

OTTAWA LETTER.

Certificate from the Hon. the Postmaster General.

That the Sun Has the Largest Circulation of Any Newspaper Published in the Maritime Provinces.

OTTAWA, May 17.—Mr. Mulock is confident that his postage bill will be of great benefit to the country. He figures out that with no change of postage the department will be self-sustaining next year. The postmaster general is making no allowance for the increased revenue from the sale of postage stamps. It is hardly probable that he can devise a new issue for this year. In place of an increase in revenue, he is likely to meet with a decrease. In fact, he has already met it in the revenue of the last two months as compared with the same period of last year. But Mr. Mulock says that even in case the reduction of postage to two cents should make a deficit of half a million dollars, it will still be no worse than many previous deficits and will relieve the people of a grievous burden.

Of course it will relieve the people of that much tax, or payment for services, but the same persons who are relieved will be obliged to pay that much additional revenue in the way of taxes upon some of their goods. Even this year the government is levying some \$300,000 of new taxes on sugar. It is a question which any man can settle for himself whether he would rather pay twenty-four cents per hundred pounds more for his sugar, with equal additional taxation on something else, or mail his letters one cent cheaper.

However, the postmaster general is not at present reducing the letter postage to two cents. He is only taking power to do it, and there is no assurance that the reduction will be made this year or next year. This part of his bill imposing postage on newspapers begins to go into effect with the first of next year. Mr. Mulock says that the introduction of newspaper postage and the reduction of letter postage are companion pieces, so to speak, and must be taken together. But Mr. Mulock is himself responsible for separating the two companions. He professes to hold them together until the bill passes, and then pull them apart, bringing in the new imposition almost at once, and leaving it optional with himself whether the letter postage shall be introduced at all. After all, the newspaper postage is only expected to produce one-tenth as much as the letter postage reduction will take away, and the question is whether the newspaper postage under the circumstances is worth doing at all.

The postmaster general estimates that the total amount which would be paid by all the newspapers in Canada if there were no ten mile exemption would be \$33,737. He reduces it to \$25,402 by the exemption. Without the exemptions the amount by provinces, which would be produced by a half cent rate, is estimated as follows:

Ontario.....	\$41,361
Quebec.....	21,726
New Scotia.....	1,726
New Brunswick.....	2,707
Prince Edward Island.....	646
Manitoba.....	2,884
North West.....	294
British Columbia.....	1,193
Total.....	\$53,797
Less exemptions.....	17,395
Balance.....	\$36,402

The largest contributor would be a Montreal paper with \$12,157, followed by another Montreal paper, printed in French, which is down for \$3,382. The third largest Montreal paper is expected to contribute \$2,406. Four papers in Toronto would be charged over \$2,000 each, the largest payment being \$5,512. The largest contribution from a religious paper will be from the Guardian, the organ of the Methodist church, which is down for \$1,067, with the War Cry \$835, and the Sunday school paper called Onward, \$713. The St. John papers would be charged with some \$1,600, of which the Sun is down for \$830. The Telegraph \$585, the Globe \$112, the Gazette \$77, the Record \$20. Halifax does not figure quite so much in the mailing list. The Herald leads with \$437, the Chronicle following with \$423. The evening papers do not patronize Mr. Mulock's department extensively.

The country weeklies in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are down for all sums from \$10 to \$100. For example, the Antigonish Casket, the North Sydney Herald, the Truro Sun, Pictou Standard, the Sackville Post, the Shediac Advance, the Summerside Agriculturist and Pioneer are mentioned as paying from \$50 up. The Summerside Journal is taxed \$181. The Presbyterian Witness is expected to pay \$63, the Westeyan \$16, and the Messenger and Visitor \$177.

Mr. Tarte has recounted on the subject of his Major Hill Park fence. He did it in an odd sort of way. He calmly told the house yesterday that he never meant to spend \$14,000 on this "homeless" useless edifice, but that he was slightly misled by his architect. As a matter of fact, when the item was up before Mr. Tarte no less than four times mentioned that he would have to spend \$14,000 for the stone part of the structure alone. He says now that he will bring his fence to an end as soon as possible without despoiling the alleged symmetry. The house of commons is beginning, or rather continuing, to accept Mr. Tarte's statements of intention with a great deal of dubiety. Last year he came to the house and gave a solemn pledge that he would not make a contract for electric light plant without calling for tenders. This year he calmly announced that he had broken his word. He tells the house now that he is building a stone fence by day work because he finds it advantageous to do so. He denies that the order in council requiring any work costing more than \$5,000, ex-

cept emergency work, to be done by tender and contract, applies to this case. In fact, he insists that the rule only applies to contracts and that he can spend \$10,000 by day's work if he likes. Whether there is an emergency or not, Sir Louis Davies, when pressed for a legal opinion on this subject, declined to endorse the day's work theory. But he said that the \$5,000 rule only applied to works on which \$5,000 was voted at one time. This convenient theory allows the government to perform a \$24,000 job without tender by cutting it up into five sections.

Before the ministers got through with their explanations and defenses, Mr. Tarte had become exceedingly annoyed. He objected to Mr. Foster's habit of lecturing. He told him that he would never attain the leadership of a party if he did not give up that custom. Mr. Tarte also explained that the conservative party would not attain power again if it continued to discuss small items, such as a \$14,000 fence that is no good, or a \$10,000 greenhouse that is not needed, or a \$50,000 or \$40,000 job that is given without tender in violation of a solemn promise of a minister. Mr. Tarte is very much concerned for the future of the conservative party. He is also a little worried because he cannot get his little jobs through without criticism. In this particular case he was obliged to withdraw the whole item, which will be a good thing, unless he works the appropriation in again in some sneaking way.

S. D. S.

OTTAWA, May 18.—The house of commons has finished its share of the franchise legislation. The final attempt of Sir Charles Tupper to incorporate an amendment permitting an appeal to a judge in provinces where there is no appeal to the court by provincial law was defeated by a straight party majority. The case presented by the leader of the opposition was a strong one, and his argument was free from acrimony or offensiveness. Sir Wilfrid Laurier admitted that there was nothing to complain of either in the demand or in the way in which it was made. In his own province there is an appeal from the revisors to a judge, and the premier thinks that the other provinces would do well to adopt that principle, but he referred to let the provinces settle that matter for themselves. Of course no one objects to the legislature settling it for themselves. The objection is to their settling it for the dominion.

Sir Charles went into some of the Nova Scotia and Manitoba cases, and on these points Mr. Sifton for Manitoba and Mr. Fielding for Nova Scotia took exception to the criticism. Mr. Sifton especially insisted that the local revisors whose action had been condemned, and especially the one under whom the alleged frauds were committed, were highly minded and able men. Reviser Perdue was especially a man to be admired and trusted. Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper seemed to remember the name of Perdue. It had been spread pretty liberally over certain papers brought down the same morning in the public accounts committee. Mr. Perdue was one of the small army of lawyers who cost Canada \$12,900 for conducting some bogus elections in Manitoba. Mr. Sifton answered his own attack of yesterday by stating that the Grenadier government would probably amend the law by providing for an appeal to judges.

As to Nova Scotia, Mr. Fielding would make no such undertaking. He defended the present system, affirming that the sheriffs were good men and true, and of course not partisan. He charged that under the old system, which Sir Charles Tupper as a Nova Scotia public man was as much responsible for as anybody, they had no judicial revision, and that the Nova Scotia government, in the House of Commons, had never provided one. Of course there were Nova Scotia members in the house to show that, under the old system, the sheriffs, who had the charge, were appointed by the judges and not by the government, and that the Holmes-Thompson government was paralyzed in its efforts at franchise reform by a hostile legislative council. Mr. Bell and Mr. Mills made this clear, and so the matter dropped. But the amendment was voted down.

The solicitor general was willing to accept an amendment by Mr. Clarke providing that where the local revisors were not annual, as happens in Ontario, no list more than six months old should be used for domestic purposes. In the bill one year is the date. There was a discussion of this amendment, which was found to be inconvenient for some cities and towns under the peculiar registration system of Ontario. Finally Sir Wilfrid, who had moved the amendment got discouraged and withdrew it, but promised to urge upon the Ontario government to make some changes which would overcome the evils that Mr. Clarke foresaw and which the solicitor general admitted. This afforded Mr. Ganong an opportunity to urge the premier to continue his great moral work of reforming provincial governments. He asked him to take a missionary tour to the maritime provinces, or else to designate that job to Mr. Blair and Mr. Fielding, who should be commissioned to procure for the people of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick an appeal to a court of law. During the discussion Mr. Foster and Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper each made a strong speech in favor of federal control, a position which is greatly strengthened now since the government has amended the bill in so many ways to interfere with provincial management.

Mr. Mulock is a half Bourbon. He learns nothing and forgets everything. If he had been capable of learning from grievous experience he would have begun his postage bill discussion by answering the proper question put to him by Mr. Foster. Another minister would probably have got the bill through committee early in the evening. Mr. Mulock went home at 4 o'clock in the morning with the bill still in committee. The house of commons is not exactly a convenient place for the exhibition of pique, but Mr. Mulock can never learn

this. The tactics which he found useful in opposition are not suitable to an occupant of the treasury benches. For Mulock in opposition was given to obstruct, and it is not considered good tactics for a minister to obstruct his own bill.

So when Mr. Foster in a tone of studious moderation suggested that the minister ought to answer his question, and when the minister peremptorily refused to say under what status or authority Sir William Mulock issued his proclamation about imperial postage, the discerning ones saw that the postmaster general was building brush fences across his own path. Mr. Foster was not allowed to speak any more of doing things, but there are Douglass's motion to adjourn the debate afforded the member for York his chance. In the speech which followed Mr. Foster was not studiously conciliatory. On the contrary, he was to the hilt an aggressive. Sir Wilfrid Laurier had come at the outbreak of the rescue of Mr. Mulock, justifying his refusal to answer Foster's questions. Imperial postage and domestic postage were two different things, he said, and it was out of order to bring them into the discussion of the other. "I did not take Sir Wilfrid's word to knock that argument in the head by maintaining that any subject dealing with postal revenue is appropriate to the discussion of a postal revenue bill. Mr. Foster said that he was sorry the speaker had not expressed himself more strongly. He was deeply stupid as to stand by his colleague in refusing proper information to parliament. The post office bill was not given by revelation from on high, and was therefore not above the criticism of human beings. There was no occasion for Mr. Mulock to climb so high and take as an insult to himself any questions or reflections on the management of his department. This house was not growing excited by subject was too insignificant for that, but the house chose to discuss the conduct of the postmaster general and would not be prevented from doing so.

Mr. Foster then started in pursuit of Mr. Mulock and his now too famous proclamation. The postmaster general had set about repealing the Berne postal convention, and altering the postal rates, not only without consulting other nations and other governments, but without even consulting his own colleagues and the law officers of the crown would have told him better. His own deputy would have protected him from his foolishness if he had not kicked him out and put a village doctor in his place. But "I, William Mulock," did not consult his colleagues. "I, William Mulock," did it all, but "I, William Mulock," was apparently unable to explain why he did it. After Mr. Foster used this quotation about him to order on the ground that he was right to speak of a member by his name, but Mr. Foster explained that he was merely quoting from a public proclamation which was sent all over Canada and which might properly be discussed in "I, William Mulock," had gone on for some time. Mr. Mulock's face growing redder and redder, and the possibility of getting the bill through committee becoming more and more distant, Mr. McMullen came to the defence of the postmaster general.

Mr. McMullen admitted that he and Mr. Mulock had hunted a little with the persons along the concession lines protesting against the governor general's salary, and stating that there were two more ministers and that \$4,000 a year was quite enough for the head of the department. But then said Mr. McMullen, this ministry is so much better than the late ministry, has saved the country so much money that the people are quite satisfied to pay the full allowance. In fact, he maintained they were willing to double the salary rather than lose them. This suggestion caused Mr. Mulock to look interested. He began to consider the possibility of getting through a bill to raise his salary to \$14,000. Mr. McMullen takes no stock in Mr. Foster's charge that the postmaster general, without authority, asked his postmasters to take stamps and prepay at the country's expense those letters which the "I, William Mulock" proclamation caused to be sent without prepay. If Mr. Mulock refused to explain, did not Mr. Foster decline to say how some \$7,000 was spent in connection with the floating of Foster's loan in England. Mr. Foster rose and gravely made a proposition. He would let Mr. McMullen all about it if the latter could get Mr. Fielding to explain the expenditure of a similar sum in connection with the last loan, or if he could persuade Sir Richard Cartwright, who knew the whole secret of financial negotiations, to come forward and say that this explanation ought to be given. Nevertheless Mr. McMullen insisted that Mr. Foster dwell in a residence of glass.

Mr. Bennett is of the opinion that Mr. McMullen makes his home in a similar structure. There is a vacant senatorship in Ontario, and Mr. Mulock is said to have the disposal of it. While this appointment is pending, Mr. Bennett feels quite sure that Mr. McMullen will have nothing but adoring words for the postmaster general. Mr. Bennett, who is "cheeky," said that Mr. McMullen had lost his chance to go as governor of the Northwest. That snap was passing to another member, whose face was even now beaming with smiles at the prospect. Cameron of Huron ejaculated that Mr. Bennett was barking up the wrong tree, and that he brought down a laugh on himself by the reply of Mr. Bennett that he had not mentioned Mr. Cameron.

The night was wearing away when Sir Wilfrid Laurier rose to propose terms of peace. Mr. Mulock had persisted that all the questions asked him about his "I, William Mulock" proclamation had been answered as much as was necessary. Sir Wilfrid was disposed to accept the argument of Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper that the explanation was not sufficient. Sir

Charles Hibbert had said that Sir Louis Davies had tried to explain it in Mr. Mulock's absence, but was unable to find the clause he was after. The minister of marine being a courteous person and not too high and mighty, had tried his best to focus a little light upon this mysterious matter. Now Sir Wilfrid said that it was perfectly proper for members to ventilate this question. Mr. Mulock ought to explain it. But since the postmaster general did not wish to discuss it in connection with this bill, could it not be brought up in supply or by parliamentary questions, or in some other way at a later day? The remarks of the premier were evidently intended to smooth down the animosities which the postmaster general has such a gift for producing. Besides, the premier wanted to go home.

Mr. Davin had now his opportunity to compare the Chesterfieldian manners of the premier with the boorishness of his minister, and he did it in his best style. He also had a little dig at Mr. McMullen's style of oratory, observing that "he did not exactly skim along the lower atmosphere like a swallow, nor yet soar into the blue empyrean, but was content with a middle flight resembling that of a wild goose." He reminded the house of old times when the east of members were tortured by the tones of Mr. McMullen's denunciation of extravagances. But now extravagances camped down at Rideau Hall, while Mr. Mulock had no bad English left wherewith to assail it. Mr. Davin was pleased to find the premier gracious enough to apologise for his postmaster general, but did not seem over anxious to accept the apology.

By midnight the house got into committee. It ought to be fair to say that there was a good deal of discussion on the merits of the bill during the long interval, and that there was much useful criticism in committee. Mr. Powell is not impressed with the necessity of reducing the letter postage. If this half million dollars is a tax, he says, its removal only requires the substitution of another tax on commodities, and he thinks this one is as easy to pay as the other would be. Mr. Gill pointed out that the United States reduction of postage from three cents to two, left the country with a deficit of twelve million dollars. Mr. Taylor says that many of the economies of which Mr. Mulock boasts have been made by closing post offices which were a great convenience to the people where the minister had made out. It is necessary for the people to carry their letters eight miles to be mailed, and suggested that people in his county would rather pay a cent more postage than walk eight miles and back.

On the newspaper postage, Mr. Ellis spoke with great plainness. He said that as a newspaper proprietor he was rather indifferent in the matter, but as a member of the liberal party he thought that Mr. Mulock was making a grave mistake. Whether newspaper postage was payable or not, it was an imposition which had to be removed. It struck him that it was not good policy for the liberals to be restoring taxes that the conservatives had taken away. Moreover, if he thought it proper to point out that the relief in newspaper taxes had resulted in a great improvement in newspapers and a great reduction in the price, it had brought home to the people, and especially to the poor, much better newspapers than ever they were able to obtain before, and even the beautiful Christmas and holiday supplements, with their elegant pictures, were a boon to the country people. Mr. Ellis has heard many subjects discussed at the hustings, but he never heard any demand for newspaper postage, and he did not believe that the country called for it. As he might be charged with self-interest, he did not propose to vote against the bill, but he would be glad if the government would not adopt this retrogressive legislation.

Soon after this Mr. Mulock produced his amendments. One of them provides that the ten-mile exemption shall apply to papers issued more frequently than weekly. Another is made to meet the case where a water front prevents the paper from circulating ten miles in some direction. This amendment provides that the publisher may choose any point for the centre of his circles and have the exemption drawn ten miles from that. Under this proposition, a dozen papers, printed in the same town, may each have a circle of its own, so that Mr. Mulock's next post office map may contain no end of circles, cutting each other in all possible directions, while his minister's assistant will have his work cut out for him in getting on to the curves of the weekly publisher.

Dr. Rutherford, who in the intervals of his labor as a veterinary surgeon in Manitoba, operates a newspaper at Portage la Prairie, insists that ten miles is not enough. He is willing to sacrifice the daily press, but demands a twenty-mile extension for the weeklies. Mr. Kaubach would be better satisfied if the weeklies were allowed free circulation within the county where they are printed. Mr. Pope, who has them exempted altogether. As for Charles Wallace, he spoke at some length in favor of postponing a consideration of the amendments, which he says are too complicated to be settled in the small hours of the morning. At four o'clock on Wednesday morning the members wandered home, while Mr. Mulock wandered to himself why it was that it took so much longer than anybody else to get anything done.

S. D. S.

OTTAWA, May 18.—Yesterday had set aside for a fortnight as an Imperial day. It proved to be a sort of international day. Mr. McNeill had the promise of it for his provincial trade discussion. He did obtain as much of a day as he needed for his personal use, but was not able to make good the monopoly. It was on

towards 5 o'clock before the Imperial question was reached.

Mr. Charlton was the first to trespass on the patent. Mr. Charlton is regarded by others and seems to regard himself as the special custodian of United States interests in Parliament. He raised the question of Senator Polo. This gentleman was at one time ambassador for Spain at Washington. When the two nations ceased to be on speaking terms, and therefore required no means of communication, he came to Canada, after a short stay at Toronto he went to Montreal, where he is now residing. Mr. Charlton hears that Polo is a sort of intelligence bureau, having a force of spies operating in the United States and communicating with him by wire, giving Madrid the information collected. Mr. Charlton insists that some spy who had been arrested was in possession of letters connecting him with the late ambassador, though it does not appear that these documents were written since the appearance of Senator Polo in Canada. Mr. Charlton trusts that the United States will use this country as a base of operations. No one suggested that the premier should watch Mr. Charlton to see whether he was not using this country as a base of operations. The premier's evidence so far points more strongly to Mr. Charlton's active assistance of the United States than it does to any Spanish emissary in this country. Mr. Charlton has not been arrested.

Sir Wilfrid did not vent the Sergeant at Arms and the Black Rod after Don Polo. He remarked that Canada, as a British country, ought to be free to fugitives from all nations. He knew of nothing that Polo had done to call for government action. The premier did not even promise that the request of Sir Charles Charlton would be taken into consideration. He only observed that Canada would maintain the duty of neutrality. Mr. McLean offered a word of testimony for our distinguished Spanish guest. He had the honor to interview the minister. During that interview the obligation of neutrality had not been violated. The ex-ambassador had carefully avoided any remark to Mr. McLean that was calculated to involve Canada in the war. So that episode ended.

The next one was graver. Mr. McLean comes from the vineyards and peach groves of Welland, where he deals in merchandise and lumber. Mr. McLean does not profess to high politics, but claims to be frank and outspoken. He wanted the premier to explain why the alien labor law was not enforced on the frontier about Niagara. Some attempt at enforcement has been made in other places, though no one can get any particulars of the process. But Mr. McLean says that the railway men who live in Canada are not allowed to follow their trains to the United States. The Grand Trunk system belongs to both countries, and men from the south are freely employed on the Canadian side of the river. Canadians who were working on the American side have, however, been sent home. Mr. McLean goes home for Sundays and never visits Welland without hearing of some new cases. He says that Canadian workmen have been treated so indecently by De Barry and other officers of the northern states that he finds a strong feeling among some classes of people in his district that it will serve the United States right to get a bit of a spanking at the hands of Spain. He did not suggest that the United States ought to be beaten altogether, but that a preliminary disaster would be useful for disciplinary purposes.

This remark brought out notes of dissent from all sides, members thinking that these things were best left unsaid in the house of commons. Mr. McLean said that he was simply reporting frankly a feeling of the people who had been ill-used, and that

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he did not propose to take it back. Mr. Blair was surprised if the state of things existed on the railway that Mr. McLean suggested. He would like particulars. These Mr. McLean said he would have great pleasure in furnishing.

Sir Wilfrid rose to repeat his declaration of neutrality. The alien labor law of Canada, he admitted, was not as strong as that of the United States, nor as effective as it ought to be. It was not as strong a law as the premier meant it to be. It will be remembered that Mr. Taylor was the first to bring forward this legislation, that Mr. Cowan, now of the government side, followed with a similar bill, and that ultimately a coalition of measures were effected. The bill as then drafted might have been operated with success, but Sir Louis Davies appeared and opposed the whole scheme. He at first threatened the committee with government opposition to the bill, but finally consented to allow it to go on condition that it could be enforced only by the intervention of the department of justice. The announcement of the premier that the measure was not as strong as it ought to be is, perhaps, not very pleasing to Sir Louis.

While the premier wants a stricter law, he does not want it made now. The peculiar situation of the two countries, the fact that the United States is at war and that our relations are supposed to be more cordial than they have been for years, are the reasons he gives for bearing a little longer with the present trouble.

Sir Charles Tupper and the premier on this occasion were in harmony. The leader of the opposition also opposed aggressive action at the moment. He was pleased with the present feeling between the British nation and the United States. Sir Charles had noticed with pleasure that the senate of the United States was taking steps to provide that Canadian miners should have the same chance in Alaska that the United States miners had in the Yukon. It would be a pleasure to him if this principle would be carried out so as to embrace other relations.

Mr. Clarke of Toronto and Dr. Sproule coincide in all the good wishes expressed by the two leaders. At the same time Mr. Clarke does not see why boot and shoe operatives should be engaged in the States to work in Toronto, when a Canadian artisan is not allowed to seek work in a United States factory. Dr. Sproule said the woods about the Georgian Bay full of United States lumbermen, cutting Canadian logs to be rafted across to the United States side, while Canadian mill men are not allowed to follow them and get work in the Michigan saw mill. It seems to them, as to Mr. McLean, that if the United States people are on such cordial terms with us, and if their feelings in these war times are tender, they might exercise some restraint on their border officials.

Then Mr. Charlton spoke, tendering his patronizing praise to the two leaders of whom he took immediate possession. Mr. Charlton said in effect that for a long time he has been casting his bread upon the waters of the Canadian parliament, and was pleased to find it after so many days. Now

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Yours truly,
ALBERT DAIGNAULT,
St. Hyacinthe, Ont.

that the lead and the steel programme is said to be an assumption they accepted meekness, any 'nerve' would be an Mr. Fraser required a little to scold Mr. utterances. Y assist upon the necessity of turning at then proceed sympathy of out to our fr Mr. Fraser w ers who, after not take side to the sides cur to them t good a right with Spain a their sympa party. In the he meant no States, but t ent taking le for Guyabot not think th ple should be Canadian national epis conclusion.

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