

produce the paper itself, irrespective of job, binding or other departments of revenue.

"From that total, subtract all newspaper revenues other than advertising. Where daily and weekly are published, the proportion of, say, three-fifths will be charged against the daily and two-fifths against the weekly, though these proportions will necessarily vary in different offices. Indeed, these proportions are put in chiefly for illustration. In, perhaps, the majority of cases, the proportion would be nearer two-thirds and one-third, respectively.

"Divide the sum remaining against daily by average number of columns devoted to advertising through the year, and you have the cost rate of advertising in daily, and similarly in weekly.

"I should be glad to hear from other publishers as to what modifications or changes they would make in this formula to insure a closer approximation to the real cost of space. This seems to me to be one of the details publishers ought to study closely. I wish to be understood as introducing this subject in a spirit of modesty. With best regards to *PRINTER AND PUBLISHER* and its editor, I remain, faithfully yours,

"W. S. DINGMAN."

#### THE QUESTION OF CIRCULATION.

By Edward J. B. Pense, *The Whig*, Kingston.

*PRINTER AND PUBLISHER* asks for opinions upon the newspaper situation, in view of the increased cost of production and of the imposition of postal rates prepayable by publishers. There can be no question but the \$3 daily in small cities is a doubtful venture. It has increased some circulations considerably and enabled them to lead the procession, as far as their local contemporaries are concerned. But there are other instances where the same lead has been attained by maintaining the \$5 rate and keeping up the quality. The competition on the daily from the big city at \$1 a year is dying out. At the first rush it seemed to be a bonanza to the reader, but quality of matter tells in the long run, not quantity, and a local paper at a fair price reestablishes itself gradually and permanently. The increased cost of paper makes it all the more necessary that the subscription should be brought back to a fair and reasonable rate, so that circulation shall be profitable in itself.

Advertising rates in Canada have not, on the average, been maintained at a reasonable or fair point. Casual orders from United States advertising agents, where time is not given to consult tariffs and to make experimental offers, are given in much higher proportion than current Canadian orders, showing that in the large and well exploited advertising field of the United States, where the dead level would be expected to be reached, prices are better than in Canadian offices. It is easy in some cases for papers to strike out alone, like *The Stratford Herald* has done, and increase its rates, because these papers command their constituencies, but it will not be easy for most of the papers to increase their rates, without an understanding with their fellow publishers. But this is not such a hard proposition if the approach is made in the right spirit. Already it is being accomplished at Ottawa satisfactorily. The example

should be followed in Western cities, because their rates are lower in proportion than those in cities in Eastern Ontario and in Quebec.

Of course, people will say that newspapers when running down combines should not themselves enter into or counsel advertising agreements, but there is a vast difference between papermakers who bind men down by a bond and make them declare by affidavit that they have not broken their bond in any way, and the making of an agreement by publishers as to fair rates and placing themselves on honor as to carrying it out. If it is sometimes necessary to fight the devil with fire, there can be no impropriety in newspaper publishers holding together against paper manufacturers, who declare to publishers that they must buy at a certain mill and may apply to others in vain to place an order. Such men would not be restrained in charging double instead of one-third more if they saw their way clear to hold together. One place will strengthen another in a movement for fair prices. Asperities are dying out and a better feeling exists between business departments.

The people do not want cheap papers at the cost of efficiency. When two city papers recently were reduced to one cent each the people were unanimous in asking the third paper not to reduce, but to remain at two cents and keep up the quality. The result is that that paper is able to maintain its two cent rate, to nearly double its former circulation and to keep its advertising on a uniform basis, giving discount or preference to nobody. A paper can cheapen itself in public estimation and some of the \$3 dailies have done so. People expect cheap advertising from a cheap paper. Publishers do not put their earnings in a stocking, as a rule, and better rates will mean better papers, greater credit to the craft and fuller satisfaction to the people.

#### PUT THINGS ON A PAYING BASIS.

By F. H. Dobbin, *The Review*, Peterborough.

I am quite sure that the rising prices in materials, prospective advances in cost of labor, postage and other increased expenses will compel publishers to advance the subscription rates of their papers. It may take some little time to do so, but it must come.

Taking the figures roughly I find that the cost of printing a paper, say a weekly, and of circulating it, will be increased by about 18 per cent. in the items of paper and postage. As most subscriptions are fixed at \$1 per year, lopping 18 per cent. off the face value of the subscription list is a pretty serious reduction. The worst of it is that the increased tax is one a fellow cannot crawl out of. It is bound to stick.

When postage was taken off and when paper dropped in price, publishers merrily brought down subscription rates to the general one of \$1 per year for a weekly. Many daily papers were reduced in price. The advent of the bar casting machines provoked, in many offices where they were used, a lavish quantity of matter. This necessitated a larger paper. The money-saving value of the machines was lost sight of. Several publishers have told me they are