

parts of the Country, whose long experience and wide business connections, give much weight to the evidence they submitted. A very valuable communication was obtained from Nova Scotia, showing the practical working in that Province of a measure similar to the one proposed here in the petitions referred to the Committee. This Document is appended—marked No. 3.

The evidence having been duly closed and arranged, Your Committee carefully considered the general principles on which any recommendations they might make should be founded. They felt all the difficulty of legislating on such a subject. They were deeply sensible that to the Christian, the Commandment of Scripture for a strict observance of the Lord's Day, must always be a final and unerring rule for his personal guidance; but, they felt at the same time, that the Legislator has no right to interpret Scripture for the community, and that the moment he assumes that province and proceeds to enforce his view by the strong arm of the law, the door is opened to evils of the worst character, and the conscientious scruples of the subject on matters of religion are in danger of being set at nought.

But there is, it appears to Your Committee, safe ground on which the protection of the Law may be invoked in regard to Sabbath labour in the Public Departments. Abstinence from work during one day in seven, is a moral and physical necessity of man's nature—he has a natural right to a seventh day of rest—he cannot dispense with it, without injury to mind and body; the whole civilized world has been forced to recognize this necessity, and to set apart the first day of the week to meet it. And not only has man a right to the full enjoyment of Sunday as a day of rest and abstinence from all ordinary labour—he has the right to be protected by the law in the decorous and quiet observance of the day. The law forbids trading on Sunday, closes the banks and public resorts on Sunday, prohibits everything that tends to a disturbance on Sunday—and in various ways secures to the subject the peaceful enjoyment of the day. It is a well recognized principle that to compel men to do ordinary labour on Sunday, except in cases of absolute necessity, is wrong and hurtful.

The Committee are respectfully of opinion that this rule can be applied with great force to the open and systematic disregard of the rights of individuals and of society by the Government of this Province, in its management of the Post Office Department and the Canals. It ought to be the high aim of every Government to set an example to the people under its rule, by the careful avoidance of all that is unjust, unseemly, or conducive to immorality. But, it is to be feared, that the Government by compelling its servants to labour in these departments on the Lord's Day, under the penalty of dismissal, inflicts great injustice on a large number of meritorious individuals and their families, and encourages thoughtless persons in the open disregard of an observance which it should earnestly seek to uphold. With what consistency can the Government enforce the many existing laws for securing the quiet enjoyment of Sunday, when it compels its own servants openly and systematically to desecrate the day in every corner of the land?

Does any good reason exist for denying to the Government *employés* in the Post Office and on the Canals, the same privilege of abstaining from labour on Sunday which is enjoyed by other public officers? Would the plea of public convenience, which is the sole argument for transacting business in these departments, not apply with equal force to many other relations of life? Doubtless it would be *convenient* to many persons were the Custom-houses opened on Sunday—were Parliament to continue its sittings—were the shops all opened on that day; but would not the mind revolt at any proposal to desecrate the Lord's Day in such a manner? Would not the injustice to individuals be declaimed against loudly and justly? Would not the injury to morality be felt painfully and admitted readily by all? Would not such a proposal be rejected with indignation? Assuredly it would. And yet what constitutes the difference between the Post Office and the Custom-house—between opening the canals and opening the shops? Habit may have hardened our minds to the impropriety and injustice of that which we have weekly witnessed, but unquestionably the moral argument is equally applicable in all these cases.