

divergent, and the consequence was that parties in these districts had to make a special contract with each other, specifying under which of the systems their contract had been entered into. He thought this question would be well worth the attention of the honourable framer of the measure were it for the benefit of the western trade alone.

Hon. Mr. YOUNG (Montreal West) admitted the importance of a uniform system of weights and measures for the whole Dominion, but it would be still better if we could assimilate our system to that of other countries. That, however, was impossible at present. Considering that nearly one half of our trade was with the United States, it would be well, when the subject was before the Committee, to consider the system in force there.

With regard to gauging the great inconvenience arose from the different systems in vogue, but this subject could be better discussed in Committee. He was sure that the measure would be welcomed by the mercantile community, and every member of the House would give his assistance in perfecting it.

Hon. Mr. DORION (Napierville) suggested that a period might be fixed after which the system would come in force in Lower Canada as in other parts of the Dominion. This was the plan followed in France.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER was satisfied that the suggestion was well worth the attention of the Committee. With regard to gauging he thought it would be found that the difficulties connected with cask gauging would be very large obviated by the substitution of the imperial gallon for the wine gallon. Reference to the trade-returns would show that the great bulk of our trade in liquids was with Great Britain.

Mr. KILLAM suggested that the Bill should be referred to the Committee on Banking and Commerce, when it could be thoroughly discussed.

The Committee rose and reported the resolution, and

Hon. Mr. TUPPER introduced a Bill founded on it which was read a first time.

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OCEAN MAIL STEAMERS

Hon. Mr. TUPPER moved that the House go into Committee to consider the following resolution:—"That it is expedient that the provisional contract entered into between Sir Hugh Allan and the Postmaster-General of Canada, under the authority of an Order in Council dated the 8th day of January 1873, for a weekly service of ocean mail steamers on the terms and conditions set forth in the said contract, a copy whereof and of the said Order in Council has been laid before Parliament should be sanctioned and authorized by

Parliament, as required by the terms thereof, in order to its becoming valid and binding."

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE complained that the contract had not been printed and placed in the hands of the members before the question was discussed.

So far as the amount of money was concerned, it was considerably less than the former contract; but when the former contract was given, it was considered that upon its expiration it would be a question for the Government and the House whether it would be advisable to have a contract at all. There were now several lines of steamers coming to the St. Lawrence and other parts of the Atlantic, with which we had easy means of communication. It was exceedingly undesirable that the Government should aid in keeping up a monopoly of this kind of freight traffic. The transmission of mails was a business transaction and it was proposed to give to one line a monopoly of it. The Allan line had done good service to the country, but the Government ought to give some reason why they did not throw this business open to public competition.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER said that the very fact of the measure being now before the House proved that the question was entirely in the hands of the House. He maintained that the Government had exercised a wise discretion in making the arrangement now submitted to Parliament. The old Province of Canada, many years ago, gave what was supposed to be a very large subsidy for the purpose of sustaining the Allan line of steamers, and he need not inform the House that the result had been the creation of a line of ocean steamers, which was not only a source of just pride to Canada, but which would be a great source of pride to the wealthiest and proudest nation in the world.

The House was perfectly well aware that of late years, with the moderate subsidy given, the mail service had been performed in a manner which left little room for complaint on the part of any one. The importance of the service was increasing every year, and the weight carried was also fast increasing, and yet the Government had been able to make a contract for the same service for some \$90,000 a year less than had been paid before, and for an amount which would be fully covered by the revenue derived from the services performed. However, if the contract had not been distributed he had no objection to allow the matter to stand over if it were so desired.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON considered that it was not in the public interest that this contract should be entered into. There were now two or three lines trading with the St. Lawrence, and in his opinion we should have a bi-weekly or even a tri-weekly mail service with England, and he believed it could be obtained as cheaply as it was not proposed to secure a weekly mail service. The effect of creating this monopoly will be to press the competing lines to establish a monopoly in other freights, which was prejudicial to the commercial interests of the whole country. He did not complain of the amount proposed to be paid; what he disputed was the wisdom