

to learn that a reduction of the rates of letter postage has been resolved upon by the Government. Whether the reduction is to be extended to letters crossing the Atlantic and passing between Canada and the United States, is not certainly known; but as these changes would have to be the subject of arrangement between the different countries concerned, it is believed that nothing is to be done with regard to lowering the rate of ocean and international postage at present. The postage on letters is to be reduced to 3 cents, at least that is generally understood here. It is said that the postage on newspapers will be 1 cent. If so, the Maritime Province people will be much aggrieved, for newspaper postage has been abolished there, and the representatives from there are very much opposed to its re-imposition. The better plan would be to abolish the postage in Ontario and Quebec and thus make the laws uniform. If in addition to reducing the rates on letters within the Dominion, the postage between this country and Great Britain and the United States, were reduced, it would give great satisfaction to all classes.

A GRAND TRUNK BILL.

The Grand Trunk Railway is to apply to Parliament this Session again. The object of the Company's application is to have a bill passed which will enable them to equip the line better than it is at present. It is said that it is desired to borrow £500,000 sterling for this purpose, and to enable the Company to do this, certain legislation is necessary. There can be no doubt of the urgent need of improving the condition of the Grand Trunk, but as it is almost certain that the proposed bill will interfere with the securities of some of its creditors, it is hardly probable that the measure will pass without opposition.

THE SILVER NUISANCE.

Everybody injuriously effected by the silver nuisance (and who is not?) will be glad to learn that the Government propose to do something on the subject during the Session, although whether during the first part, or after the recess, has not transpired. Shortly after the opening, several notices appeared on the notice paper upon the subject, and the Premier said the other day that in the currency bill, the silver difficulty would be treated. It is not said what course is to be pursued, and much interest is felt upon the point, for it is one of those questions for which it is difficult to find a remedy by legislation. The people have at present full liberty to refuse American silver on any terms, or only take it at a certain rate of discount, and it is not easily understood what legislation will better their position, for if people will take silver for more than it is worth, no law can prevent them. By making it a legal tender only at a rate so depreciated as will prevent its influx from the United States, would probably be the most effective remedy. If not depreciated to such an extent, it might become our principal circulating medium, and greatly injure the Banks by throwing their notes out of circulation. Anyway it may be looked at, the silver nuisance is rather a hard nut to crack.

WELLAND CANAL IMPROVEMENT.

The improvement of the canal system of Canada is an undertaking to which the Dominion Parliament, or at least leading members of the Administration, are pledged to so soon as the public finances will admit of it. The other day the Government were asked whether they intended to complete, before the opening of navigation in the ensuing spring, the excavation several years in progress on the Welland canal, and also such other work as may be necessary to admit the waters of Lake Erie into the said canal. The answer of the Government was adverse to going on with the work at present. The Commissioner of Public Works, Mr. McDougall, said the work was a desirable one, but that the state of the finances would prevent its being completed at the present time.

THE TARIFF CHANGES.

What changes are likely to be made in the Tariff are of course, kept perfectly secret. Very few seem to be able to understand how the Government will be able to make reductions, and still pay its way. The feeling is, however, that it will be attempted, with a view to conciliate the "wise men from the east," but it will be a pity if such a course should result in producing another series of annual deficits.

NEW MINISTER OF FINANCE.

The Hon. John Rose, of Montreal, has become Mr. Galt's successor. On announcing his acceptance of the position of Finance Minister, the Premier said that there had been no change in the financial policy of the Government, as decided upon in July last. Until Mr. Rose is returned, we shall not have full information as to his reasons for joining an Administration to the Financial policy of which last session he was opposed.

POSTAL REFORM.

WE cannot say that the bill introduced by the Hon. Post Master General meets our expectations, nor do we think it will be received by the people of the Dominion as altogether satisfactory. Reform there is, but it does not go far enough. The details of this measure are of course meagre, and as far as we have heard through the press, two amendments alone are suggested, the reduction of letter postage to 3 cents, and the obligatory prepayment of newspapers at 1 cent each.

The first of these is a step, a long step in the right direction, but we think a further reduction was perfectly possible without much loss. It would only have been anticipating the question by half a decade. Sooner or later the postage of the Dominion will be reduced to a 2 cent basis. As well do this to-day as to-morrow. This principle is recognized, that a reduction is necessary, advisable, and practicable, and it remains to be shown that 3 cents is the limit at which reduction ceases to be possible. We do not believe that this can be shown. The same logic which advises a reduction to 3 cents, on the ground that the reduction will increase the number of letters, should, we think, prove that a further reduction to two cents would result similarly. To the department the cost will not be increased. They pay a certain sum for mail service, and that service can as well carry 20,000,000 of letters at 3 cents, as 12,000,000 at 5 cents, or to carry it further, 30,000,000 at 2 cents as well as 20,000,000 at 3 cents. The history of reduced postal rates does not show this ratio of increase to be anything out of the way, or not to be expected. We consequently hope to see this further reduction made, and the great principle of cheap postage given a free way and a fair trial in Canada.

Nor should its application be confined to inland postage alone. We think it should be extended to international postage as well. The present English tariff is 12½ cents *via* Allan line, 17 cents *via* Cunarder. Deducting 5 cents for the Canadian share of the service we have a sum of 7½ cents and 12 cents, respectively, left for the balance of the route. In other words we may divide the rate thus:

ALLAN LINE.

Canadian Department.....	5 cents.
Steamer.....	5½ "
English Department.....	2 "
	12½ cents.

CUNARD LINE.

Canadian Department.....	5 cents.
American Department.....	3 "
Steamer.....	7 "
English Department.....	2 "
	17 cents.

Reduce the Canadian share of the service to 2 cents, and it is easy to carry ocean mails at 10 cents. Indeed there is less actual work over an ocean mail than over a local mail. A letter leaves Sarnia for Cookshire let us say. It passes through the hands of the Sarnia clerk, the three mail-conductors to Montreal, one to Sherbrooke, Post office at Sherbrooke, Post office at Cookshire, seven handlings for 2 cents. Mail a letter at Hamilton for England. It is at once made up with others into an English packet, the bag is locked, and with out further handling goes direct to Liverpool. We also think that the steamers could reduce their rates, and that thus an 8 cent rate might be arrived at. This movement already obtains favourably in America, and ere five years all subsidies will be done away with, increased competition carrying the mails as they would express freight, at so much per ton. An 8 cent rate is practicable we think even now, reducing the rate *via* American lines to 12½ cents. Within five years the American rate to England will be 5 cents. We whose relations with England are more intimate than those of our neighbours, should not let them surpass us in cheapness and extent of this vital accommodation.

The American rate also requires reduction. At present the tariff is 10 cents, each department taking as its share all paid at its own offices. The American rate being 3 cents, the Canadian let us say 2 cents, we think that the through rate could easily be placed at 5 cents. The division of this might be left as it is at present; each department taking all it collects, prepayment however, being enforced. Transient newspapers and drop letters in Canada, we would leave at their present rate, 1 cent each. Nor do we think the book and parcel posts can be changed. Their greater bulk makes reduction impossible. It is however desirable that the parcel post arrangement, and our

Canadian rules as to manuscript and proof sheets should be extended to the United States; as also, when the settlement of American currency on a gold basis admits of it, the reciprocity of the money order system. With registration in Canada we do not propose to deal, as the present rate is low enough. As to the money order system, its extension, and probably, a reduction from the present rate of 1 per cent, are to be desired.

The point however wherein we are at wide variance with the Post Master General, is the question of newspaper postage. The present idea of charging the publisher 1 cent per number on his issue is absurd, and unjust. Take for example a daily with a circulation of 1,000 in the country, and distant cities. Is it fair to impose a tax of \$1,000 on its proprietor, an amount which represents possibly the whole profits of the year? A daily at \$5, probably makes \$2 profit on its circulation. This tax would reduce its profits to 40 cents per number. Another daily in Canada is sold at \$6, which actually costs \$6.80 to publish. Add \$1.60 and the unfortunate proprietor loses \$2.40 on every copy he circulates. This is absurd, unjust, impracticable.

The present custom of levying this tax on the subscriber, has we think serious disadvantages. He finds it quite enough to pay for his paper, without having to pay 25 per cent extra for getting it brought to him, when he would get it delivered in the city without any extra charge. This is taxing the intelligence, morality and literature of a country, instead of cultivating it. If indeed the Post Office Department finds it necessary to increase its revenue by taxing newspapers; let it tax the proprietors a moderate sum on their issue. While this will result in a large increase of circulation, in expansion of intelligence, and in ultimately increased revenue for the department, it will we think be productive of that great general good, which is the foundation and the aim of all good government. In suggesting the following rates for the proposed tax, we think that from our practical experience, we are naming the figures which will produce the greatest revenue for the Government, without hampering the newspaper proprietors.

For a daily per copy.....	40 cents.
For a tri-weekly.....	20 "
For a semi weekly.....	15 "
For a weekly.....	7 "

Thus briefly and hurriedly have we given our views on this vital subject. We feel satisfied that this measure, which to us seems short-sighted and unjust, will be fairly discussed and ventilated ere it is allowed to become law. From the number of practical newspaper men in the Commons, we think it certain that our side of the question will be duly represented. It remains with the press, which is the great interest of the country, to discuss and suggest, and use all possible means to arrive at a solution and a decision which will be fair to them, to the people whom they inform, educate, and lead; and to that government which is indebted to the press of the country for existence, and support.

GOVERNMENT CONTROL OVER THE TELEGRAPH.

THE British Cabinet, we learn has just resolved to place all the telegraph lines of Great Britain, under control of the Post Office department; and in the House of Commons at Ottawa, it has been asked whether our Government intend to provide for the management of the telegraph lines in connection with the postal system. The subject is important, and worthy careful consideration. In favor of the project it can be argued, that all the reasons by which the Government control of the Post Office is supported, apply with ten-fold force to the assumption by the same power of the telegraph. The Post office is controlled by the Government, because it yields the public a revenue; and because the Government can discharge the duties of the office better than any private company could. If the Government had control of the telegraph, there is no doubt that it would yield the public a large revenue, and its duties would be discharged better than they are at present.

Since the discovery of the telegraph its use has become very popular, until now it has in many important affairs of life, superseded postal communication altogether. All monetary matters, and the most important part of trade and commerce between sellers and buyers, producers and consumers at a distance, are transacted almost entirely by telegraph. And yet the present system we find is attended by expense and insecurity. The public cannot do without