,240 lbs. make a ton of coal; in the other Provinces the ton is 2,000 lbs. In Quebec the arpent and the minot, though antiquated and even obsolete in France, are still current. The old English wine gallon and the English Winchester bushel have also been retained in some parts of the Dominion.

The committee urge that these anomalies should be removed by a comprehensive measure, and insist that another session should not be allowed to pass without its adoption.

The metric system is strongly recommended; and the powerful argument that some fifteen countries, with an aggregate population of four hundred thousand people, have wholly adopted it, is adduced in support of that recommendation. In five countries, with a population of one hundred and eighty-three thousand, it has been partly adopted; while in the United Kingdom, United States, and Prussia, it is simply permissive. It will be remembered that a strong effort was made by the American Boards of Trade, scarcely two years ago, to buy and sell grain by the cental or 100 lbs., but without success. Those who adopted the new system were forced, in a short time, to retrace their steps. The result of this experiment cannot be held to condemn the principle, which is thoroughly sound beyond a doubt; it only shows that people are not easily driven out of the ruts and grooves in which they move. Such an object can only be effected by bringing to bear the full influence of a legal enactment. A uniform metric system would greatly simplify commercial transactions and expedite business. Who, that understands reckoning money by dollars and cents, would be willing to go back to the old system? It is necessary to complete the reform which was inaugurated in the legalization of the decimal currency, by adding the metric system of weights and measures, and the work would be finished. The simplicity and beauty of the system, when once we are familiarized with it, would be so apparent that a return to the existing arrangement would be practically impossible.

A very serious objection, however, to the change is the foreign nomenclature which attaches to the metric system—a difficulty for

which no satisfactory solution has yet been found. To our numerous fellow-subjects of French origin this is no objection at all—quite the reverse. With the English speaking population it is a formidable obstacle; to the great majority, both the speaking and spelling of these French names would be an irksome, indeed, an impossible task. It would require the lifetime of a generation to popularize them. Still, formidable as this difficulty appears, it should not lead to the entire rejection of a system otherwise so near to perfection.

A permissive act, as suggested by the committee, would be a step in the right direction. Whatever is done in the matter will have to be done by steps, slow steps, so that the people may be gradually educated to the advantages of a change which has so much to recommend it to all classes.

PAYMENT BY TELEGRAM.

The constant tendency there is to strain any time or labor-saving appliance beyond the bounds of prudence, is being shown in the custom of entrusting to a telegram, duties which, except in very rare emergencies, it would be wiser to leave to the post service.

There is a class who have a habit of never doing to-day what can be done to-morrow, who however well prepared, meet no obligation until the last hour of the day of maturity. Another class, though aware that it will be needful for them to sell part of their stocks, in order to meet some payment falling due, postpone such sale to the very latest moment, hoping, micawber-like, and gambler-like, that "something will turn up," some change in the market in their favor. To these classes the telegraph gives such facilities as unhealthily to stimulate their love of procrastination. A case has come under our notice which shows that this practice is not without risk, and as a novel and untried point of law is involved, we will state the facts and the principle on which any decision will be based, should it be brought to the arbitrament of the courts. The names, dates, &c., are so given as to afford no clue to the real ones.

On the 10th April, Wheat & Co., of A., having a note due for \$1,000, sold, through their brokers at B., produce to that amount, which was paid into a bank, with instructions to advise their branch at A. of such payment, and late in the day, the A. bank received this telegram:—"A. Bank to B. Bank: We have placed \$1,000 to credit account of Wheat & Co." The bank at A., which held the due note of Wheat & Co., then presented their cheque for payment to the bank, which had received the telegram, and payment was refused, as the agent declined to advance upon a mere telegram, and elected to wait advice

by letter. On this, both note and cheque were protested, and next day, the cheque was presented, with a demand for a day's interest and cost of protest, which being refused, the cheque was withdrawn from presentation, and the question may be argued in consequence—Whether a bank is bound to act upon telegraphic advice? In two cases which are somewhat analagous, a banker is free to dishonor cheques without risk of action; the one is, when sufficient time has not elapsed for him to ascertain that the provision made for such cheques is "good" for its stated value; the other is somewhat similar, when he has not received a return for such cheques, &c., as have been left for collection to cover those drawn on such cash returns. Now the provision of a telegram is not so absolutely "good" as to justify in all cases an advance of money upon it, and the possibility of irregularity is amply sufficient to warrant a banker postponing such advance until more satisfactory advice is received. The weak point of a telegram is, that it does not carry with it legal proof of being genuine, and where a doubt may arise, a banker's duty is to give himself the benefit of it. Some banks use a secret cipher in all messages to and from their several offices; this is an advisable safeguard, and, in the case quoted, might have avoided the difficulty. We would, however, urge traders to a more timely preparation for their engagements; waiting for a rise often results in a fall, and a banker's confidence is seldom great in a customer who only meets his engagements at the last moment before going to protest.

Payment by telegram is a custom to be deprecated in the interests of careful, prudent, sound trading, as, until it can be made self-evidential, and the ostensible sender be held responsible for its terms, in all cases, this form of message will never have the legal status and power of a written letter.

MOVEMENT OF POPULATION—THE CREATION OF NATIONAL WEALTH.

The largest immigration ever received by Canada was in 1847; a year memorable as that in which the "accursed potatoe," so called by a foe to its use as the chief food of a people, failed in Ireland. Famine, fever, and a flight of population followed. But the flight did not always enable the fugitive to outstrip the grim messenger, who had already marked them for his own. To Canada, in that terrible year, came one hundred and twenty thousand emigrants, whose pathway and resting places were strewn with corpses. In this city, 1,500 of the victims found, literally, a common grave. The Government took alarm, and sent to England remonstrances against this pouring out of a tide