

We now come to the consideration of the second question, viz. Should the same rate of duty be levied upon both Raw and Bastards?

We think it should, for various reasons which we shall state briefly. First, though Bastards are inferior in strength to Muscovadoes of the same *apparent* quality (2 lbs. of good Muscovado being probably on the average fully equal in strength to 3 lbs. of Bastards) the cost to the Canadian consumer, pound for pound, is about the same, that is, the differential duty in favor of British sugar enables the importing merchant to pay the English refiner 5s. per cwt. more than he could or would do if the same duty were levied here upon both kinds. In other words, the differential duty gives a fictitious value to that, comparatively speaking, spurious trash called Bastards, by which the Canadian consumer is imposed upon for the joint benefit of the English refiner and English consumer of loaf sugar. That such is substantially the effect may not perhaps occur to our readers at first view. But nothing can be plainer. The higher the price the refiner gets for his "refuse," the lower he can afford to sell his "loaves"; and thus a differential duty here of 5s. in favor of "refuse" or "bastards" is virtually giving the consumer of loaf sugar in England a bonus at our expense to that extent upon every cwt. of such sugar which he consumes, which every one will admit is a piece of absurd liberality on our part, and quite uncalled for.

On this point therefore we shall conclude our remarks, by asserting unequivocally that, in our opinion, whatever duty is hereafter levied upon Muscovado sugar, the same should be exacted upon Bastards, the consequence of which would be that they would either fall to their true relative value in the British market, or be entirely excluded from ours by the superior article—that is the genuine Muscovado.

We shall recur to this subject from time to time till we have gone over the chief articles of import subject to duty, or fit in our opinion to bear it.

## THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

No. 4.

As to number of Post Offices, the Commissioners considered that there was no great reason for complaint, in Canada; although they strongly recommended a bolder policy in establishing new offices. The practice, they say, had been to wait always for applications, and then often to spend a good while in preliminary inquiry as to the propriety of acceding to the applications made. Instead of which course they recommend that the Department, through its staff officers, the surveyors, should be constantly on the watch for opportunities to increase the accommodation given by it to the public, in the most judicious manner, and with the least possible loss of time. In the United States, it is observed, there are (or were at the date of the Report) about twice as many Post Offices in proportion to the population, as in Canada.

The immediate introduction of the English system of dividing offices into the three classes, of *forwarding*, *ordinary*, and *sub-offices*, is strongly insisted upon in the Report, as one of the first and most essential reforms to be undertaken; a reform which would much lessen the labor of Post-masters in despatching and receiving mails, would simplify their accounts, and thus at once save them some further trouble and subject them to more efficient supervision by the Accountant's department,—would tend to lessen the delays on the road caused by the examination of the mail-bags at every office by the Post-master,—and would give the department greatly increased facilities for the detection of carelessness or dishonesty on the part of its employes.

Complaints, it is said, were made to the Commission, of the sites of some offices, of the insufficiency of the office-hours kept at others, and of incivility and inattention on the part of the Post-masters, in some cases. For these and the like evils, wherever found to exist, the Commissioners considered that the true and only remedy was to be found in the adoption of their leading principle of Colonial Post Office reform; the subjection of the department, as regarded the details of its administration, to the constant control of the Provincial Executive, the only authority which could be competent to direct its courses, to the satisfaction of the public mind, in matters of such minute detail.

A variety of suggestions are made in the Report, on the subject of mail conveyance. It is admitted that the state of our communications, the indifferent condition of our country roads, the magnificence of our distances, and the extremes of our climate, which make our summer and winter travelling so opposite in their character, and both so different from the travelling of our spring and fall, interpose very serious obstacles to the regular and punctual transmission of Her Majesty's mail-bags. But it is maintained that improvement in this respect might be made. All mail conveyance, it is recommended, should be put under contract; all contracts once made, enforced to the letter; and no contract made otherwise than after public competition. Wherever the mail is carried by

passenger stages, as of course it often must be, the number of passengers, weight of luggage, and number and length of stoppages to be permitted, should all be strictly regulated.

As regards the frequency of the mails, the Commissioners suggested no material change, so far as Canada is concerned. Along the great main line of communication they would have the mail travel daily; abandoning the half-and-half system of Sabbath observance, which, by stopping the mails at one or two points of the line on the Sunday, throws it out everywhere else on other days of the week. The mail should be stopped *everywhere* for the whole of Sunday; or else, so far at least as the main route is in question, it should be stopped nowhere. To stop it at Montreal and Toronto, and let it travel everywhere else, is a mere absurdity. But to stop it everywhere would be to delay more than half of all the letters passing through the Post-Office in British North America, twenty-four hours or more *in transitu*, many for eight-and-forty hours, and in winter not a few for even seventy-two hours. The only measure of Sabbath observance which the Commissioners regard as feasible, is that which would so arrange the mails as to require no Sunday travelling upon any side route; and this, of course, it would be easy to effect.

The Commissioners had no idea of the abandonment, which has since taken place, of the Halifax and Quebec route for the conveyance of the English mails; and accordingly they insisted strongly on its being served more efficiently than they found it to be. They did, however, recommend, in addition to all the improvement that could be made in this respect, that the privilege of running a light express mail from Boston to Montreal and Kingston, should if possible be obtained from the United States Government; the letters sent by such mail to bear such extra charge as might be necessary to defray its cost.

The relations subsisting between the Provincial Department and the Post-Office authorities of the United States, of course could not escape the utter condemnation of the Commission. They are justly characterized as "anomalous and unsatisfactory," making officers of our establishment the private agents of a foreign power, yielding large emolument to a few of them, giving a world of unnecessary trouble (with almost no reward for it) to the rest, and yet not yielding to the public in these provinces the accommodation which they had a right to expect, inasmuch as the United States did not collect our postage as we did theirs, and so forced our people to prepay (in part, at least) upon every letter passing into their territory, while no such hindrance was imposed upon letters passing from their territory to ours. To remedy this evil, the Commissioners recommended prompt negotiation on the part of the British Government, through its Minister at Washington, with a view to a Post-Office treaty, which should bind the Department in either country to collect the postage of the other, at a fixed percentage. A few Post-masters along the lines would by this means become the only parties required to keep separate accounts for foreign postage, and an entire reciprocity of accommodation would be established on the two sides of the frontier line.

The closing chapter of the recommendations of the Report treats of the emoluments of the officers of the Department.

All fees, perquisites, and privileges are summarily condemned. "As far as possible," the payment of all salaries should be "by fixed salaries liberally proportioned to the amount of labour and qualification required in them."

The emoluments of the Deputy Postmaster General for Canada are characterised as excessive; those of the Accountant and his clerks, as insufficient. And all questions of amount of salary and compensation for loss of other emolument, should be dealt with by the Provincial Executives.

For Post-masters at minor offices, however, it is admitted that the fixed salary system is inapplicable. Their actual remuneration the Commissioners conceived to be too small; and they proposed accordingly to raise it to a percentage of thirty per cent. on the first £10 collected in every quarter, and twenty per cent. on the remainder. Taking this change in connection with the great simplification of their duties which would result from the other recommendations of the Report, and adopting also the principle of granting a reasonable amount of extra payment, at every forward or other office where extra duty might be required, the Report recommends the abolition of the Post-master's franking privilege.

"It is not in our power," the Report concludes, "to submit an estimate in figures of the effect of our various recommendations upon the financial condition of the establishment; but after maturely considering the whole subject, we have arrived at the conclusion that the proposed scale of rates will yield a revenue sufficient to enable the Department, in the exercise of a judicious economy and foresight, to adopt the principles we have suggested in the payment of all its officers, and at the same time to enter upon a liberal system of Mail extension. Taken in connection with the abolition of the Post Masters' franking privilege, we believe that our scale of remuneration will not be found more costly than the present. From the appropriation of the Newspaper postage to the general fund, we anticipate a considerable increase of revenue; and the increase of correspondence which may be expected to arise from the establishment of a system