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## The Old Stamp Duty on Newspapers.

As late as 1836 there was a duty on each newspaper sold in Great Britain and there was besides a considerable duty—sixpence or some such sum—on every advertisement in a newspaper. In the early days of our century the stamp duty was about fourpence though it had been much higher than that. There was also a heavy excise tax on the paper itself and a customs duty that prevented foreign competition. These various charges pressed heavily on the newspapers of that day, so much so that one could not come into existence until it had made provision for no end of factitious expenses. The consequence was that in those days the possession of a newspaper was a luxury of the rich, and others were deemed fortunate if they obtained an occasional read of a paper. It was a common thing for a number of persons to club together and take a paper which they read by turns, and as compensation for late reception of the news the paper remained in possession of him whose turn came last.

The advertisement tax was finally abolished and in 1855 the stamp duty was also done away with. Then many papers were started and some of them acquired influence and reputation, but still the paper duties told heavily against cheap journalism. The various taxes were originally imposed with the object of checking the growth of seditious newspapers, and when the agitation came to abolish the taxes, it was the creed of many that cheap newspapers meant the establishment of a daily propaganda of socialism, communism, red republicanism, blasphemy, bad spelling and general immorality. The subject is fully treated in Justin McCarthy's *History of Our Own Times*.

How different it is in these days in our enlightened and progressive Dominion. Here every village almost has its newspaper at not more than a dollar a year, and metropolitan weeklies are sold at half that sum. Even the average rural paper in Canada to-day gives vastly more news than the London papers did half a century ago notwithstanding their price was something like \$30 a year.

## Toronto's Early Newspapers.

We are indebted to the Richmond Hill Liberal for some corrections of the list of early papers as published in last IMPRINT. It appears that the first daily paper in Toronto was printed in 1836. The Liberal is unable to give its title, but supplements our list by the following papers:

1. "The Albion," 1836, by John F. Rogers.
2. "The Courier of Upper Canada," by George Gurnett.
3. "The Christian Guardian," 1829.
4. "The Mirror," 1837, by Donley and McTavey.
5. "The Palladium," 1838, by C. Fothergill.
6. "The Globe," by John Carey, 1840.
7. "The Canadian Correspondent," by Rev. Dr. O'Grady, 1853.
8. "The Leader," 1854, by James Beatty, edited by Charles Lindsay.
9. "The United Empire," 1852, by Ogle R. Gowan.
10. "The Catholic Citizen," by Michael Hayes, 1854.
11. "The Canadian Freeman," 1858, by J. G. Moylan, editor, and James Mallon, printer.
12. "The North American," by William Mc Dougall & Co., 1850.
13. "The Star" by W. J. Coates, 1845.
14. "McKenzie's Message," 1856.

Not taking into account "Punch," "The Grembler," "Momus," and others of that ilk, but of smaller caliber.

## In Ye Olden Time.

THE following, taken from *The Gore Balance*, dated at Hamilton, December 20th, 1830, indicates one of the vicissitudes of newspaper life in those days:—"The present number of the *Gore Balance* has been necessarily suspended until this date (Monday 20th) for want of printing ink which could be procured only by making a journey to York over one of the most frightful roads that disgrace this country. If some mechanic understanding the manufacture of this article would locate himself in the Canadas he would find ample and profitable employment."