POSTAL TELEGRAPHY.

AN innovation which seems not unlikely to result in a formidable amount of injury to the existing telegraphic companies is in a fair way of soon being tested. Nor can the Post-Office authorities fail to watch the experiment without a very real interest. It is claimed, indeed, that the business of the Post-Office Department will be very sensibly diminished under the operation of the new proposed Postal Telegraph Co. The objects of this Company are cheap and uniform rates; absolute certainty and celerity of transmission and delivery of messages to all points and at all times, without regard to atmospheric conditions; to transact any required volume of business without delay; to provide prompt and reliable communication between the stock and the produce exchanges and boards of trade of the large cities, and between them and the Atlantic cables; to provide a method whereby mercantile and financial houses may communicate by telegraph directly and promptly with each other and their correspondents at distant points over the Company's wires without the intervention or knowledge of any officer or employee of the Company; to supply a postal telegraph system by which long messages, letters, etc., will be received through the Post-Office or otherwise, and sent over the wires to be delivered by messengers, or through the Post-Office in the large cities, and through the mails, to places away from the lines, by posting at the receiving office; to transmit any amount of press news, at any time of day, simultaneously to all points, without delay, and without interfering with commercial business, and at cheaper rates than are now afforded. The intention, as we understand, is to commence this experiment with a communication only between New York and Chicago, making other connections from time to time as results may warrant. Rates are to be put so low as to tempt, in great commercial centres, the almost total substitution of telegraphy for communication through the slow medium of the Post-Office. The enormous economy of time thus effected is claimed as one of the most important elements relied upon for success, and the acquisition of marvellous speed, obtained by the purchase of some quite modern inventions connected with telegraphy, promises a capacity for promptly transmitting messages between any two places at the rate of thirty thousand messages per day! As the promoters themselves claim, "The Postal Telegraph Company, with its "perfect wire, improved systems, trunk "lines, cable connections, superior and "reliable service, cheap and uniform rates, "will discard inferior methods and appliances now in use and enter an entirely "new and independent field with the most "comprehensive and profitable telegraph "system in the world." It seems beyond doubt that plenty of money backs the promoters. The capital stock of the Postal Telegraph Company is $21,000,000; divided into 210,000 shares of $100 each. First mortgage gold bonds, to run thirty years, interest at 6 per cent., amounting to $10,000,000, have also been issued, and the Company claims a contract for the exclusive interchange of business with a Cable Co. that proposes to immediately construct and lay two submarine ocean cables, connecting the lines of this new Company with all the principal cities of Europe, the cable rates to be also cheap and uniform. There is no doubt that this scheme of uniform and very cheap rates is about to be practically tested on a large scale, for construction has already actually commenced. The result will everywhere be watched with lively interest, especially as success in the States means the putting of the system upon its trial in Canada also.

BANK OF ENGLAND DIVIDENDS.

THE Bank of England dividend of 10½ per cent., declared at the late general meeting, is stated to be higher than any made since 1866, that eventful year of financial disasters. It appears that for a period of three months in that year the bank rate of discount stood at 10 per cent., and at one time at the end of May the private securities showing the assistance required of the Bank stood at £33,500,000, the dividend on bank stock rising from 10½ per cent. in 1865 to 11¾ per cent. Subsequently the dividend dwindled because the profits were lower, and the means of employing money at very high rates less, and a distribution of 8 per cent. was made in 1868. For three successive years 8¾ per cent. was paid, then in 1872 9½ per cent., while 1873 and 1874 mounted up to 10 per cent. each. Nine per cent. was paid in both 1875 and 1876, 9½ per cent. in 1877 and 1878, 10 per cent. in 1879, and 9 per cent. in both 1880 and 1881; so that taking the 10½ per cent. for the past year the return exceeds by ½ per cent. any dividend paid since the financial and commercial crashes of 1866. The price of bank stock is higher now than it was at the commencement of the present century, when, for a succession of years, some sixteen or so, a 10 per cent. dividend was paid regularly.

THE INSURANCE INJUNCTION CASE.

WE mentioned in due course that proceedings had been taken on the part of insurance companies doing business in this Province to test the validity of the tax imposed last session by the Quebec Legislature on sundry commercial bodies. The North British and Mercantile Insurance Company appeared as plaintiff, and Mr. W. B. LAMBE, in his official capacity as Revenue Inspector for the District of Montreal, as defendant. Plaintiffs asked for a provisional order enjoining the defendant to suspend all proceedings in about forty actions brought by him against them for the recovery of the new tax imposed on these companies, on the ground that the law under which he claimed his authority to act was *ultra vires* of the Quebec Legislature. Lengthy and able arguments were paraded on both sides, but though they were of great interest to the profession, and exhibited abundant research, they would have so little attraction for the general reader that it would be idle to reproduce them here. The judicial decision, which has just been delivered by the Hon. Mr. Justice JETTÉ, in the Superior Court, will suffice for the present. After a lengthy explanation of the reasons on which he had based his conclusions, the learned Judge came to the pith of his views as follows:—For these reasons, I think it "my duty to grant the injunction asked for "by the insurance companies, but as the "delays of the proceedings may imperil "the recovery of the tax, by a possible "change in the position of the companies "when the final decision is rendered, I order "that the amounts claimed by the Revenue "Inspector be deposited in the Bank of "Montreal by each of the said companies, "to be paid to those who are entitled to "them when the final judgment is rendered." This decision no doubt reaches all the reasonable hopes of the insurance companies at this stage at the same time that it can hardly be distasteful to the ruling powers at Quebec.

THE PROGRESS OF THE NATION UNDER QUEEN VICTORIA.

UNDER the above heading a London paper, the *St. James's Gazette*, reviews the progress of the United Kingdom from 1840 to 1880. In other words, it commences its data shortly after the accession of Her Majesty. The statistics, taken from official sources, should be reliable, and they more than dispose of the alleged decadence of the mother-country. The article in question is the pleasantest possible reading to all who have the interests of the Empire at heart, and we therefore reproduce it in full. The remarks on the enormous lessening of the public burden between 1840 and 1880 viewed *per capita* are novel to the general public, and the view that the reduction of the national debt is no advantage is still more so. The aggregate of the colonial trade, as here set forth, is so suggestive that we must confess we should like to see it supported by full statistics instead of a mere declaration of an alleged fact.

THE NORTH SHORE RAILWAY.—The business of the North Shore Railway has steadily increased since it passed into the hands of a private company in June last, and a very considerable reduction in expenses has also been effected. The earnings in the past three months have been as follows:—July, $43,040.36, August, $52,687.97, September, $57,091.12, making a total of $152,819.46 for the quarter, in addition to which the accounts outstanding amounted to $32,000, so that the gross revenue of the company in the three months foots up to about $185,000. The reduction thus far effected in expenses is at the rate of $71,819.45 per annum.