

English acre, and the *minot* somewhat larger than the bushel, it is clear that misconceptions may readily arise as to the comparative value and productiveness of land in Lower Canada estimated on this basis, and that even statistical returns, without great care on the part of those who furnish as well as those who collect them, may be stated erroneously and to the disadvantage of that Province as compared with others where the English statute acre and the bushel are alone in use.

"In view of all these circumstances, your Committee are of opinion that no time should be lost in establishing by law a uniform system of weights and measures throughout the Dominion. The duty of initiating legislation on a subject of such general importance necessarily devolves upon the Government; and your Committee are of opinion that another Session should not be allowed to pass without a comprehensive measure being submitted to Parliament.

"With regard to the metric system, your Committee consider that it is excellent in principle, simple in its construction, and capable of being acquired with great facility, and as such they strongly recommend its introduction in Canada. As, however, so large a proportion of the trade of this country is carried on with Great Britain, your Committee suggest that her example may be safely followed, and that the metric system may, as in England, be made at first permissive and be adopted, as there, conjointly with her system of imperial weights and measures. This course would secure a uniform system of weights and measures for the various Provinces of this Dominion, and at the same time in conformity with that of the mother country, an object much to be desired.

"In contemplation of the early adoption of the metric system, and with a view that the youth of the country be made acquainted with it, your Committee would call the attention of the House to the propriety of suggesting to the Government the importance of causing this system to be taught in all schools over which they have control directly or indirectly. It is simple, easily learned, and not readily forgotten; and young men instructed in it will thus acquire additional facility in understanding the trade with countries where this system prevails exclusively. If this suggestion meet the approval of the Government a knowledge of the metric system might also with advantage be required on the part of candidates for the Civil Service."

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of many facts in this report, or the recommendations it contains. A permissive Act should certainly, at once, be passed; and the metric system be taught in all schools which receive government aid. Its simplicity is well adapted for teaching children the principles of arithmetic. We may add that conservative England has adopted the use of the metric system for certain postal purposes, and a commission has recommended its application to the mint.

INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF COINS.

The Dominion Senate Committee, in the next place, report on the subject of a uniform international system of coins. They refer to the conference held at Paris, upon the invitation of the French government, in 1867, of representatives of various States, for the purpose of deliberating upon the best means of securing an international coinage. The British government deputed the Master of the Mint, and an officer of the Treasury Department, to attend that conference.

At the conference the following recommendations were made:—1. A single gold standard. 2. The proportion of fine gold in the coins to be 9-10ths. 3. All gold coins thereafter struck in any of the countries, parties to this convention, to be of the value of 5 francs, or the multiples of that sum. 4. That a gold coin, of the value of 25 francs, be struck by such countries as prefer it, and be admitted as an international coin.

A royal commission was subsequently appointed to examine into these recommendations. It reported favourably on the two first, but not on the two last.

The ground of objection of the commissioners was that, in their opinion, the general commerce of the world would be promoted by adopting the English sovereign as a basis of an international currency; and further, because the adoption of the 25 franc piece would make only a partial and not a complete assimilation of monies.

That report was adopted in 1868, but the Senate Committee state that since its date some progress has been made by the governments of England and France towards the object of attaining an international coinage, by establishing equality of value between the sovereign and the 25 franc gold piece, which it is proposed to coin in France. They quote an extract from a speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Lowe) in the House of Commons, 1869. This proposed 25 franc piece, he said, would be of less value than the sovereign by 22 centimes, or about 2d. sterling. He stated, further, that if the British government were to impose a seigniorage of about 1 per cent, or $\frac{1}{993}$ of a grain, and take gold to that amount from the sovereign, that it would then be identical with the 25 franc piece, and that it would still remain the current coin of the country of the same value as now. Mr. Lowe still further stated that the Spanish doubloon, the Prussian Frederic, and the half-eagle of America, approach each other very nearly in value; and he thought that if France should consent to meet England in the way proposed, and make her mintage charge 1 per cent, instead of a fourth or fifth, as now, the question would be solved, as far as England and France are concerned, of an international coinage.

The Senate Committee added to these remarks of Mr. Lowe, they had reason to believe that further progress had been made in the negotiation with France; but no legislation has taken place in the Parliament of the United Kingdom; and they further state they learn from the Minister of Finance, that the new Canadian silver coins are of such denominations and intrinsic values as always to serve for tokens of sub-divisions of the proposed 25 franc piece, the sovereign, and the 5 dollar gold piece, when assimilated to the 25 franc piece.

In Nova Scotia, the values placed by law on the British sovereign and British shilling are 5 dollars and 25 cents respectively.

By the Canadian Act, passed in May, 1868, 31 Vic. cap. 45, Canada has placed herself in a position to adapt her currency to an international decimal system of coinage, so soon as the great commercial nations shall agree to establish such system.