

A NEW regulation which has been instituted by the United States postal department is to the effect that money orders shall not be made payable at any specified place, but shall be payable at any post office in the United States. This is certainly a great improvement on the old system, which directed that a post office order could only be paid at the place designated in the note. The change will prove a great convenience to the public. Frequently money orders reach persons who had changed their location subsequent to the dating of the order, and in such instances a good deal of inconvenience is the result in obtaining the cashing of the order. Travelers especially will benefit from the change. The adoption of a similar system in Canada would be received with favor.

THE labor question received a good deal of attention in the address at the opening of the Ontario Legislature last week. Reference was first made to the Factory Act, which provides for the regulation of child labor, the ventilation of factories, etc. Owing to a question of jurisdiction between the Dominion and Provincial Governments, this Act has not been brought into force. Some further legislation will be enacted to provide for the working of the Act. Another question dealt with is that of prison labor, and in this connection it is proposed to abolish the custom of letting out prisoners to companies or private parties on contract. The custom of letting out the labor of prisoners is one against which many objections have been urged, both from a commercial and moral standpoint. At best it is but a system of illegitimate competition, first against paid labor, and second against employers of such labor. The Ontario Government, in abolishing the system, will doubtless have the support of the mass of public opinion.

It is amusing to read the reports in the British Columbia papers of the recent "cold snap" on the Pacific coast. Elaborate accounts are given of the condition of the weather, and the occurrences which it brought about. In consequence of the thermometer having gone down to within six degrees of zero, we are told that the Legislature at Victoria was compelled to adjourn until the "cold spell" should pass away. Heavy wraps which had not been used for years, were brought into requisition, and most remarkable of all, "business was almost entirely suspended." Who in Manitoba would ever think of suspending business on account of a little cold weather? On the contrary it takes cold weather to liven up business in this country. During the early portion of the present winter, the daily complaint among the mercantile community was, that the weather was not cold enough. The degree of cold may be measured by the amount of suffering it entails, and in this respect the recent drop in the thermometer at Victoria to within six degrees of zero, would probably cause more inconvenience and suffering than has been felt here from severe weather in many years.

THE winter carnivals which have come into such renown since first the idea was carried out in Montreal, appear to have a very salutary

effect upon the trade of the cities where they are held. It is well known that the Montreal merchants derive large profits from the sale of goods during the carnival season. Large quantities of special lines of goods are laid in for sale during the holding of the carnival, and the numerous wealthy visitors from all parts of the continent are sure to carry away with them often costly mementos of the occasion. There is also a large sale of the special costumes worn by those taking part in the celebration, together with the winter goods which those coming from warmer climates are obliged to provide themselves with. But in addition to the trade done in a retail way, the wholesale merchants often find the carnival a valuable means of extending their trade. Among the visitors are always a large number of country merchants, who take advantage of the low rates to visit the city, witness the sights, and do business at the same time. In this way new connections are often formed, and the wholesale trade of the city is extended. During the recent carnival at Hamilton the wholesale merchants report that a large number of buyers were in that city from all parts of the country, among whom were many who had not previously done business at Hamilton. The wholesale dealers of the city were therefore greatly pleased at the result of the carnival, and will no doubt endeavor to have them continued in the future.

THE late "breaking out" in the United States Senate at the time of the passage of the Senate retaliatory bill, has by no means exhausted the fishery question at Washington. The administration does not seem disposed to accept either the Senate bill or the House bill dealing with the question, and Secretary Manning has submitted the draft of a bill as a substitute for the measures already reported. It is understood the President is desirous that any legislation upon the question should be as explicit as possible, and without expressing an opinion as to the issue, he asks that a more definite measure be prepared. The draft of the bill proposed by Secretary Manning will probably accomplish this. It is very similar in its provisions to the measures already before Congress, though more definite in details. It provides that when the President is satisfied that American vessels are denied treaty rights, or reasonable privileges, he may by proclamation prohibit the entry into American ports of vessels owned wholly or in part by British subjects, arriving from Canada or Newfoundland; also the importation of all goods, wares or merchandise from Canada or Newfoundland, or any locomotive, car or other vehicle. Violation of this provision is made punishable by fine and imprisonment. The President is given the power to apply the prohibition to any or all of the things named. A section of the bill authorizes the creation of a commission to take testimony with respect to damages inflicted upon American citizens and American vessels. It is just possible that all this retaliatory talk may end in smoke. The differences of opinion in regard to the measures before Congress will likely have the effect of delaying legislation for some time, and in the meantime other influences may be brought to bear upon the matter which may alter the aspect of affairs. Indeed, it is

said that many of the senators have already greatly modified their views in regard to retaliation, and some think that merely prohibiting the importation of Canadian fish would answer the purpose. There is no doubt but that pressure has been brought to bear upon senators and representatives from commercial sources, against the proposed legislation. Retaliation in the manner proposed would work almost as much injury to the United States as it would to Canada, and it is not likely that the interests affected would allow such a measure to pass without a protest.

THERE would seem to be a growing feeling in favor of protection in England. Judging from utterances of the press and leading statesmen of late, the adoption of some measure of protection would not be a great surprise. There is no immediate apprehension that a general policy of protection would find favor in Britain. Free trade principles have been so long upheld and so firmly believed in that a change in favor of a radical measure would be nothing less than a revolution. Nevertheless there are many men of eminence in Great Britain who are beginning to doubt the advisability of continuing a one-sided free trade policy. Whilst upholding free trade from principle, many believe that special duties should be imposed upon commodities coming from countries where British goods were subject to heavy tariffs. The following utterance from the *Mark Lane Express*, taken in connection with many other similar expressions, is significant of the direction in which public opinion is tending: "The day will surely come when the people will learn that it may be cheaper to give 6d. for a loaf grown at home than 4d. for one grown abroad, to the displacement of home industries; and it is to the people as consumers that this momentous question should be propounded and elucidated on every possible occasion." At a recent meeting of members of Parliament to consider a measure based upon the report of the depression of trades' commission, the question of protective duties was discussed. The consensus of opinion favored the tabling of a resolution supporting the principle of reciprocity, and declaring that where foreign fiscal arrangements attack British trade, countervailing duties should be levied. Several drafts of motions were discussed and finally referred to another meeting. Gentlemen recently from England have been heard to declare that the tide of public opinion is turning in favor of protection, and such utterances as the one from *Mark Lane* would seem to bear out the assertions. The adoption of a limited measure of protection, directed against countries imposing restrictions upon British trade, would not seem improbable, from what may be judged from the tone of the press. Once the thin edge of the wedge of protection should become actually inserted, there is no telling where the agitation might end. The adoption of a protective policy by the greatest free trade nation of the world, would be a remarkable occurrence, but there are many who profess to believe that such an outcome is not improbable. Another Cobden is evidently needed to stem the tide of opinion in the direction of protection.