

# R E P O R T.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE to which was referred the Petition of J. H. Maitland and J. C. Becket, of the Canada Sunday School Union, praying that measures be adopted to establish a cheap and uniform rate of POSTAGE, and various other Documents, Petitions, and matters connected with the POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,—have the honor to REPORT :—

THAT by the pressing calls of other Committees, and by the late period of the Session, your Committee have been prevented from entering into the consideration of the subject committed to them, with the full attention which its importance demanded.

They have, however, obtained some important evidence from the Deputy Post-Master General, and from Christopher Dunkin, Esquire, Secretary to the late Commission of Enquiry into the Post-Office Department, chiefly with reference to any change in the rate of internal postage, and to some control being exercised over this Department by the Provincial Government, which evidence is herunto annexed.

Your Committee naturally directed their attention to the Report of the Post-Office Commission, supposed to have been made to the Executive during the Government of Lord Sydenham, as containing the result of very extended enquiries, and conveying the opinions of three Officers, whose thoughts and labour had been during many months directed to that subject; and they have been desirous of possessing themselves of a copy of this Report. In this desire, however, they have not been able to succeed,—the only copy which they have ascertained to exist in the Province, and that an unauthenticated one, being in the possession of the Deputy Post-Master General, who does not feel authorized to give communication of it without instructions so to do; at the same time that he expressed his entire willingness to give it up when so instructed.

Your Committee naturally supposing that the original Report must be in the possession of the Home Government, and deeming it highly desirable that its suggestions should be made available, they are respectfully of opinion, that it would be expedient for the Legislative Assembly to present an humble Address to His Excellency the Governor General, praying that he would be pleased to use his endeavour to procure and communicate to your Honorable House a copy of the said Report.

Your Committee have further had under their consideration, the question of a uniform and reduced rate of Postage. They are of opinion, that such an amended system would be of very great benefit to the public at large, and might eventually be made to afford an increased revenue, as well as greatly extended accommodation; they are, however, disposed to question the expediency, under the circumstances of the Post-Office Revenue, the surplus of which is but trifling, amounting only to about £8000 per annum, of any other than a gradual approach to a reduced system of Postage, which though found to be eminently successful in Great Britain, as there adopted in its full extent, may possibly have depended for its success in the first instance upon the resource of a very large surplus Revenue; and they, therefore, hesitate to recommend at this moment, any particular course, in a question involving very great difficulty, and requiring very detailed enactments if carried out.

Connected further with this branch of their enquiry, as well as with other proposals for improvement in the

Department, your Committee have entered into the consideration of the question of some sort of control being conferred upon the Provincial Government over the Provincial Post-Office, but on account of the late period of the Session, and its approaching termination, they have not been able to form any conclusive opinion upon this point; but they respectfully recommend that it should form a subject for enquiry at an ensuing Session of the Legislature.

The whole, nevertheless, humbly submitted.

ED. HALE,  
*Chairman.*

28th March, 1845.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

EDWARD HALE, Esquire, in the Chair.

*Wednesday, 19th February, 1845.*

*Thomas Allen Slayner*, Esquire, Deputy Post-Master General, called in; and examined :—

1. Have you in your possession a copy of the Report made by the late Commissioners of Enquiry, relative to the Post-Office Department; and if so, can you lay it before the Committee?—I have no official or authenticated copy of the Report made by the Commissioners of Enquiry.

2. Have you any objection to communicate to the Committee the copy of the Report admitted to be in your possession; and if so, state your objection?—I do not feel myself at liberty to communicate to the Committee the copy of the Report alluded to, without the sanction of His Lordship the Post-Master General, and I respectfully trust, that having in view the peculiar circumstances in which the Committee must see I am placed, they will not insist upon my departing from the view I have taken of my duty in this matter.

3. What are the grounds upon which you do not feel at liberty to communicate the Report in question, without the sanction to which you have referred?—I think that the communication of the Report in question should be looked for at the hands of Government, if to be made at all; and that it would consequently be wrong in me to interpose any action of mine in such a case.

4. Is the Post-Master General aware of your being in possession of a copy of the said Report, and have you been instructed to regard it as a confidential document?—I have not advised the Post-Master General that I am now in possession of a copy of the Report, although it may be so understood by His Lordship, since I communicated a copy to the Department in London: I have consequently not been instructed by the Post-Master General to regard the document in a confidential light.