

THE UNITED STATES POST OFFICE



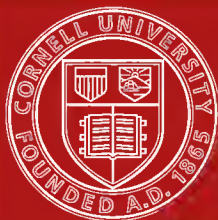
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MESSENGER OF SYMPATHY AND LOVE
SERVANT OF PARTED FRIENDS
CONSOLER OF THE LONELY
BOND OF THE SCATTERED FAMILY
ENLARGER OF THE COMMON LIFE

CARRIER OF NEWS AND KNOWLEDGE
INSTRUMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
PROMOTER OF MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCE
OF PEACE AND OF GOODWILL
AMONG MEN AND NATIONS

*—Inscription on the United States Post Office
at Washington, D. C.*



MAIL BY AIR

THE UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

ITS PAST RECORD, PRESENT CONDITION,
AND POTENTIAL RELATION TO
THE NEW WORLD ERA

By

DANIEL C. ROPER

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First Assistant Postmaster General, 1913-1916*

ILLUSTRATED



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PREFACE

WITH the belief that the World War marks the end of an old and the beginning of a new era for our country, the writer has endeavored, in this book, to sum up in a large and, perhaps, superficial way the history and present condition of the postal service of the United States, and to indicate the potentiality of this institution for still greater service to our country and to mankind. He has done this in the hope that it may enable those employed in postal activities, and also the public generally, to attain a fresh view-point and better to understand the postal service.

Postal service is universal in this country and, for that reason, is accepted as a matter of course. Comparatively little is understood of its purposes and workings. It is, nevertheless, one of the most interesting and important branches of the Federal Government, and the sympathetic understanding and intelligent cooperation of the people is necessary to enable the postal establishment to respond adequately to the postal needs of the country.

The mission of the Post Office is social, commercial and intellectual. Wherever its agencies go, law and order supersede violence and the crude customs of savage life. In the wake of projected

mail facilities are found all the blessings of civilization. Hence, to make available for the people of the United States information regarding the Post Office has seemed to the author a privilege and a patriotic duty.

THE UNITED STATES POST OFFICE is intended to be a practical handbook for those who wish to learn more of the nature and operations of the Government under which we live, and to prove of assistance to teachers and students in schools and colleges.

If the book fails in the purposes outlined, the full responsibility must rest with the author who has had the unstinted cooperation and assistance of many officers of the Post Office Department, the postmasters throughout the country, and a great number of postal employees, from all of whom valuable suggestions and material have been obtained. The official records and collections of the Government at Washington have been used to the fullest extent, and all the sources and publications listed in the bibliography appended to the book have been consulted.

To Mr. FRANKLIN C. PARKS, secretary to the author, and former Assistant Superintendent, Division of Post Office Service, the author tenders grateful acknowledgment for constant assistance while this book was in course of preparation.

DANIEL C. ROPER.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *July 1, 1917.*

INTRODUCTION

THE mightiest implement of human democracy is postal service. Good postal facilities prompt and encourage the spirit and service of that world democracy which makes for the freedom and happiness of mankind. The privileges of the post office are not yet enjoyed by all persons throughout the world. Millions of people in Asia and Africa can not be reached by mail. In many countries where post offices exist the service is insecure and postage rates excessive.

The privilege of communicating with friends at a distance through the confidential medium of the post office is one of the greatest privileges of a free people. This was clearly perceived by the framers of the Constitution, who vested in Congress the exclusive power to establish post offices and post roads.

The United States Post Office may be said to be universal within its territory, for the Federal Government undertakes to deliver mail to every person under the Flag. For this purpose, 56,000 post offices are kept open, manned with 75,000 clerks and city letter-carriers. Of rural carriers 42,000 are employed to deliver the mail along a million miles of country roads. This great

institution has an agency in every community and an army of workers in every State. It renders some service every day to almost every citizen, and the work it performs is absolutely essential to business and society. The business man depends on the post office for his orders and remittances, as well as for the delivery of much of his goods. The national banking machinery is operated largely through the mails. The drafts and acceptances of social intercourse, no less than the written instruments of credit and exchange, circulate through the post office. Separated friends are kept in touch with each other by the letters they write and distant journeys are undertaken by those who depend on the mails to preserve the relationship with home. Government, as well as commerce and society, is supported by this familiar and responsive institution. The Union of States, and the integrity of the Federal Government, are possible only as the result of improved postal service which has brought the Pacific ocean within five days of the Atlantic.

The manner in which the post office is conducted has a definite effect on the welfare and advancement of every individual and every community. If the post office is prompt and accurate in its work, all enterprises, of whatever sort, are helped. On the other hand, if outgoing mail does not make the first available dispatch, or if incoming mail is delivered at the business man's desk less quickly,

than it might be, the individual concerned is deprived of a part of his opportunity in life. The outside world thus becomes a little more distant than it might be and the development of the community is retarded.

The Post Office Department at Washington is constantly endeavoring to increase the efficiency of the post office, both generally and in every community. To this end the Department earnestly seeks the cooperation of the public and suggestions are at all times welcomed and carefully considered.

There is every reason why the people should cooperate with the post office and no reason why they should not, except lack of knowledge of how to cooperate. Every citizen owes it to himself to make such a study of our national post office as will enable him to understand the facilities and advantages it affords, as well as the conditions under which it performs its work. This knowledge will enable any citizen to secure greater benefit from the post office, and to contribute to better postal service for all.

The United States Post Office is the people's institution. It will respond to the requirements of our growing country in proportion as the people understand and intelligently use it.

THE UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

I

POSTAL SERVICE AND CIVILIZATION

Postal service was a human activity at the dawn of history. It originated when communication began; it existed before language originated. It antedates the alphabet. The first postal messages were conveyed by word and sign. The rude hieroglyphics of prehistoric man were the first important step in postal progress. To the present time, postal service continues the patient handmaiden of civilization. Without it civilization can not be, and in the perfection of its methods and service, the degree of civilization is ever recorded and indicated.

Postal service is inherent in human society. It is, in fact, one of the first beginnings of social organization. As long as men are content to speak their minds face to face with one another, or merely to shout and signal to one another, there

can be no postal service; but when a third man speaks to one man the message of another, or furnishes to those two men an instrument such, for instance, as the telephone, by which they can communicate with each other at a distance—then postal service begins.

It is the nature of man to desire to exchange ideas and goods with his fellows. Nor is he satisfied to restrict his dealings to the circle of his immediate acquaintances or to the people in his own town. As a result of this human trait, the whole world is fast becoming one great community, in which every individual is working to produce ideas and goods for other people and receiving as his reward the ideas and goods produced by others. It is commonly said that the world is growing smaller. That is because men are constantly inventing some new devices for breaking down the barriers of distance. Distances remain the same but the time required to bridge or span them is constantly diminishing.

The operation of any means of communication, however simple or complex, is postal service. The pains that men take to establish these agencies are also postal service. Running the locomotive and inventing the telephone are alike postal service. Everything that is done to satisfy the primal human desire for the exchange of ideas and goods is postal service.

Postal service is not necessarily a function of

the government, but every well-organized nation has a government post office which controls a part or all of the postal service of the country. In the United States, men in their private capacities conduct railroad and steamship lines, and telegraph and telephone systems; but these activities are under the regulation of the government. Our post offices are operated primarily for the transmission of written communications, tho a number of other kinds of postal service have been added, such as the conveying of newspapers and printed matter, the parcel post, the postal savings system and the money order service.

The post office gets its name from the earliest known means of carrying messages. In every civilization of which any record has been preserved, there is known to have been some organized plan for maintaining communication by couriers, who were either fast runners or riders mounted on camels, horses, or the like. The relaying of these couriers was an obvious expedient for securing greater speed, and was resorted to by nations as remote in time and place as the Persians and the Peruvians. With the Romans the place where the relay was effected was marked by a "post" along the side of the road, from which fact will appear the derivation of the term "post office." These posts were the first post offices, as they marked the convergence of post roads, and the foot and mounted couriers were the precu-

sors of the modern fast mail train. The ancient highways along which they ran were the first post roads.

A brief review of notable early postal systems will indicate that established post offices and post roads have been considered necessary by the people of every civilization, ancient and modern. The Persians had a postal service under Cyrus in the sixth century before Christ. It resembled in many particulars a "riding post" of the Middle Ages in Europe, but was more highly developed. The "postmaster" was an appointee of the Imperial Government; he maintained a place for horses and employed grooms to care for them; he supervised the work of the couriers, who were stationed at the post; and he received the packets of letters from the couriers of other posts and forwarded them by fresh couriers and fresh horses to the next post toward their destination. Merchandise to a limited extent was carried by these early couriers, so that it may be said parcel post was not unknown even to the Persians. The manner of recording and accounting for the packets by the Persian postmasters was highly developed and well systematized. Darius, the last Persian King, was the first postmaster-general of record. Before ascending the throne, he was in charge of the elaborate postal system which connected the Persian capital with all parts of the great empire. Reference to this early postal system is found in

the following quotation from the Book of Esther (viii, 10): "And he wrote in the King Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the King's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries."

The Roman system was fully developed in connection with the great military roads, which at one time extended from Scotland to Egypt, and everywhere throughout the European and Asiatic possessions of the empire. By the frequent relaying of mounted couriers, the official messages were carried at great speed. Like the Persian, the Roman system of posts existed for the use of the State alone; letters were not carried for private individuals.

The dissolution of the Roman Empire and the subsequent low ebb of civilization in Europe was marked by the absence of any important postal system until that established by Charlemagne in 807 A. D. This reform, together with the culture created by him, disappeared with the break-up of his empire.

Universities in several of the States of Europe were among the first organizations to establish and maintain postal facilities. Of these, the University of Paris was most notable for the completeness of the arrangements and the length of time during which its system existed. Under the protection and sanction of the French Kings, the students employed runners who, by operating

under prescribed schedules, relayed each other, and carried to distant parts of what is now France and Germany messages of all kinds, especially appeals for funds, returning with the necessary supplies to enable the seekers for learning to continue their studies in the French capital. This system was one of the most enduring, having come into existence in the twelfth century and continuing until the eighteenth.

The wonderful awakening of Europe, known as the Renaissance, had many causes and manifestations, among which should be included the development generally of postal facilities in response to the growing demand for means of communication. The Hanseatic League, which in the fourteenth century comprised 85 of the great trading cities of Europe, maintained a postal system for commercial purposes, but this system did not serve the people generally. Some features of the League organization were perpetuated as late as 1889 by Hamburg, one of the original "Hanse" towns, and it is an interesting fact that the first foreign mail treaty of the United States was made in 1847 with the Hanseatic Republic of Bremen.

In 1544 government permission was granted in Germany and Spain for the conduct of private posts. Shortly thereafter, Charles V established a postal monopoly in favor of the Count of Thurn and Taxis. This monopoly was vigorously developed and yielded large revenue.

The discovery of America and the Spanish conquest of South America opened to European eyes the civilization of that unknown continent. The postal system of Peru at that time is described by William H. Prescott, in his entertaining history, as "established on all the great routes that conducted to the capital." The account continues, "all along these routes, small buildings were erected, at the distance of less than five miles asunder, in each of which a number of runners, or *chasquis*, as they were called, were stationed to carry forward the dispatches of government." The dispatches were long strings, or quipus, peculiarly knotted according to a code resembling the Morse alphabet for telegraphy. These "quipus" were wound about the waist of the runner who was also uniformed to show his official errand. The "chasquis" were relayed at short distances, so that it was possible for important news from outlying provinces to be carried to the Inca at the rate of one hundred and fifty miles a day.

There is no reason to doubt that, from antiquity, the peculiar civilization of China was supported by an organized postal system. Marco Polo, the Venetian traveler, about 1280, reported that letters were carried by riders on horses throughout the Chinese Empire. He estimated there were then 10,000 post offices and 200,000 horses. The post offices were stationed about 25 miles apart and served the purpose of inns for travelers as well

as providing relays for the mail. This condition existed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The English postal system is the forerunner of our own, and the story of its development is therefore of interest to the student of the United States Post Office. Early letters are preserved with the words "Haste, post, haste" written evidently for the direction and admonition of the post rider. Such letters may have been carried as early as the reign of King John, who retained "nuncii" or messengers for carrying his commands throughout England. The riding post, as a national institution, was definitely established about the middle of the sixteenth century and was intended to provide horses for people who were traveling, as well as to carry the government messages. The rights of postmasters in England to the exclusive letting of horses to travelers were not entirely abrogated until late in the nineteenth century. This early riding post was not intended for carrying letters of private individuals. That some such letters were carried is evident from an order-in-council in 1556 to the effect that the riders should keep a record of every letter, the time of the delivery to the post and the name of the sender.

The accession of James, King of Scotland, to the English throne, stimulated intercourse between the two kingdoms, and, in 1603, postmasters were again secured by royal order in their monopolistic privilege of letting horses to travelers, and at the

same time were subjected to regulations designed to hasten the mails between London and Edinburgh. Every postmaster was required to keep constantly on hand for government messages two horses, and to forward such messages within 15 minutes after their receipt "at the rate of not less than 7 miles an hour in summer and 5 miles in winter."

In 1633, Thomas Witherings, postmaster-general under the "de Quester" patent issued by James I., and confirmed by Charles I., effected important reforms in both the domestic and the foreign mails. He entered into negotiations with the Count of Thurn and Taxis, the hereditary postal monopolist of the German Empire, as a result of which the one weekly mail between London and Antwerp and Brussels was increased to two mails weekly, and the time required for each mail reduced from 4 to 2 days. Witherings also succeeded in inducing greater speed in the domestic posts. He arranged that the letters of every postmaster along a route should be made up in a separate bag to save rehandling and delay. He established definite rates of postage and enforced the prohibition against private expresses for letters. This was actual postal reform and established government postal monopoly.

John Hill, an attorney of York, England, published in 1659, a pamphlet entitled, "A Penny

Post: or a Vindication of the Liberty and Birth-right of every Englishman in carrying Merchant's and other Man's letters, against any Restraint of Farmers, etc." In 1682, William Dockwra, of London, undertook, as a private business, to give that city a good local delivery service. A century and a half in advance of Rowland Hill, Dockwra carried letters and packages for a penny apiece to any address in London. It is said that he had not less than 500 "receiving houses" and "wall boxes" and that he provided hourly collections and from six to ten deliveries daily. Prepayment of postage was required and, for the first time, post-marks were used. The system established by this energetic promoter came under the unfriendly eyes of government officials. A trial resulted before the King's Bench, and the court adjudged the right to belong to the Duke of York. Dockwra's system was absorbed by the national post office, and its features of cheap and efficient service were not continued. Dockwra's system, tho notable as a forerunner of the reforms of Rowland Hill, did not extend outside the city of London and failed to provide prepayment of postage. A similar scheme was undertaken in 1708 by one Charles Povey, who commenced a "halfpenny" post for London; but this attempt to benefit the public at the expense of the postal revenue was suppress before it had well started.

From this time until the opening of the first English railways and the postal reforms of Rowland Hill, the British post office was deliberately used by the Government as a means of taxation, with little or no regard for the advantages to be gained by facilitating correspondence among the people. Few events in this period are of importance in the history of the post office. Legislation was enacted in the reign of Anne, which consolidated the postal systems of the Empire, defined the powers and duties of the proprietary postmaster-general (among which was the right to let horses to persons "riding post"), established Edinburgh, Dublin, and New York as chief letter offices and provided for the privacy of sealed mail. Under this law, Ralph Allen, the friend and patron of the poet Alexander Pope, became lessor of the post offices on the minor routes lateral to the great highways of the United Kingdom. This was known as the "cross-roads post," which until that time had given scant service to the people and little revenue to the government. Allen, by the application of sound business principles, improved the service to out-of-the-way sections and also promoted honesty in the "cross-roads" postmasters to such an extent that he profited greatly by his enterprise and enriched the government revenue.

As the result of this settled policy of operating the post office solely for revenue, the efficiency of

the mail service in England was at a low ebb at the time of the American Revolution. The departure and arrival of posts were extremely irregular; time in transit was insufferably slow; and robberies were frequent. To insure safety, even on the principal highways, papers of value and bank notes that had to be sent by post were cut in two, by merchants and bankers, and half sent by one post and half by the next. John Palmer, the manager of a theater at Bath, was the reformer whose agitation made the Government see the shortsightedness of this niggardly policy. He received the favor of Camden and Pitt, and was finally permitted to carry out his proposals. Coaches designed especially for speed were built and placed in service, good horses and armed guards were provided, and regularity was insisted upon. As a result, correspondence that had been going by private means was restored to the government posts and the revenue of the post office doubled in ten years and doubled again in ten years more, when a period of stagnation set in preceding the era of steam transportation and modern postal reform.

In 1837, Rowland Hill published the pamphlet, "Post Office Reform." For twenty years, he pointed out, the postal revenue had been stationary, in spite of the large increase in population. The revenue received by the Government from stage-coach charges, he compared with the postal

revenue, to show that the latter had not increased to the extent that should be expected. He then presented statistics of the total cost of handling all the letters in the post offices and of transporting them by the means employed for the purpose. These statistics applied to the estimated total number of letters and of newspapers, made it appear that the average letter might be carried for 84-100 of a penny, of which less than 1-10 of a penny was chargeable to transportation. On this basis he argued for the discontinuance of distance as an element in postage rates, and the establishment of a uniform penny rate for letters throughout the United Kingdom. Coupled with this reform was the prepayment of postage by stamps or stamped envelopes, not an original suggestion with Rowland Hill but by him first applied to a great national service. These reforms were made effective in 1840, and Hill was enabled to supervise the working out of his own plan, first through a special office created for him in the Treasury Department and afterwards in the post office itself. He had a broad, clear vision into the needs of modern postal service and effected many improvements along diverse lines. The success of his plans was made possible by the rapid development of railway transportation at the time of his agitation and the great release of human activity under the magic spur of steam-power in the industries.

The wonderful development of the nineteenth century followed in the wake of world-wide postal reform, and well before the close of that century postal service and civilization had attained high development in the United States. A new era has now commenced, with world solidarity as the goal of all mankind, and in this era the post office is to play an important part.

II

COLONIAL POST OFFICES IN AMERICA

THE colonists brought to America no ideas of postal service from England. The General Post Office of Great Britain was not established until 1657 and the service was not extensively developed until after the close of the seventeenth century. The colonists, moreover, were separated from one another both by vast distances and by their political and religious differences. There was scant desire for communication among them.

The mail which the early American colonist regarded as important was that which crossed the Atlantic and kept him in touch with the Motherland. Masters of ships leaving England for America would undertake for one penny each to see letters safely delivered across the ocean at some reputable tavern or coffee-house where the addressees could call for them. This ocean penny postage appears to have been profitable to the shipmasters as it was the custom of some of them to place, in certain coffee-houses in London, re-

ceiving bags for letters which they collected before sailing, and carried on board their ships.

For the convenience of those who expected or wished to send these "ship letters" the General Court of Massachusetts in 1639 ordered that "Richard Fairbanks, his house in Boston, is the place appointed for all letters, which are brought from beyond the seas, or are to be sent thither; (they) are to be brought unto him and hee is to take care, that they bee delivered, or sent according to their directions and hee is allowed for every such letter one penny and must answer all miscarriages through his owne neglect in this kind; provided that no man shall be compelled to bring his letters thither except hee please."

As this is the first record of any official beginning in any of the colonies of a postal system, Richard Fairbanks has frequently been referred to as the first postmaster in America. However, there is no evidence that this early post office at Boston received or delivered local letters or was engaged in any correspondence with other communities in America. For many years the only postal development took the form of crude arrangements for handling these "ship letters" and for sending and receiving official letters.

In 1657, the Virginia Assembly required that all letters "superscribed for the service of His Majesty or publique shall be immediately conveyed from plantation to plantation to the place and

person they are directed to under a penalty of one hogshead of tobacco for each default." At New Amsterdam about the same time measures were taken by the Dutch to prevent the private sending or receiving of "ship letters." A box was set in the office of the secretary and "three stivers in wampum" was required for each letter.

The first step toward a domestic post for connecting the several colonies was taken in 1672, when Governor Lovelace, of New York, decreed that a post should "goe monthly between New York and Boston." This was the first post route officially established in America. The necessary arrangements were made with a person whom the Governor "conceaved most proper, being voted active, stout and indefatigable." "I have," says Governor Lovelace, "affixt an annuall sallery on him, which, together with the advantage of his letters and other small portable packes, may afford him a handsome livelyhood." The pioneer postman had to travel through the trackless forest and it was a part of his duty to mark the trees for travelers who might wish to follow him.

This ambitious venture was a seven days' wonder to the people of New York and Boston, and a letter is preserved in which Governor Lovelace describes its features with proud detail to Governor Winthrop of Connecticut. The letter is couched in quaint, old-fashioned language and is of especial interest on account of its naïve descrip-

tion of the "closed pouch" which is an important principle of modern mail service.

"The maile," writes Governor Lovelace, "has divers baggs, according to the towns the letters are designed to, which are all sealed up 'till their arrivement with the seal of the secretarie's office, whose care it is on Saturday night to seale them up. Only by-letters are in an open bag to dispense by the wayes."

The Boston-New York service, so auspiciously begun, was soon abandoned, and for more than a decade no attempt was again made to establish a regular post road in America. Correspondence between the American colonies languished for the lack of any regular means of communication. Friends in different colonies occasionally succeeded in sending letters to one another by means of sea captains traveling along the coast or by Indians or travelers. Official dispatches were sent by special messengers.

Meanwhile, steps had been taken to devise regular mail service within each of the principal colonies. In 1673, the Massachusetts General Court ordered that post messengers should receive for their services three pence a mile and certain other perquisites. Two years later the General Court of Connecticut gave directions regarding the allowance for post riders. For each journey from Rye to Hartford twelve shillings were to be given for the horse and twenty shillings for the man,

with eight shillings extra in winter; and it was especially prescribed that "hyred" horses were not to be deprived of their allowance. In 1676 John Heyward, scrivener, was appointed by the Massachusetts General Court to "take in and convey letters according to the direction."

The first successful postal system established in any of the colonies was that of William Penn, who in 1683 appointed Henry Waldy of Tekonay to keep a post and "supply passengers with horses from Philadelphia to New Castle or the Falls of the Delaware." Letters were carried from Philadelphia to Chester for 2d., to New Castle for 4d., and to Maryland for 6d. It appears also that shortly after this time posts were in successful operation from Philadelphia to every civilized community in that Quaker colony.

In 1684 Governor Dongan of New York revived the project of Governor Lovelace for the establishment of an intercolonial post. In addition to his predecessor's route between New York and Boston, Governor Dongan proposed to establish post offices along the Atlantic Coast from Nova Scotia to Carolina. He had some correspondence with Sir John Werden, who at that time, under the English system of farming out the postal privilege, held the monopoly for all post offices in England and any that might be established in America. Altho nothing came of Governor Dongan's efforts, it is apparent that there was an in-

creasing desire among the Americans for the establishment of means of communication between the principal colonies.

About 1687 an irregular post was operated for some time by one John Perry between Hartford, Fairfield, and Stamford in Connecticut. A record is preserved, dated June 11, 1689, of the appointment by the Massachusetts General Court of Richard Wilkins as postmaster to "receive all letters and deliver them out at one penny each." At this time no doubt the Boston Post Office handled many letters besides those from England. There were "ship letters" from along the coast, letters to and from outlying hamlets in Massachusetts, and letters brought in from other colonies by travelers and irregular post riders.

The real beginning of postal service in America dates from February 17, 1691, when William and Mary granted to Thomas Neale, by letters patent, "full power and authority to erect, settle and establish within the chief parts of their Majesty's colonies and plantations in America, an office or offices for the receiving and dispatching of letters and packets, and to receive, send and deliver the same under such rates and sums of money as the planters shall agree to give, and to hold and enjoy the same for the terme of 21 years." Thomas Neale, the grantee of the American post, was a court favorite and a man eminent for enterprise and large speculative affairs. He was master of

the mint and was connected in some way with state and private lotteries. Neale remained in England but nominated, as Postmaster-General for America, Andrew Hamilton, an Edinburgh merchant, who was an intimate friend of William Dockwra and had recently returned to England after a sojourn of several years in New Jersey. The appointment of Hamilton was confirmed by Cotton and Frankland, the British joint postmasters-general, on April 4, 1691.

Andrew Hamilton was the first officer of any rank appointed to serve all of the British possessions in America without reference to the independent establishment of the separate colonies. His task, for this reason, was difficult. The Neale patent, under which he was to operate, itself recognized that the colonists were free to cooperate or not in the plan for intercolonial postal communication. Postmaster-General Hamilton was an earnest public-spirited man, possessed of an unusual degree of executive ability, and his engaging personality made friends for him even among those who, like Penn, were little disposed to assist in any movement for consolidating the British colonies in America. After much negotiation he succeeded in inducing practically all the colonial assemblies to pass postal acts that were sufficiently identical in their terms to permit the establishment of a united system of posts in America.

On May 1, 1693, Hamilton's Intercolonial Postal Union commenced a weekly service between Portsmouth, N. H., and Virginia. Arrangements were made to dispatch and receive mail between the colonies and all parts of the civilized world. The salaries paid to employees were liberal, and the rates of postage, tho high, were not regarded as excessive in those days.

Postmaster-General Hamilton held theories of postal service in advance of his time and, as a practical administrator, sought to give effect to his theories. He was confident that, ultimately, the use of the postal service by the people would so increase as to justify and repay all the expense incurred in perfecting the service during the first few years. He regarded the post office as a public utility established for the benefit and convenience of the people and believed that if it was maintained in the best possible condition and extended rapidly it would eventually prove successful as a commercial venture.

In 1698 Hamilton returned to London to report progress to his principal, Neale. The total expense had been £3,817; the revenue but £1,457. This result was very unsatisfactory to Mr. Neale, who was unable to see the brilliant prospects that Hamilton predicted for the American post office. Partly for this reason, and partly because his credit was seriously impaired, he decided to relinquish his postal venture. Neale accordingly

offered his patent to the government, and as the consideration demanded by him was refused, assigned his rights to Andrew Hamilton and to West, an Englishman, to both of whom he was heavily indebted.

In 1698, the year in which Postmaster General Hamilton, in partnership with Mr. West, took over the ownership of the American posts, the service which he had established between the American colonies was as complete and satisfactory as any then existing in Europe under similar conditions. The postage rates, altho prescribed separately by the legislature of each colony, were in effect uniform. The amounts varied greatly, but this was due to the fact that there was no common standard of money among the colonies. The English terms, pounds, shillings, and pence, were in use, but there was no English coin. Spanish coin was used and also the coin issued by several of the colonies. Thus, for example, seven shillings in Massachusetts were the equivalent of nine shillings in New York. Hamilton maintained the post office finances on a sound money basis by requiring postage to be paid in pennyweights and grains of silver.

Such a postal policy promoted better highways. When the Intercolonial Postal Union started in 1693, every post road had to be made through a wilderness, but by 1698, when Hamilton returned to America to resume his duties, these routes had

become the accustomed way for all travelers and were traversed with much less difficulty by the post riders.

Andrew Hamilton, whom history recognizes as the first Postmaster-General of America, died at Amboy in New Jersey in 1703. Altho the post office had not, up to that time, made a profit, it had proved a great public convenience. This gave Hamilton's services a high place in the estimation of the people throughout the colonies. While Postmaster-General he had also been Governor of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and was besides an active and successful merchant.

He was succeeded in 1703 by his son, John Hamilton, who operated the system until 1707, when the British Government paid him £1,664 and took over the colonial postal service.

III

BRITISH CONTROL OF THE AMERICAN POST OFFICE

JOHN HAMILTON was continued by the Crown as postmaster-general for all the American colonies and given a salary of £200 annually. Postage rates were increased and routes were established, one between New York and Williamsburg, Va., to be served weekly, and two to be served biweekly between New York and Boston and between Philadelphia and Annapolis. John Hamilton had inherited his father's disposition to serve the people to the utmost with little regard to profit. The surplus revenues derived from parts of the system were applied by him to the improvement and extension of other less remunerative routes. This led eventually to his removal in 1721 by the British postmasters-general and the appointment in his place of John Lloyd of Charleston, South Carolina. Lloyd promoted the mail-packet service from Falmouth, England, to Charleston and New York in America; and to the West Indies. He was succeeded by Alexander Spotswood in 1730.

Under Postmaster-General Spotswood, Benja-

min Franklin commenced his experience in the postal service. In 1737, Franklin was appointed postmaster at Philadelphia and later he entered upon duties which he described as acting for the postmaster-general "as his comptroller in regulating several offices and bringing officers to account." Thus Franklin seems to have been the first post office inspector.

The postmasters-general who succeeded Alexander Spotswood were Head Lynch, 1739 to 1743; Elliott Benger, 1743 to 1753. After that time the British possessions in America were divided for the purposes of administration into Northern and Southern postal districts. The Southern District included the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida and the Bahamas, while the Northern district, beginning with Virginia, extended to Canada. The postmasters-general appointed for the South were Benjamin Barons, 1765; Peter de Lancey, 1766; George Roupell, 1771. Roupell continued in office until after the Revolution. These officers were to receive £350 salary and £150 for a secretary annually. The Southern post office was at Charleston, South Carolina. From 1768 to 1782 a mail-packet service plied between that city and Falmouth, England. The Northern district was established in 1753 with two postmasters-general. William Hunter and Benjamin Franklin served jointly from 1753 to 1761, when John Foxcroft succeeded William Hunter. Franklin served until

1774 when he was removed by the British Government.

The Act of 1710 of Queen Anne establishing the General Post Office for the British Empire, marks the beginning of a new era in American postal service. The details of accounting were improved and there was closer supervision by the Crown. Under this law, the two postmasters-general in London took charge of the entire British system. New York was made the head office for North America. It was provided that ferries must serve the post riders in America free of charge. The postage prescribed was four pence for 60 miles with correspondingly higher rates for greater distances. The charge for a single letter from New York to Philadelphia was 9 pence, and from New York to Boston one shilling. These rates remained in effect until after the Declaration of Independence.

The service established by Andrew Hamilton ran parallel to the coast and connected all of the colonies from Virginia northward. Under John Hamilton cross posts to the inland began to develop. In 1740 the post office at Charleston, S. C., was established and service arranged to connect the southern colonies with New England by post. It can not be said, however, that there was any material improvement in postal facilities until after Benjamin Franklin had become postmaster-general in 1753.

Up to 1753 the British Government had failed to realize a profit from the American posts, and accordingly Franklin and Hunter were required to take their appointments as postmasters-general as a speculation. They were to receive, jointly, £600 annually, if they could make it out of the profits. Franklin had had experience as postmaster at Philadelphia; and Hunter was well known in the colonies as a printer, having been postmaster for the colony at Williamsburg, Va. With great foresight, these two men went about their undertaking by extending the service and instituting improvements. In the first four years, they lost more than \$3,000, but eventually their policy was justified by the great increase in postal correspondence on the part of the people.

The defeat of Braddock in 1755 influenced the British Government to improve postal facilities in America. As a step in this direction a regular mail packet service between England and New York was established. This service was continuously maintained by the British Government to 1840, when it was superseded by the service of the Cunard line of steamships. After 1763, when England acquired her possessions in Canada, it was a prime object of Imperial policy to link Montreal and Quebec with New York and Boston. When Hugh Finlay, a representative of the British postmasters-general, undertook in 1773 a survey "of the post roads on the continent of North Amer-

ica," his first interest was with the mail routes between Boston and Quebec.

There is little doubt that Hugh Finlay was assigned this survey partly for the purpose of determining the political sentiment in the different colonies. Finlay refers frequently in his journal to the rebellious temper of the people. At Salem, Massachusetts, the drivers of stage-coaches carried so many letters outside the mails that the revenue of the post office was seriously impaired. Regarding this, Finlay says: "If an information were lodged (but an informer would get tarred and feathered) no jury would find the fact. *It is deemed necessary to hinder all Acts of Parliament from taking effect in America. They are, they say, to be governed by laws of their own framing, and no other.*" On making some proposals to the Governor of Massachusetts for the improvement of the postal service, Finlay says: "His Excellency informed me that the troubles and confusion now subsisting in his province, joined to the present spirit of the people, left him but little room to imagine that any regard would be paid to any proposal coming from him, however beneficial to the province, but that it would rather be vigorously opposed."

The original journal of Hugh Finlay, containing his observations on all the post offices and post roads then existing in America, carefully written in his own hand, is preserved in the archives at

Washington, and presents the most complete and valuable account extant regarding the condition of the postal service in America at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. No modern post office inspector would care to undergo the hardships endured by Finlay in traveling from the Canadian settlements on the River Chaudière to Massachusetts. He says:

The River Des Loups is about forty yards wide at its mouth, is exceeding shallow, rocky and rapid; indeed at this season we found it so low, that our canoes could not float in many places, and here our fatigue began. We were obliged to wade, the Indians bearing the canoes up as much as possible on the surface, thus carrying them slowly along; by continuing long in the water, our feet became so beat and tender that we endured much pain in treading on the rocks and stones in the river; besides they were so slippery that we often fell down. In this disagreeable manner we proceeded six miles, and at 5 o'clock in the evening encamped at the foot of a fall, where the river tumbles over a bed of rocks ten foot high.

Mr. Finlay evidently found some compensation for these hardships in the wild magnificence of the scenery and the romance of his adventurous journey. After a day of this laborious wading and canoeing he writes:

We unloaded our canoes, lifted them out of the water and carried them and our provisions, etc., above the fall, made a slow fire, and set the canoes to dry a distance from it; then we made a wigwam or hut, of branches, open in front; we next made a large fire at a convenient distance; the floor of our wigwam we laid with tender springs of the aromatiëk

Spruce tree, which comforts the lungs, and defends the breast from noxious night vapors; this makes a soft and agreeable bed. After all these matters were arranged, we hung our kettles to the fire, and boiled pork in sufficient quantity for supper, and to last us all next day until the evening, when the same work is again done. After supper each man wraps himself in his blanket, lays himself down on his spruce bed with his feet to the fire and passes the night in sound and refreshing sleep.

Although the post office at Portsmouth in New Hampshire which Finlay visited on October 5, 1773, is "small and looks mean," the English inspector says that the books "are in good form and up to this day." The postmaster, he says, "is a careful regular fellow, . . . understands his business, and seems to have the interest of the office at heart."

Of the postmaster at New London, Connecticut, Finlay says:

Visited John S. Miller, the Deputy. He keeps his office in a room hir'd on purpose in the very centre of the town. He is a young man who talks sensibly of post-office matters, and who seems to be a postmaster in his heart. His office is neat, his books fair and up, his papers are in order, and everything is in due form.

The report on the post office at New Haven, Connecticut, shows the difficulty which postmasters in seaport towns had in collecting their revenue on "ship letters." So wrote Finlay:

"This is a large flourishing seaport town. Went to the post office 13th, examined his books, questioned him and found

that he understands his business thoroughly; he laments that he can not put the acts of Parliament in force. He says that if every vessel arriving at this port were to send her letters to the office the income would be doubled and the revenue increased in other parts; but when he sends to the shipmasters they insult and threaten his messengers; the Custom-house officers, though directed by act of Parliament to admit no vessel to entry without the postmaster's certificate, take no notice of the act.

The report on the route between New York and Boston shows that the revolutionary sentiment in New England encouraged insubordination on the part of the post riders. Evidently the post riders not only appropriated the postage on letters collected and delivered along the way, but also operated for their own benefit a considerable parcel-post service. The excerpt is as follows:

In short I find that it is the constant practise of all the riders between New York and Boston to defraud the revenue as much as they can in pocketing the postage of all way letters; every Deputy Postmaster complains against them for this practise, and for their shameful tardiness; likewise of the bare faced custom of making pack beasts of the horses which carry His Majesty's mails. Every postmaster making complaint, or giving official information, begs that his name may never be mentioned as having made any of those representations.

The following excerpts from the report on the post office at New York shows what the great metropolitan postal service of New York was in the year that Watt perfected the steam-engine and

the Boston patriots made tea for King George in the harbor of Massachusetts Bay.

The books in this office are regularly kept, and the quarterly accounts regularly delivered to the Comptroller.

Great dispatch is given to the different riders, who are punctually sent off at the stated hours.

Soon after the arrival of a mail the letters are quickly delivered by a runner always in time for answers to be returned in course; this regulation gives much satisfaction to the publick.

POST DAYS AT NEW YORK

<i>Monday.</i>	<i>Tuesday.</i>	<i>Wednesday.</i>
<p>A mail from Philadelphia arrives at 8 and goes out at 10 in the morning very regularly.</p> <p>At 12 the Boston Post by way of New Haven, New London, Rhode Island & Providence is dispatched. This is called the lower road.</p>	<p>The Quebec Post by way of Albany arrives at 4 o'clock P.M., he is very regular.</p>	<p>The Boston Mail by way of Hartford, called the upper road, is irregular in his arrivals for reasons assigned in this Journal under the Boston head, but in common he arrives between 5 in the evening and 10 at night. The Albany Post, which carries the Canadian mails is sent off at 11 A.M. A mail arrives from Philadelphia at 10 and the Post returns at 12. The Packet Mail is made up and dispatched from this office the first Wednesday of every month at 12 o'clock at night.</p>
<i>Thursday.</i>	<i>Friday.</i>	<i>Saturday.</i>
<p>The Post for Boston by New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield, called the upper road, is sent off at Noon.</p>	<p>The Post from Philadelphia arrives at 11 o'clock P.M. and returns at one o'clock.</p>	<p>A Post from Boston by the lower road arrives between 5 and 10 at night, sometimes it is Sunday, for reasons assigned under the Boston head.</p>

Speaking of the drivers between Norwalk, New Haven, and New York, Finlay says:

They may pretend that they are at great expense for horses; it is only a pretense. An ass could travel faster; they seldom or never change horses. They have excuses always ready framed when they come in late—"their horses lost shoes"—"they were detained at ferrys." It is their own business alone which detains them. They have sometimes said that it was too hot to ride, and at other times that it rained and they did not chuse to get wet.

The following is a part of the report on the service at New Port:

It is common for people who expect letters by post, finding none at the post office, to say: "Well, there must be letters, we'll find them at Mumfords" (the rider of the stage-coach). It is next to impossible to put a stop to this practise in the present universal opposition to everything connected with Great Britain. Were any deputy postmaster to do his duty, and make a stir in such matter, he would draw on himself the odium of his neighbors and be marked as the friend of slavery and oppression and a declared enemy to America.

The journal of Finlay is full, as will be seen from the foregoing excerpts, with reference to the state of political discontent among the Americans; but from beginning to end there is no mention of Benjamin Franklin, altho he was at the time Postmaster-General jointly with John Foxcroft, and had held office for more than twenty years. This omission is no doubt significant in view of the fact that on January 31 of the following year, after Franklin's mission to England in the inter-

est of peace and accommodation between the Mother country and the American colonies had failed, the following letter was sent to the American Postmaster-General:

General Post Office, Jan. 31, 1774.

To Doctor FRANKLIN,

Sir:

I have received the commands of His Majesty's postmasters-general to signify to you that they find it necessary to dismiss you from being any longer their deputy for America. You will therefore cause your accounts to be made up as soon as you can conveniently.

I am, sir,

Your most humble servant,

ANTHONY TODD, *Secretary.*

Referring to his dismissal, Franklin wrote: "Before I was displaced by a freak of the ministers we had brought it (the post office) to yield three times as much clear revenue to the Crown as the post office in Ireland. Since that impudent transaction they have received from it not one farthing."

During the twenty-one years in which Benjamin Franklin was postmaster-general in conjunction first with William Hunter and afterwards with John Foxcroft, he was absent from the country two-thirds of the time on various missions of public business; yet it was largely due to his genius that the British postal administration gave the American colonies a postal service that was

of the utmost value in uniting the colonies and enabling them later to organize for the Revolution. By 1774, post routes ran from Maine to Florida and from New York to Canada. The ocean packet service ran on a monthly schedule. The ambition of England to extend her control over the Mississippi Valley made her ministers agreeable to the postal reforms and extensions of Benjamin Franklin.

The dismissal of Franklin incensed the Americans, and in 1774 William Goddard, an editor, who had suffered by the arbitrary increase in the rates prescribed for newspapers, undertook to enlist the cooperation of the colonial assemblies to form an American post office as opposed to the parliamentary post office of the British. When the Continental Congress met in 1775, it took up as one of the first matters of important public concern the establishment of suitable postal facilities, and the plans worked out by Goddard were made the basis for the Revolutionary post office. On Christmas day, 1775, John Foxcroft, whose associate Franklin had been, announced the end of the Royal Post in the revolting colonies. Hugh Finlay, who had succeeded Franklin as joint postmaster-general, withdrew to Canada, where he organized the postal service of the remaining British possessions and served there as postmaster-general for a number of years.

From the foregoing account it will be seen that

in colonial times, up to the outbreak of hostilities with Great Britain, the postal service was in a primitive stage. In this respect, it did not differ from the postal service of European nations. The high rates of postage established by the Act of Queen Anne in 1710 still prevailed. A letter was a written communication on one sheet of paper, and double and triple letters, and packets of letters were charged for at correspondingly high rates. As a result, correspondents of those days cultivated a small and compact penmanship that is very noticeable in the handwriting even of the prominent men of that time. A large and flowing script would be an evidence of extravagance or great emphasis and was reserved by reasonable people for unusual occasions, such as the signing of the Declaration of Independence by John Hancock.

Transportation by steam and the prepayment of postage, which revolutionized the postal service in the following century, were lacking and the great distances, poor roads and sparse population made the means of communication between the colonies extremely hazardous and expensive. It is to be especially noted that despite these obstructions to rapid communication, the widespread opposition to the arrogation of authority by the British Crown sprang up in all the colonies at about the same time. A clear understanding of this condition is necessary to appreciate the diffi-

culties encountered and overcome by the revolutionary leaders in organizing and maintaining effective military forces, and of the misunderstandings and prejudices with which the delegates from the thirteen states entered the fateful convention in 1789.

IV

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEDERAL POSTAL SYSTEM

At the beginning of the struggle for independence, there were in America two rival postal systems—the British or “parliamentary” post office operated by the deputies under Foxcroft and Finlay, and the “constitutional” post office. The latter was the outgrowth of the need for independent and secret means of communication among the leaders in the agitation against British control. Paul Revere, for example, was a post rider for the Massachusetts patriots as early as 1773, and his celebrated ride April 18, 1775, was taken in the performance of his postal duties. The line between Baltimore and Philadelphia inaugurated in 1774 by William Goddard was later extended by the Continental Congress throughout all the colonies.

In July, 1775, the Congress established the Constitutional Post Office with Franklin as Postmaster-General. A line of posts was directed to be established from Massachusetts to Georgia, with such cross posts as the Postmaster-General might deem necessary. This enactment also ex-

tended the franking privilege to members of the Congress and to army officers.

The establishment and operation of the Royal post office in America was considered by the revolutionists as an unwarranted assumption of power by the British parliament, but it continued to the end an unmixed benefit to the people. The leaders of the revolution were kept informed of events transpiring in Europe through the agency of the ocean mail service of the British-American post; and they recognized also that the service was of such convenience to merchants and separated friends that any unnecessary suppression of its activities would be unpopular. Some delegates in the Continental Congress advocated measures directed against the Royal Post, but the forbearing attitude prevailed that this remnant of British institutions would "die a natural death." "It has," said Paine, "been under languishment a great while; it would be cowardice to issue a decree to kill that which is dying." The discontinuance of the British postal system in America on December 25, 1775, by Postmaster-General Foxcroft was voluntary; he issued a statement in New York that the incoming mail from England would not be sent to the Colonies but would be advertised and held subject to call.

"Communication of intelligence with frequency and dispatch from one part to another of this extensive continent, is essentially requisite to its

safety," reads a resolution of the Continental Congress in 1775. Franklin was exhorted to take the most stringent measures to insure the fidelity and despatch of post riders. Legislation was passed exempting the deputies in charge of post offices from military and court duty. The keepers of ferries were required to serve the post riders without delay and without charge. The solicitude of the Congress regarding the operation of the post office was redoubled after Franklin was called, in 1776, to plead the American cause at the Court of Versailles, and his son-in-law, Richard Bache, had succeeded him as Postmaster-General (November 7, 1776). Bache was commanded to furnish a list of the persons employed by the postal service in order that it might be determined if "persons disaffected to the American cause" were included in the number. The suggestion that an oath of office be required of all deputies and riders was made; and a resolution adopted on October 17, 1777, provided for the appointment of an "Inspector of Dead Letters," at a salary of \$100 per year. This officer was required to examine quarterly all dead letters, to account for all money and valuable property enclosed therein and to communicate to Congress such as contained "inimical schemes or intelligence." These measures indicate that the concern of Congress with the post office then related primarily to the military situation.

The Articles of Confederation contained a clause designed to establish a federal post office, but the activities of the post office were limited to interstate mails; it was to have nothing to do with municipal mails or with any postal service beginning and ending within the same state. Under this restricted authority, and in the disordered condition of the country, little improvement was made in postal facilities before the adoption of the Constitution. The revenues did not respond to the expenditures made, for the reason that depredation on the mails and defalcation of postal officers could not be punished without the permission and cooperation of the state legislatures.

In 1782 Ebenezer Hazard, who had been the "Constitutional" postmaster of New York in 1775, succeeded to the position of Postmaster-General. In the same year (October 18) the Congress passed an act having for its object the establishment, under the authority granted in the Articles of Confederation, of a complete interstate postal system. All that this legislation lacked to accomplish the results sought was sufficient authority in the federal government to give force and effect to its provisions. This central authority, which had been lacking since the withdrawal of the British postmasters-general, was provided by the Constitution of the United States in 1789. In 1792, the act of ten years before was reenacted

under the Constitution, and this statute continued, without material change, to control the United States post offices until 1845.

The period of the Revolution and of the years succeeding until 1789, when the states composed their differences and evolved the Constitution, was very naturally marked by conditions of insecurity and uncertainty in the postal service. The brief crude journal kept by Postmaster-General Bache is preserved at Washington, and shows the limited extent of the service, and the slight revenue received from even the most important postal centers. Congress repeatedly ordered investigations to determine what could be done to improve the unsatisfactory mail service and at the same time to reduce the expenditure.

On September 22, 1789, temporary provision was made for the postal establishment under the Constitution, by authorizing the continuance of the conditions existing under the Continental Congress. This authority enabled President Washington to appoint Samuel Osgood, of Massachusetts, as the first Postmaster-General under the Constitution of the United States in 1789. Osgood had served as a delegate from his state in the Continental Congress, and appears to have been possess of considerable ability for organization and management. His first appointments were Jonathan Burrall as Assistant Postmaster-General; Sebastian Bauman as Postmaster

of New York and Robert Patton as Postmaster of Philadelphia. He sent Burrall to survey the post offices in the Southern States and himself set about devising such measures as might be necessary to bring order and good service out of the chaotic condition into which the post office had fallen.

In 1789 there were in all the thirteen states only 75 postmasters. The mails were carried on less than 2,000 miles of post roads, consisting of one long route paralleling the Atlantic coast with a few cross posts serving important inland towns. The entire annual cost of carrying the mails was less than \$25,000; but this, with the other expenses of the service, was greater than the revenue, which had been reduced to a figure less than had been realized by the British colonial post office fifteen years before.

Postmaster-General Osgood was not a member of the Cabinet and his reports were submitted to Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury. In his report of January 20, 1790, Osgood stated that the postal service was in an impoverished and disorganized condition. The small revenue was derived almost entirely from postage paid on ship letters. Rates of postage were computed in fractional amounts that could not be "made out in any pieces of coin current in the United States." Embezzlement of funds and mail depredations were common occurrences and went

unpunished. Contractors consulted their own pleasure as to the days and hours of arrival and departure of the post riders. Letters and packets were entrusted to travelers in preference to the mails. Six chief difficulties with the post office are enumerated in this report. Mr. Osgood wrote :

As to the revenue of the post office, it may be observed,

1. That there may be so few letters that, under the best regulations, it would not amount to anything considerable, and the manner of settling the country may operate powerfully against the productiveness of the post office.
2. The franking of letters may have been extended too far.
3. Ship letters may not have been properly attended to.
4. The rate of postage may have been too high in some instances, and too low in others.
5. Stage drivers and private post riders may have been the carriers of many letters which ought to have gone in the mail.
6. The postmasters may have consulted their own interests in preference to that of the public.

In 1792 the important legislation enacted by the Continental Congress, regarding the establishment and operation of the postal service, was reenacted by the United States Congress with but few alterations. The establishment of a system of posts throughout the country was authorized. The postmaster-general was to appoint postmasters, post riders and messengers and to make the necessary contracts for transportation. Post-

masters were to receive commissions limited to 20 per cent of the money arising "from postage in their respective departments." The secrecy and inviolability of mail matter were declared. Postal employes were required to take an oath of office and the theft of valuable letters by sworn employes was punishable by death. Postal rates expressed in the money of the Federal Government were prescribed, altho there was practically no essential change in the amount of the rates. Newspapers, the carrying of which had formerly been a perquisite of the deputies and post riders, were admitted to the mails and charges of one cent for every newspaper carried not more than 100 miles, and of one and one-half cent for every newspaper carried a greater distance, were authorized to be collected from subscribers; the editors were given the frank for their exchanges so that there might be no limitation on the free interchange of communication between different states and localities.

The penalty of death for mail depredation seems in this day to have been so severe that it is interesting to read the humane argument of Postmaster-General Habersham, on whose recommendation the penalty, except for aggravated cases of mail robbery, was changed, in 1799, to flogging. He says:

The punishment is so contrary to the present humane regulations and mild policy of the laws of the separate states,

and so shocking to the humane sentiments generally prevalent in this country, that it is hoped the substitute may be adopted. . . . The law, in fact, . . . from the severity of the punishment, has become useless; and villains relying on the public humanity violate it with impunity. . . . It is therefore to be wished that a severe punishment, and one that will not at the same time much outrage the prevailing sentiments of justice, or tempt those to whom the execution of the laws is entrusted, or the people at large, to favor escapes, may be provided. Such a one is the substitute supposed to be. . . . To prevent crimes so easily committed, and so injurious to the public interest, as those under consideration, no punishment promises to be so efficient as the one proposed. Those who have hitherto violated this part of the law, have been young men, having some education, and respectable connections, to whom the punishment proposed would be more terrible in itself and consequences, than death; and from which they would have no hope of escape, through the humanity of those entrusted with the execution of the laws; and from thence it is believed, it would have a much more powerful effect in preventing the commission of these crimes, which is the object of the law.

Before the close of Washington's second administration the number of post offices, the miles of post roads and amount of the postal revenue had all increased more than five times.

By the close of Habersham's administration as postmaster-general in 1801 a great improvement had been effected in the postal service. Since the beginning of the government under the Constitution in 1789, the number of post offices had increased from 75 to more than 1000 and the miles of post roads from less than 2000 to more than

20,000. The revenue likewise had multiplied tenfold and was approaching the third of a million. No more striking evidence could be offered of the salutary effect of the free and united government established under the Constitution.

The new century opened with a great tide of immigration to the west. By 1803, Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio had been admitted to the Union. In the following year Jefferson consummated the Louisiana Purchase; and in 1805 Lewis and Clarke extended the territorial claims of the United States to the Pacific coast. A period of great industrial activity was beginning and the postal arm of the federal government responded to the opportunity for service. In answer to the vigorous agitation in behalf of the policy of internal improvement at federal expense, the "Cumberland Pike" was commenced in 1806. For more than thirty years the government occupied itself extensively in building, and in encouraging the building, of roads and bridges and, later, of canals and railways.

At the outbreak of the second war with England in 1812, mail service was in operation over more than 50,000 miles of post roads. In spite of this great development the operation of the post office had been profitable to such an extent that over \$600,000 had actually been covered into the Treasury as surplus postal revenue. Up to that time the policy with respect to the post office had not

been illiberal; but, nevertheless, the receipts had not been fully applied to the development of the service, unless the roads and stage lines constructed at the cost of the government be considered as postal expenditure.

During the War of 1812, postage was increased by one-half. This was purely a revenue measure, and a new postage law was enacted in 1816, restoring the old rates with a few modifications.

Postal officers of that time took special pride in the coach service which was very much to be preferred to the mail riders and sulkies by which the service was maintained in the outlying and sparsely settled sections of the country. It was the policy, as rapidly as the volume of mail increased sufficiently or whenever there was sufficient passenger traffic, to establish stage-coach lines under contract. To facilitate this improved service assistance was given to road-makers and to coach-makers. In 1811 the Government experimented with a line of government-owned stages between Baltimore and Philadelphia. This line was operated by the Department at less expense than the cost for contract service but Congress, for reasons of public policy, declined to sanction the extension of this principle.

By 1813 the steamboat had become an important means of transporting mail. In that year all steamship lines were declared to be post routes. The first steamship crossed the Atlantic in 1819

and by 1825 the opening of the Erie Canal connected the Atlantic coast with the middle west by water.

In the second administration of President Monroe, John McLean, of Ohio, became Postmaster-General. Mr. McLean originated the modern policy of the post office department with respect to the extension and maintenance of postal facilities. In the nine years of his predecessor's administration more than a third of a million dollars for surplus postal receipts had been taken up by the Treasury. McLean commenced the practise of applying the entire postal revenue to the improvement and extension of the service. In defining the policy, he stated, in a report to the President on December 2, 1823; that "it is understood that, whilst Congress are willing that all the revenue of this Department shall be appropriated in extending the travel of the mail, they are unwilling to provide for its accommodation to any considerable extent by appropriations from the Treasury. It is, therefore, an object of great importance to bring the expenditures of the Department at least within its receipts."

The post offices in this year had been increased to 7,000, and the Postmaster General said, "there are few towns or villages in the Union that are not accommodated with mail stages." President John Quincy Adams, in his message to Congress on December 4, 1827, said, "It may be noticeable

that while the facilities of intercourse between fellow-citizens, in person, or by correspondence, will soon be carried to the door of every villager in the Union, a yearly surplus of revenue will accrue, which may be applied as the wisdom of Congress, under the exercise of their constitutional powers, may devise, for the further establishment and improvement of the public roads, or by adding still further to the facilities in the transportation of the mails. Of the indications of the prosperous condition of our country, none can be more pleasing than those presented by the multiplying relations of personal and intimate intercourse between the citizens of the Union dwelling at the remotest distances from each other.”

The extent to which Postmaster-General McLean followed his policy of rapidly extending the service may be seen in the increase in the number of post offices, from 4,498 in 1823, the year of his appointment, to 7,651 in 1828, the last year of his service. In the same time the length of post roads was increased from 82,763 miles to 114,536 miles. Altho the revenue increased from \$1,114,000 to \$1,598,000, Mr. McLean in his six years of service as Postmaster General turned over to the Treasury less than \$14,000. President Adams, again referring to the post office, said: “While the correct principle seems to be, that the income levied by the department should defray all its expenses, it has never been the policy of

this government to raise from this establishment any revenue to be applied to any other purposes.”

Postmaster-General McLean reported in 1828 a “great increase of expedition on almost all the important routes. On many of them it is now conveyed,” he says, “at the rate of 100 miles a day.” His general policy is clearly outlined in the following statement taken from the same report:

It is believed to be good policy to keep the funds of the department actively employed in extending its operations, until the reasonable wants of every community shall be supplied. By withdrawing mail accommodations from all unproductive routes, and substituting a horse for a stage transportation on many others, a very large surplus of funds would annually accumulate; but the public convenience would be greatly lessened, and the means of information withheld from districts of the country but sparsely inhabited. There is no branch of the government in whose operations the people feel a more lively interest than in those of this department; its facilities being felt in the various transactions of business, in the pleasures of correspondence, and the general diffusion of information. In the course of every year, no inconsiderable amount of the active capital of the country, in some form or other, passes through the mail. To connect important places by frequent lines of intercourse, combine speed with all the security possible, and extend the mail wherever it may be wanted, constitute the objects which have influenced the policy of the department.

In 1827, the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads of the Senate recommended that the salary of the Postmaster-General be increased from

\$4,000 to \$6,000 per annum. That report comments in this connection as follows:

In the operations of the Post Office Department about 20,000 agents are employed. All the other branches of the Executive Government, including the army and navy, fall short of this number. The dispersion of this force into every neighborhood of the Union must add to the labor of controlling it; and as all its acts come under the public inspection and are immediately connected with other interests, the most unceasing diligence is necessary to give the public satisfaction. The responsibility of the Postmaster-General is great. He disburses, at his discretion, about \$1,000,000 annually, for the conveyance of the mail; and to postmasters, who are appointed by him, near \$500,000. The correspondence of the general post office, it is ascertained, amounts to about 600 communications daily, including all received and sent. Between six and seven thousand postmasters make quarterly returns, which are all examined; and payment is made quarterly to between two and three thousand contractors. . . . Whether the committee consider the labor required of him, the great responsibility of the office, or the talents he should possess, they are brought to the decision that his compensation should be equal to that of any other head of a department.

In accordance with this recommendation the salary of the postmaster-general was increased to \$6,000 per annum, which was the same amount received by members of the Cabinet. In the ensuing administration of Andrew Jackson, Postmaster-general William T. Barry of Kentucky, who was appointed on March 9, 1829, was invited by the President to become a member of the Cabinet. The opinion of President Jackson re-

garding the postal establishment is thus expressed in his message to Congress in 1829:

In a political point of view, this department is chiefly important as affording the means of diffusing knowledge. It is to the body politic what the veins and arteries are to the natural—conveying rapidly and regularly, to the remotest parts of the system, correct information of the operations of the government, and bringing back to it the wishes and feelings of the people. Through its agency we have secured to ourselves the full enjoyment of the blessing of a free press.

The close of the administration of Andrew Jackson in 1837 brought the high-water mark of the postal régime in America, that had begun practically with the Act of Queen Anne in 1710. In 1837 transportation by stage-coach had not ceased to be the principal means of conveying the mails and a large part of the service was performed by post riders and in sulkies. The zone system of postage was still in effect and the rates, which were oppressively high, were essentially the same as they had been when Benjamin Franklin was postmaster at Philadelphia 100 years before. Envelopes were entirely unknown and a letter on two sheets of paper was a double letter on which double rates were charged. Postage stamps also were unknown and postage was paid in cash, usually by the addressee. Nevertheless, with all the handicaps of the dead past still adhering to the postal system, a great extension and development of the service had taken place, and almost

every reform that could be devised under the old order of things had been placed in effect by Jackson's two postmasters-general, Barry and Kendall, and by their predecessor, John McLean. The difficulty of accounting with postmasters was remedied by issuing warrants on them which were used to pay contractors located in the same section of the country. Thus, the contractors were made the collectors of the postal revenue. The plan of having postmasters whose annual commissions exceed \$1,000 appointed by the President was originated by President Jackson in 1829 and confirmed by legislation enacted in 1836. Again, the Post Office Department was reorganized in 1836 and an adequate system of accounting commenced.

This period was also the beginning of a number of movements that were destined within a short time to entirely revolutionize postal conditions in this country. Mail was first carried by a steam railway in 1834. But it was not until 1838 that a law was passed declaring all railroads to be post routes, and the traveling railway post office did not come until 1840. The high rates of postage induced the development of an elaborate system of private expresses, under competition with which the postal revenue gradually declined. In 1837 Morse invented the electro-magnetic telegraph, and in the same year the postal reforms in England brought about by Rowland Hill be-

came the subject of popular discussion in America. As the result of these tendencies, it is not surprising that the last year of President Jackson's administration recorded the last postal surplus until the postal reforms of a decade later were well under way. The goal aimed at by the zealous postmasters-general of that time was to be attained through agencies that would have seemed incredible to them and under conditions which they would have declared impossible. Meanwhile, a period of ten years was to ensue in which, amidst much doubt and debate, the new system of cheap uniform postage and rapid transportation was to be built up on the basis of a system which had outlived its capacity to meet the rapidly developing needs of the nation.

V

RISE OF THE MODERN POSTAL SYSTEM (1836-1847)

THE present organization of the Post Office Department originated in 1836. In that year, Congress, on the recommendation of Postmaster-General Amos Kendall, passed a law providing for a business-like organization of the postal service. The office of third assistant postmaster-general was created and an increase in clerical force authorized. Thereafter, all revenues of the department, instead of being available for expenditure at the discretion of the postmaster-general, were to be accounted for to the Treasurer of the United States as a part of the general revenues of the government. To provide for the expenditures, the postmaster-general was then as now required to submit to Congress itemized estimates of the amounts necessary under specific classifications; and Congress was to appropriate such amounts as it might deem necessary, out of the postal revenue. As a check on the operation of the new financial system, the office of Auditor for the Post Office Department was created. This legislation put the Department on a sound basis

financially and relieved the Postmaster-General and other officers from the criticism and imputations to which they had previously been exposed on account of the lax and irresponsible manner in which the expenditures had been authorized and paid. In the decade preceding 1836, the records of Congress are filled with charges and countercharges involving the good name and integrity of many officers of the Department. The only certain conclusion to be arrived at from reading the prolonged hearings and debates on the subject is that the Department was in dire need of this reorganization of its financial and accounting system.

It is an interesting coincidence that, in this same year which marks the turning point in the affairs of the United States postal service, the old Post Office Department building on E Street between 7th and 8th Streets in Washington was destroyed by fire, together with practically all the books and records relating to the service. In 1839, the construction of a modern post office building occupying the entire square in which the old building had been located was commenced. This building was occupied by the Post Office Department from 1841 to 1900.

The period following 1836 was one of transition from the stage-coach to railway transportation. The change, says a later report of the Department, "was made from the stage coach to rail car without any fixt rule. Sometimes the contractor made

his own arrangements with the railroad company; sometimes the old contract was simply transferred to the company at the same rates; sometimes the compensation was divided *pro rata* so far as the railroad covered the route; sometimes the postmaster in a large city made the arrangements for the Department." The significance of the development in railway facilities was very little appreciated. The law of 1836 reorganizing the Department contains in none of its 46 sections any mention of railway transportation. Evidently it was not regarded as a subject of special importance to the Department. The annual transportation by railways had increased by 1835 to 270,504 miles, but there were several reasons why this new element in mail transportation was not regarded as revolutionary.

Railway trains still contended on some lines for the right of way with horse-cars built to run on the same track, and railway transportation was generally in a primitive and crude condition. A railway company bidding on an advertised mail route stipulated that the Department must reduce the required rate of speed to eleven miles an hour. The railway was more uncertain and subject to more accidents and delays than the stage coach, which continued for some time to be the best and most reliable means for carrying the mails. However, in 1838, a law was passed which declared all railways in the United States to be post routes

and authorized the Postmaster-General to arrange for railway transportation of the mails provided the cost did not exceed 25 per cent of the amount paid to stage-coach lines.

In 1840, the British Government discontinued the packet service to New York which had existed since 1755 and arranged with the Cunard Steamship Line for the modern type of service which has continued to the present time. In this year also the first route agents were placed on railway mail cars; and in the following year the commissions of postmasters from the sale of postage stamps had become so great in the larger post offices that a law was passed limiting the commission which might be taken by a postmaster in any one year to \$5,000. In spite of these evidences of the increasing activity of the people and the importance of postal facilities, postage revenue *per capita* declined from twenty-six cents in 1837 to twenty-two cents in 1845. Each year closed with the announcement of a postal deficit. This unsatisfactory financial result was due to the high rates of postage which limited correspondence by mail, and to the operation of numerous private expresses which, in spite of the law, carried letters and papers outside the mails. The postal expenditures, moreover, were expanded by the high cost of railway and stage-coach transportation. On many routes which were productive of little revenue pressure was brought to bear on the

Department to contract for stage or railway transportation in order that these facilities might be assured for the use of passengers. In 1841 occurred the first transfer of funds from the United States Treasury to cover the accumulating deficit in the postal revenue.

In 1840 the popular demand for cheaper postage and improved mail facilities became insistent, and for five years this question was a matter of political controversy throughout the nation. The success of postal reform in England was the argument generally used in favor of the reduction of postage in the United States. The wide-spread demand for this reform can easily be understood by a comparison between the rates of postage in England and in the United States. The British rates established in 1840 made it possible to send a letter of any number of pages, not exceeding one-half ounce in weight, between any two offices in Great Britain and Ireland on the prepayment of one penny (two cents) in postage. In the United States the lowest letter postage was six cents and applied to a letter written on one sheet of paper and going not more than 30 miles. For each additional page the same rate was charged. If the distance exceeded 30 miles, a charge of 10 cents was made for each sheet of a letter; from 80 to 150 miles the single letter charge was 12½ cents; between 150 and 400 miles, 18¾ cents and over 400 miles, 25 cents. The substitution of uni-

form two or three-cent postage was naturally urged as a boon to the people which Congress should not withhold, and the arguments made good by Rowland Hill in England were repeated in this country to justify the change.

But conditions in the two countries differed widely. In the United States, the expenditures on account of the postal service exceeded the revenues by nearly \$2,000,000 for the period of eight years preceding June 30, 1845. In England, on the other hand, the Post Office Department, prior to the reduction of postage, had yielded annually a revenue of about \$7,000,000 to the Government. On account of the great distances in this country and the sparse population, the cost of mail transportation was large and the average return from each mail route was much smaller than in England. "The mode of managing and conducting the post offices in the Kingdom of Great Britain," says Postmaster-General Wickliffe, "is not only different from, but much less expensive than, that in the United States. . . . I am convinced upon a most thorough examination into the habits, conditions, and business of the people of the two countries,—the circumscribed limits and dense population of the one, the extensive boundaries and sparse population of the other—that nothing like the same ratio of increase in the correspondence of this country

would follow the like reduction of postage as has taken place in England.”

Mr. Wickliffe also referred to the growing evil of private expresses which, operated in connection with the improved facilities of the railways, had deprived the Department annually of a large revenue. He was keenly alive to the unfairness of the competition of the private expresses, which, as he says, may “take charge of the correspondence of the country upon railroad and steamboat routes, and between our great commercial cities,” but which would neglect the “distant and scattered portions of our population—the towns and villages whose business tends to swell the tide of our national commerce. A merchant in New York,” he says, “would find it difficult to get one of these private letter mail expresses to transport his letters from New York to the town of Independence, in Missouri, at ten times the rate now charged by the Government.”

On March 3, 1845, the last day of Postmaster-General Wickliffe’s administration, the first legislation of the modern postal system of the United States was approved by President Tyler. This law limited the franking privilege and provided postage rates for letters not exceeding one-half ounce in weight of five cents for distances not exceeding 300 miles, and ten cents for distances exceeding 300 miles; it also contained the interesting provision in which the modern star route

service originates. This provision was to the effect that the postmaster-general should award contracts for the transportation of mail "to the lowest bidder, tendering sufficient guarantees for the performance, without other reference to the mode of transportation than may be necessary to provide for the due celerity, certainty, and security of such transportation." Under this provision, the Department could no longer accept the bids of stage-coach and railroad companies, if these bids were exorbitant. It came to be the practise to indicate bids and contracts for service providing "due celerity, certainty, and security" by means of three stars or asterisks and eventually the service for transporting the mail by all modes, except boats and railways, came to be known as "star" route service.

This same law of 1845 classified railroad and steamboat routes into three classes and limited the maximum rates of compensation for each class. This provision was also designed to protect the Department against the exorbitant demands of the companies and to strengthen the finances which it was feared were to be seriously affected by the low postage rates prescribed.

That this fear was not unfounded is indicated by the alarm exprest in the report of Postmaster-General Cave Johnson, submitted to Congress on December 1, 1845. He maintained there was no reasonable ground to believe that, without some

amendment of the law, the annual deficiency would fall short of a million dollars.

The law of March 3, 1847, contained the remainder of the legislation originally advocated by Postmaster-General Wickliffe. The legislation existing at that time against the operation of private mail expresses was strengthened by the reassertion of the Government's monopoly and by providing adequate penalties. It was provided that the postal revenues should receive \$200,000 a year from the Treasury to cover the cost of the franking privilege and the handling of official mail. Thenceforth, this amount was included in the statement of postal revenue.

Postage stamps had made their appearance in the United States shortly after their adoption in England in 1840. Postmasters in this country and private mail delivery companies printed stamps and sold them for use by their patrons to indicate the prepayment of postage or of local delivery fees. The act of 1847 authorized their official introduction into our postal system.

By this time the use of envelopes was becoming common and the prepayment of postage was the established practise. A few years later official stamped envelopes were authorized, and in 1855 the prepayment of postage was made compulsory.

The legislation of 1845 and 1847, which marked the beginning of the modern era in the United States postal service, contained the first germ of

the foreign mail service. The postmaster-general was authorized to enter into negotiations with the postal administrations of other countries with a view to perfecting arrangements for the exchange of mails. The first treaty of this kind was concluded in 1847 with the Hanseatic Republic of Bremen, then an autonomous German State. Two years later a formal treaty covering mail relations was entered into with Great Britain and in the following year, 1850, Horatio King, afterwards Postmaster-General, was appointed to conduct a "foreign desk" in the Post Office Department.--

VI

UNITED STATES POSTAL HISTORY SINCE 1847

CORRESPONDENCE by mail was greatly quickened by the low postage adopted in 1845, and economies were effected in the arrangements made for the transportation of the mails under the provisions of the law classifying the railway service and authorizing the star route service. As a result the postal service was found in 1848 to be again on a self-supporting basis. This condition lasted until 1851 when the postage rate was reduced to three cents for single letters going not more than 3,000 miles. This reduction, from the previous rates of five and ten cents within the same distance, together with the increasing transportation of the mail by railways and the increasing volume of newspapers carried at less than cost, ushered in another era of postal deficits which continued practically without interruption for more than 60 years. By the same law of 1851, the Department's allowance for the franking privilege and the carrying of Government mail was increased by Congress from \$200,000 to \$700,000 annually.

This latter amount was carried in the Department's statement of postal revenue.

The further reduction of letter postage from three to two cents was agitated in 1851. This proposition was opposed by Postmaster-General Hall who, in his annual report, dated November 29, 1851, pointed out that, altho the reduction of postage in 1845 was accompanied by a great reduction in the cost of transportation, no such reduction could follow the Act of 1851. The agitation for two cent postage failed at this time, but in the following year, 1852, the rates on newspaper and printed matter were reduced.

The first mail service with California was by way of Panama and the Postmaster-General reports in 1851 "that contracts have been made with the Pacific Mail Steamship Company to increase the trips of the mail line between Panama and Oregon to semi-monthly, thus making that service conform to the semi-monthly service on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus." California entered the Union in 1850, and in the same year overland mail service to that State and Oregon was instituted.

The common use of postage stamps made obvious the desirability of enforcing the prepayment of postage. For the period from 1847 to 1851 the value of all postage stamps issued was \$274,710, a very small part of the total receipts from postage. This was due largely to the somewhat

unethical practise of advertisers in flooding the mails with circulars and letters of solicitation to be paid for or refused as the addressees might see fit. The Post Office Department advocated the compulsory prepayment of postage on the ground that the responsibility for each piece of mail rested with the sender and that the charge for its transportation should properly be exacted from him.

In 1851 the Postmaster-General made the following reference to the efficiency of the postal establishment: "Considering the large number of persons employed in the several post offices, and in the transportation of the mails; the extent and complication of the routes; the numerous and various arrangements for separating and distributing the mail matter, and the inadequate compensation allowed to a large proportion of the persons employed in these services, there is perhaps more reason to be satisfied with the general accuracy and efficiency of the service than to complain of the mistakes, irregularities and accidents which occasionally occur." The gross receipts for the Department for the year ending June 30, 1851, were \$6,786,493.22. Up to this year the postal monopoly was confined to mail matter transmitted from one post office to another, and private messengers and carriers had been permitted to deliver letters originating and intended for delivery in the same city. The law of

1851 provided that a one-cent rate of postage should apply to all local or "drop" letters.

In 1855 the Government responded to the popular demand for greater security in sending money and valuables by mail. Accordingly, the Registry Service was established on July 1 of that year. Under the original act the registration fee was fixed at five cents. This innovation was variously considered in 1855. It was intended to provide a means for tracing missing letters and for fixing the responsibility in case of loss. It was contended, however, by some, including one postmaster-general, that the registration of a letter merely identified it as being valuable without providing any additional safeguard. Whatever force there may have been in this original argument it has in modern times been nullified by the greater security and protection accorded to all classes of mail and by the improvement in the registry system itself. In this year also the compulsory prepayment of postage was finally and permanently adopted by law as an essential feature of the postal system.

The growth of population in the cities and the increasing use of the mails eventually brought about a situation in which it was impracticable to deliver all of the mail to people who called at the post offices. For some years, private carriers had been utilized in the larger cities and paid one and two cents for each letter delivered. In 1858

the first street letter-box for collecting purposes was put up in New York City, but the local collection and delivery of mail was still left to the private carriers, and the post office continued to be concerned primarily with mail-matter which had to be transmitted from one post office to another.

The following quotation from the report of Postmaster-General Holt in 1860 will indicate the provision made by the Department for the local delivery and collection of letters:

The one cent envelop is designed mainly for circulars of which many millions are annually distributed through the mails. . . . The envelop with the one cent and three cent stamps will be required in cities where there are lamp-post letter-boxes or other depositories for letters, to be conveyed by carriers to the post office, the one cent paying the carrier's fee, the other stamp paying the postage on letters to be sent out of the city by mail. This envelop will also be used by those who, when addressing their city correspondents, desire to relieve them from the payment of the carrier's fee for delivering their letters at their domicil.

In 1863 the free delivery of mail in cities was undertaken. The experiment was commenced in forty-nine cities with 449 carriers at an annual expense of \$300,000. The underlying principles on which the success of the city delivery service is based, are well stated in a report which Postmaster-General Creswell rendered to President Grant in 1873, from which the following is an excerpt:

With this report ends the first decade of the free delivery service in this country. The grounds mainly relied upon for its establishment and extension, namely, public convenience and the stimulus to correspondence, have been fully verified by experience thus far. This system, with its letter-boxes located at convenient points throughout the large postal centers, and its frequent deliveries and collections of mail-matter by carriers, has proved to be a virtual extension of the post office to every house. The transaction of the postal business of large communities by a few men selected for the purpose is justified, in an economic point of view, by the time saved to the people, the reduction of labor in post offices, the facilities and stimulus given to correspondence, the frequency, promptness, and accuracy secured in the delivery of letters, and the reduction of the number of advertised and dead letters. While these benefits are most strikingly seen in the larger cities, they are felt and appreciated in all places where the frequency of the mails, the density of the population, and the distance from the office make it inconvenient for citizens to call or send for their mail. The average of population to each carrier varies with the number of people to be served, the extent of territory, and the frequency of deliveries. The general average, however, is estimated at 3,690. The expense of the system at each office is paid out of the revenue of that office. It seems but fair, therefore, that this mode of delivery should be extended to all cities where the population, business, extent of territory, and frequency of the mails may authorize the requisite force and outlay. Just how far these elements may combine to warrant the extension of the system, it is difficult to determine; but I am of the opinion that it might be advantageously provided for cities having in their corporate limits a population of not less than ten thousand.

Many years before 1864 the establishment of a money order system had been urged for the pur-

pose of freeing the mails from "money" letters which provoked theft and robbery. The establishment of this service in the third year of the Civil War was designed for the special purpose of accommodating the soldiers who desired to send money to their homes. The original rate was ten cents for any sum less than \$20, and twenty-five cents for larger amounts up to \$30, which was the maximum fixed by the original law. New York was made the exchange office to which remittance of excess money order funds was made by postmasters and from which postmasters drew the amounts necessary to pay demands made upon them in excess of the local money order receipts. The service instituted in 1864 had 138 offices and four years later had been extended to cover more than 1,200 offices.

Montgomery Blair, who was Postmaster-General during the administration of Lincoln, pursued a liberal and constructive policy with respect to the postal service. Partly as a result of the discontinuance of mail service in the Southern States, he succeeded in greatly reducing the postal deficit, and actually produced in 1865 a surplus of nearly one million dollars. This financial achievement was due largely to the Postmaster-General's strict enforcement of the star route law of 1845 under which he greatly reduced the cost of the transportation of mail. In addition to establishing the money order system and the city delivery service,

Mr. Blair was also successful in bringing about the first International Postal Convention which met in Paris in May, 1863, and consisted of the representatives of twelve European and three American nations. The convention made a study of postal practises in the several nations represented and considered ways and means for bringing about agreements between their respective governments for standardizing international rates of postage and conditions of mailability. In this convention, the seed was sown from which later sprang the International Postal Union. In 1867, by agreement with a number of nations, the international money order service was added to the domestic system established three years before.

In 1872 an important law relating to the postal service was passed. This formally asserted the Post Office Department to be one of the executive departments of the Government, provided that mail robbery should no longer be punishable by death, and in other respects brought postal legislation into harmony with modern conditions.

Postal cards were authorized by an act approved in May 1873.

Commencing about this time (1871) the question of taking over the telegraph system, which had been relinquished in 1843, was vigorously debated. President Grant in that year urged upon Congress the serious and favorable consideration of the recommendation of Postmaster-General Creswell

that the Government proceed under the act of 1866 to purchase and acquire all the telegraph lines in the country. Practically every postmaster-general from that time to the present has advocated the union of postal and telegraph, as well as telephone, facilities. The argument of the Department has been throughout practically as stated by Postmaster-General Howe in 1882 in the following excerpt:

The business of the telegraph is inherently the same as that of the mail. It is to transmit messages from one person to another. That is the very purpose for which post offices and post roads are established. The power to establish is not limited to any particular modes of transmission. The telegraph was not known when the Constitution was adopted; neither was the railway. I can not doubt that the power to employ one is as definite as to employ the other.

To enable patrons of the mail to secure special and prompt delivery of letters, the special delivery service was established in 1885; and this branch, which in the beginning handled one million letters a year, has so grown in favor that by 1917 it was carrying more than twenty-five million letters annually.

In 1896, the experiment in rural free delivery was started with three routes in West Virginia. This expensive service has been justified on the ground of public policy and is now thoroughly entrenched in popular favor. In twenty years

the number of rural mail-carriers grew to more than 44,000, and the annual cost increased from \$50,000 to \$50,000,000.

For many years there was discussion as to the propriety of creating a postal savings system in this country, the opponents maintaining that such an institution would be detrimental to private banks. It was finally decided that such a service would not interfere with the prosecution of private banking enterprises, but, on the contrary, would aid the banking business by bringing hoarded money into circulation, and would be a benefit to a large class of citizens who are, for lack of confidence or otherwise, unwilling to avail themselves of the facilities of banks. The system went into effect January 3, 1911. Its operation has fully justified the arguments advanced in favor of its establishment. In 1917 there were more than a half million depositors with deposits aggregating more than \$80,000,000. The original restriction fixing \$500 as the maximum amount to be accepted for any one depositor has been liberalized and now any amount may be deposited at any time until the depositor's aggregate savings reach \$1,000. To provide for savings greater than this amount special bonds of the United States paying $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest annually are issued at par in convenient denominations in exchange for postal savings certificates of deposit.

On January 1, 1913, a great step in the elabora-

tion of postal facilities was taken in establishing a domestic parcel post. The justification of this establishment flows from the theory that the postal service which exists primarily for carrying written and sealed mail, should be utilized to the fullest extent possible in responding to the demands of the people for supplementary messenger-service.

A century and a quarter and forty-three postmasters-general intervene between Postmaster-General Osgood and Postmaster-General Burleson. The great strides made by the postal service in that time may be shown by a few comparisons. There were seventy-five post offices in 1790 compared with more than 55,000 in 1917. The postal revenue was, in 1790, about \$25,000, and in 1917 about \$330,000,000. The per capita expenditure for postage in 1790 was about one cent a year; the average person of 1917 expended per year considerably more than \$3.00 for postage. One hundred and eighteen officers, postmasters and employes of all kinds served Postmaster-General Osgood. Postmaster-General Burleson directed the activities of 300,000 officers, agents, and employees of the modern United States postal service. The post riders of the eighteenth century carried the mails biweekly through wilderness and forest, and across swamps, rivers, and mountains. It was a painful, slow, uncertain and insecure service, and all the post routes of that day did not exceed

2,000 miles. Modern conveyances in 1917 carried the mails over 1,500,000 miles of railroad, steamboat lines, automobile routes, and improved rural roads.

The object from the beginning has been to give the people such service as they have been willing to pay for. Large surpluses of postal revenue have not been permitted to accumulate, but have been returned to the people in the form of extensions or improvements of existing postal service. At the same time it has been recognized that the Post Office Department should be substantially self-supporting. The expenditures of the postal service from the establishment of the Government to the close of the fiscal year 1915 aggregated \$5,158,006,599 and the revenue during that time amounted to \$4,831,491,971. The accumulated postal deficit of a century and a quarter would thus amount to \$326,514,628. This large sum, however, is but $6\frac{3}{4}$ per cent of the revenue during the same time, and is far more than offset by the gratuitous service performed in connection with franked and official mail.

Every state in the Union has to-day much greater postal facilities than existed in all the thirteen states at the beginning of the United States Government. Porto Rico and Hawaii each reports postal receipts ten times as great as that which Postmaster-General Osgood handled in 1789. Even the United States Postal Agency at

Shanghai receives a revenue greater than the entire United States postal service in 1790.

The history of civilization is the history of the struggle for human rights. Basic in this struggle is free communication on equal conditions. Progress in the facilities for such communication has made the United States postal service a democratic institution.

It is governed by the people, not by any ruler of the people. It is operated by officers and employees drawn from the people, not by any official class. It exists to serve the people, not to tax the people. It serves every person in the land according to his need, and knows no personal or class distinction.

VII

THE POST OFFICES

ACCORDING to the official figures, the number of post offices in the United States is steadily decreasing. The twentieth century began with 76,688 post offices in the United States; there are now fewer than 56,000. The number has declined still more greatly in relation to the population served. In 1900, there was a post office for each thousand people in the country, but this ratio has so changed that now there is barely one post office for each two thousand of population. From the beginning of our Government to the time of the Civil War, the extension of postal service was marked by a rapid increase in the number of post offices. At the outbreak of the war in 1861, there were 28,000 post offices. More than 8,000 of these were in the seceding states. After 1865, the offices in the states which had been out of the control of the Federal Government were gradually re-established, and by 1871 the number of post offices had reached 30,000. Subsequently, the establishment of post offices proceeded with great rapidity until the high-water mark was reached in 1901.

In that year there were 76,945 independent postmasters reporting directly to the Post Office Department at Washington. Since that time, every year has shown a marked reduction in the total number of independent post offices.

This trend in postal affairs is, of course, no indication of any diminution in the amount or degree of postal service accorded to the people, and the practise, which grew up in earlier years, of measuring postal development and growth by the increase in the number of post offices must be discarded.

The anomaly of increasing service and decreasing independent offices for performing the service finds explanation in the fact that a new era of postal service has dawned. The agricultural population no longer clusters about outlying posts as it did a century ago; nor is it so sparsely distributed as it was fifty years ago. Vast areas of the country are evenly settled by farmers and the improved rural roads have become post routes along which rural mail carriers deliver and collect mail. There are 42,000 of these traveling postmasters, and they have superseded thousands of the small post offices. These carriers are under the direction of the postmaster who supplies them with mail at initial points and, as they do not report directly to the Department, they are not represented in the published number of post offices. Even a small post office may thus be several

post offices in one, if it happens to be the starting point for several of these traveling postmasters.

Rural mail service was first commenced in this country in 1896 and its rapid extension has been the principal cause for the discontinuance of small post offices. There are other reasons, however, for the increasing size and importance of individual post offices and the decline in the total number. The development of cities has had the effect of centralizing in these centers of population the greater part of the postal affairs of the country. At the head of the list of big post offices there are fifty serving between one-fourth and one-third of the entire population of the country, selling more than one-half of the postage, and handling a large proportion of the mail of the country. These are super-post offices—huge ganglia in the postal network. Each of them has a large number of subsidiaries which, like the rural carriers, do not appear in the statistics of the number of post offices. There are about 7,000 branch post offices and postal stations in the country, nearly all of which are attached to these fifty super-post offices. Also, each of the super-post offices and many of their stations and branches have attached to them large forces of city carriers. Of the 34,000 men engaged in the city delivery, almost 20,000 are employed at the fifty largest offices. These carriers, like the rural carriers, are essentially traveling post-

masters, and both deliver mail to the patrons and collect mail from the collection boxes.

It will be seen, therefore, that the postal service reaches the people by 6,700 branch post offices and postal stations, 42,000 rural carriers, and 34,000 city carriers, as well as by about 56,000 independent post offices. If the "traveling" postmasters and branch offices are included, as they may properly be, it will be seen that the ratio of one post office to every one thousand people, which was nearly approached just before the Civil War and again attained in 1890 and maintained until 1900, is now greatly surpassed.

From the administrative point of view the decline in the number of independent post offices is entirely satisfactory. It is much easier to administer a large postal district, embracing many dependent branches and hundreds or even thousands of employees than it is to administer a large number of small post offices each independent and submitting its requisitions, reports and accounts directly to Washington, but in the aggregate transacting less business than one large postal district attached to a super-post office. As early as the incumbency of Postmaster-General Wanamaker, it was urged that the entire country be divided into postal districts and that the administration of the service by independent offices be abandoned. In recent years, notably under Post-

master-General Burleson, the Department has sought freedom from legislative restriction in consummating the consolidation of post offices, when such action would be in the interest of the service.

Under the law post offices are divided into four classes according to the gross postal receipts. Post offices having receipts less than \$1,900 annually are designated as fourth class, those having less than \$8,000 annually are third class, those having less than \$40,000 annually are second class and all those having \$40,000 or more are first class. The first, second, and third classes are known as the presidential grade for the reason that postmasters at these offices are appointed for terms of four years by the President "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate."

On March 31, 1917, President Wilson, by Executive Order, directed that thereafter an efficiency test of applicants for these positions should be conducted by the Civil Service Commission to assist in determining the one best qualified for nomination to the Senate. Postmasters at the offices of the fourth class are appointed for indefinite terms under procedure prescribed by the Civil Service Commission.

The great development of the post office service is reflected in the rapid increase in the number of post offices of the first, second, and third classes.

the extension of rural mail service. In 1899, there were only 4,400 Presidential post offices; in 1917, there were about 10,000. The annual revenue of the post office at New York increased from \$9,000,000 in 1899 to more than \$30,000,000 in 1917, or more than the entire revenue of all the United States post offices as late as 1879. Since 1850 the annual revenue of the postal service has practically doubled every ten years and this ratio of increase shows no tendency to fall off, altho the income of the service is now more than a million dollars for every working day in the year.

It should be noted that every year many fourth-class post offices are established but that the total number is reduced by the advancement of large fourth-class offices to the presidential grade and by the discontinuance of small fourth-class post offices on the extension of the rural free delivery service.

In the establishment and discontinuance of post offices, the reasons which impel the Department to take action are always related to the improvement of the service to the people. In most instances, the extension of rural mail service affords better postal facilities than the small post office, but no post office of this kind is discontinued if there is a real need for its existence, and the Department is always willing to establish a new fourth-class office if there is a genuine demand and if reasonable requirements are met by the

community and by the person selected as postmaster. To secure the establishment of a rural route or a post office, it is necessary merely to bring the matter to the attention of the Department in a responsible way, either by a petition of those interested or through a member of Congress or other person known to the Department, and an investigation on the ground will be made by a post office inspector. Every opportunity should be given the inspector to learn the sentiment of the community and all the facts in connection with the need for the service desired as it is his duty to render a full and impartial report. If it is needed, the post office or rural route will be established and maintained provided this can be done within the funds made available to the Department by Congress.

It sometimes happens that the name of a post office is not the same as that of the community in which it is located, or the name of the railroad station. This is because those who have decided on the town name have failed to consult the Post Office Department. Years ago it was the practise of the Department to acquiesce in whatever name the residents might select. This naturally led to a condition in which many post offices in the country, and even in the same state, were known by the same name. After a town has continued under a name for a number of years sentimental reasons make it very difficult to have the name

changed and, also, any change in the name of the town interferes with the established trade relations of the business men.

There are no longer post offices of the same name in the same state, but in different states there is a great deal of duplication among the post offices. The buffalo, which is feared to be nearing extinction, is perpetuated in the name of 23 post offices in different states. Every man prominent in the public eye at any time in the history of the country has been rewarded by having several post offices named after him. There are 28 Washingtons, 27 Madisons, 26 Clevelands, 25 Monroes, 23 Lincolns, 22 Jacksons, 17 Grants, 17 Taylors, Adams and Jeffersons; the Harrisons and Roosevelts number 16 each. The Union is perpetuated in the name of 25 post offices. Independence is emphasized by post office names in 20 states. Faith, Hope, and Charity are post office names each of which has been used more than once. This results in confusion to the mail service and in delay in the handling of mail. The Department, consequently, has adopted the rule of refusing to approve any new name for a post office which is the same as the name of any other post office in the United States. It is impossible, of course, to overcome the duplication in the names that already exist, and this will stand for many years as a relic of the unfortunate lack of cooperation which, as a nation, we are now out-

growing, between communities and the Federal Government.

The dual nature of the post office should be recognized. The post office is the agency of the National Government for the performance of the national postal service, and it is also a civic institution belonging in a sense to the community in which it is located. There are two sides to every mail transaction. Every letter mailed at one post office, unless it is a local letter, must be delivered at some other post office, and every letter delivered at one post office was mailed and despatched at some other post office. Each and every post office depends to some extent on every mile of transportation lines in the country, because it is receiving and sending letters and other mail which must travel over all of these lines.

It is futile to speak of any one post office as making a "net profit." The post office that sells the postage stamp is not necessarily the one that performs the bulk of the service. The post offices in New York and Chicago, for example, turn in far more revenue than is expended in those cities in connection with the postal service, but the great sale of stamps in those cities depends on the maintenance throughout the country of the railway mail-service, on the so-called "unprofitable" rural service, on the thousands of miles of star routes in Alaska, on the ocean mail-service,

and all the necessary and auxiliary branches of the service. A small fourth-class post office, on the other hand, may have a revenue so small that it must all be turned over to the postmaster as his compensation. The transportation of mail to that place may seem to be a dead loss to the Government, but as a matter of fact it is paid for in Chicago, New York, and all large post offices whose patrons are perhaps more interested in sending mail to the small fourth-class post office than the patrons of that post office are in receiving it. For example, two-thirds of the postage affixed to parcel-post matter is paid at the fifty large post offices in the country, but these large post offices receive only 17 per cent of that matter, while the small post offices receive two-thirds of the parcels, for handling which they are given no credit in postal accounts.

The federal character of a post office is of greater importance than its civic character. Each post office depends on its relation to all other post offices and not on the handling of local mail or on any other local considerations. In the beginning the handling of local mail was not even regarded as a postal function, and the government's monopoly with respect to local mail was not asserted until 1851. Local mail has become important in the large cities, but, as we have seen, the post offices at such places are aggregations of post offices and, hence, the local mail within a

large city is the same in principle as mail passing between several small post offices.

Every citizen should regard the post office primarily as a branch of the Federal Government and understand the importance to the community of giving the Post Office Department free hand in administering the local post office to the best advantage of the whole service. It is most unenlightened and unpatriotic for any citizen of a community to endeavor to influence the location of a post office with a view to enhancing the value of real estate and without regard to the most effective handling of the mail. It is short-sighted for the people in any locality to strive to secure the expenditure of Government money in the unnecessary construction or elaborate ornamentation of Federal buildings for post offices, when this money might be spent to better advantage, in the interest not only of the whole country but also the community concerned, in the extension and improvement of mail facilities. There have been many instances in the administration of the post office service in which it happened that the only persons interested in the leasing of quarters for the post office were the rival owners of buildings, each with his group of supporters, and each striving to make the public need his private gain. Another unfortunate view of the local post office is that it is an aggregation of sinecures to be jealously retained for local pensioners.

The view regarding the post office, and the one which must become prevalent in this country before the post office can fulfil its whole mission, is that the local service can not be improved at the expense of the whole service; that expense and efficiency alone should be considered in such matters as the location of the post office building, the construction of a Federal building and the making of contracts. With reference to the selection of a postmaster and the personnel of the post office, it must become clear to all that whatever may be the mode of selecting the postmaster, no man should be so blind as to advocate for his own town or city an incompetent candidate, for any reason whatever. Such a candidate, if selected, will be the man on whom the community must depend for the handling of its mail and for other service vitally important to business and society. Hence, the value and importance to the service and the public is made clear of the Executive Order of March 31, 1917, providing efficiency tests for candidates for presidential postmasterships.

It is desirable that every position in the post office, from postmaster down, be filled at the will of the Department, by appointment, transfer or promotion from within the post office or through some other post office. Such a system of interchangeable personnel should be welcomed as it brings new ideas and new personalities to the post office and to the community, and opens a field of

200,000 positions throughout the nation to ambitious young men and women. From the financial view-point it should be recognized that the many benefits of the service performed by the post office so far exceed any revenue that may be derived from the community that the desire for the unnecessary expenditure of Government money should never arise. Each citizen should take the broad view that he is personally interested in the establishment of remote post offices, in the maintenance of distant transportation routes and in all the postal facilities that the Government maintains at great cost in order that every person in every community in the United States may communicate cheaply and quickly with any other person in the United States or in the world.

In the new era upon which the post office has entered the identity of the local post office has become obscure. In the future, service is to be rendered to each community, to each section of every community, and to each individual, according to the most effective and economical method. Already it is true that thousands do not see their post office from one year to another but they feel its influence more than ever, for the post office is extending its facilities gradually to the door of every person in the land.

VIII

THE NETWORK OF POST ROADS

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that in 1789 such a thing as a road, as we understand the term to-day, was unknown in America. Then, the roads were mere paths, unimproved, and suited only for travelers on foot or on horseback. One of the earliest and most urgent problems of the new Federal Government was the creation of means for communication and transportation. With the population of the thirteen states extending into the vast inland territory, which the national safety required should be held against all European nations, it was imperative that the outlying settlements should be kept in touch with the Atlantic seaboard. If the Union was to be preserved, and the newly acquired western territory retained in the possession of the United States, it was realized that the mails must follow closely behind the pioneer.

The constitutional provision, that Congress shall have power "to establish post offices and post roads," was the subject of much debate in the first few years of our national existence.

Jefferson questioned whether the right "to establish post roads" meant to "make the roads" or only to "select from those already made those on which there shall be a post." The broad construction of the term prevailed and Congress early entered upon a course of road-building throughout the country, primarily for the purpose of extending mail facilities.

In 1792, a post road was established between Richmond, Va., and Danville, Ky., and money of the Federal Government was used to put this route into condition suitable for the transportation of the mail. From that time on, the improvement of roads was earnestly and effectively aided both by the State and National Governments. In 1806 the celebrated Cumberland Pike was commenced and at the outbreak of the second war with England in 1812, practically every road west of the Alleghanies had been built by the Federal Government as a post road for the transportation of the mails.

In this way the network of the American post-roads began. A motion pictograph on a map of the United States would illustrate the wonderful process of extension and amalgamation by which the continent has been absorbed. The network of post roads has been developed in two ways namely, where necessary, Congress has built the road and even operated conveyances upon it; and, where private enterprise has blazed the way, the

achievement has been recognized and the new line of communication declared to be a post road.

In 1813 the steamboat lines were recognized as post roads. A great system of canals was built and fostered by Congress before the advent of the railway. The first railroad also was built and maintained by the Government and the crude single track was made available for the use of coaches drawn either by horses or locomotives. In later years federal aid in the construction of post roads took the form of land grants to the transcontinental and other railway lines.

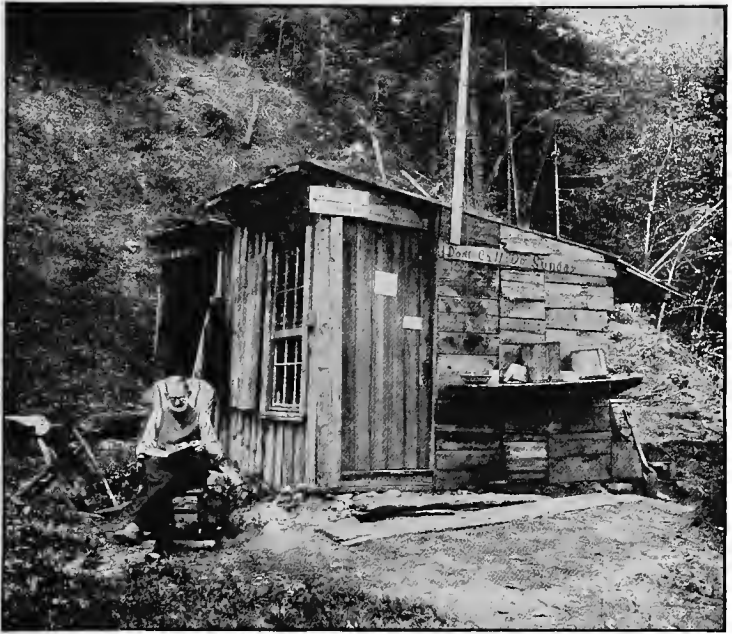
Under the postal power granted by the Constitution, Congress has virtually achieved the accomplishment which it set about at the beginning of the last century. There are now more than 1,800,000 miles of post roads in the United States. Regular mails in the custody of sworn employees of the postal service travel more than one billion miles every year over those roads. Since 1884 it has been unnecessary for Congress to specifically designate any road or way as a post road. All railroads, all the waters of the United States, all canals, all public roads and highways, and all mail-carrier routes are recognized as established post roads of the United States. There are now in the United States 234,000 miles of railroad; 1,092,000 miles of rural mail routes; 250,000 miles of city carrier routes; 139,000 miles of star routes; 32,000 miles of steam-

boat routes, and several thousand miles of miscellaneous routes. In Alaska there are already more than 4,500 miles of star routes.

With the network of mail routes in the United States now so fully developed, the significance of the post road is not so apparent as it was when the problem of postal communication confronted the founders of the Government. Communication is now easy and frequent, and it is forgotten that every road and means of travel and communication exists primarily for the postal service. This truth, however, is still illustrated in the few remaining undeveloped sections of the country where the Government, at great expense, establishes and maintains regular mail service.

Every post office is supplied with mail by one or more post roads, of which there are to-day many kinds. Every method of conveying the mail that has been developed in the past, even the most primitive, is still employed; and to these has been added every advanced method that human ingenuity and invention has produced. Stages, sulkies, and riders on horseback were the principal means of mail transportation when Andrew Jackson was President, and these selfsame conveyances are still used on post roads in the isolated and out-of-the-way parts of modern America.

At the present time, however, the mails depend most largely on the railroad. Practically all mail,



WIDE RANGE OF POST OFFICE BUILDINGS



A PRIMITIVE MAIL MESSENGER



STAGE COACH ON A STAR ROUTE



A FAST MAIL TRAIN

except local mail, is carried some part of its journey on a railroad. These transportation facilities are provided by private companies which own and operate the railways.

In the early days of railroad development, much difficulty was experienced by the postmasters-general in securing satisfactory contracts with the companies and the renewals of these contracts were a matter of much vexation to the Department. All railroads are now post roads and no railroad can refuse to carry the mails, formal contracts are no longer necessary and the people have protected themselves by legislation against the imposition of extortionate charges by the railway companies for carrying the mail.

The compensation to which each road is entitled for carrying the mail has been until recently determined by weighing all the mail on each railroad route during a period of thirty days, once every four years. For the purpose of these quadrennial weighings the country was divided into four sections so that the work involved was distributed throughout the four years. This weight basis of payment has been retained for mail that is carried in closed pouches in the baggage-cars of trains, but practically all other service performed by the railroads for the Post Office Department is paid for now on the basis of car-space used by the railway post offices.

Altho the railroad is the principal means now

employed for transporting the mails, the old stage-coach and horseback lines have their modern successors in the star routes. As previously stated, the term "star route" finds its origin in the Act of March 3, 1845, which provided that contracts for carrying the mails on routes other than steamboat and railroad lines should be let to the lowest responsible bidder guaranteeing satisfactory performance and due celerity and security. The bids, which were considered as offering such guarantee were indicated by three stars to symbolize "celerity," "certainty" and "security." In this way the routes came to be known as "star routes." Such routes are intended to serve small post offices located off the lines of railroad travel, as well as those families who live between the post offices, provided they erect boxes for receiving and sending their mail. The longest star route in any state is the one from Helper to Vernal, Utah, 116 miles, which is maintained at an annual cost of more than \$38,000. The shortest star route is from Keiser to Natalie, Pennsylvania, which is a little more than one-half mile in length. The longest star route in Alaska is from Barrow overland to Kotzebue, 650 miles. A route from Delphi to Bloomville, New York, 8 miles and back 12 times a week, was let for four years beginning July 1, 1917, at the rate of one cent per annum. The contractors in this case evidently regarded the advantage to be derived from carrying the mail

as sufficient compensation for the work. Excluding the service in Alaska there are about 11,000 star routes in operation with a total length of slightly less than 140,000 miles. The average cost for maintaining these routes per mile is 54 cents a year or at the rate of slightly more than 10 cents per annum for each mile traveled. The contracts for star route service are made quadrennially, following the general weighing of the mails on all transportation lines which takes place each year in one of the four mail-contract sections of the country.

The lines of the rural mail-service, together with the star routes, constitute a network of post roads which are rapidly supplementing the rail and water network, so that the entire face of the country is becoming one intricate fabric of postal service. Half of the country roads in the United States are traveled by rural or star route carriers, and these carriers serve about 80 per cent of the entire rural population.

The routes of city carriers, aggregating approximately 250,000 miles, constitute a special class of post roads. The city carrier, like the rural carrier, is a traveling postmaster, and the law has made the route along which the city carrier travels a post road. The legislation applicable to mail service performed on any post road is applicable to the service performed by the city carrier.

Accurate maps are necessary for the administration of the postal service, and the making and distribution of post-route maps by the Post Office Department has become a public industry of considerable proportions. Nearly 50,000 maps are printed annually. A valuable type of map is produced in connection with the extension of the rural service. These maps are made to a scale of one inch to the mile and show by states and counties all public roads and rural routes. Negative prints of these maps are sold to the public at thirty-five cents each by the Third Assistant Postmaster General.

IX

THE POST-OFFICE LOBBY

WHEREVER the flag flies over a Federal post office, or wherever the mere sign "Post Office" is seen, every one knows that there the door of the United States Postal Service stands open to the public. Inside is a room or corridor for the free use and convenience of the people. This is the post-office lobby, and no Government office or place so thoroughly belongs to the people without distinction or reservation. The lobby is the principal point at which the postal service touches the people, and for that reason is deserving of particular attention.

All post-office lobbies are very much alike. The small fourth-class post office, which sometimes shares its lobby space with the general merchandise business of the postmaster, offers essentially the same service as the marble and granite corridor of the post office at the National Capital. In the lobby of the small post office all the postal business may be transacted at one window and the entire outfit for handling the mail may be a few pigeonholes on a single-section case. Neverthe-

less, practically everything is done for the public in this lobby that is done in the lobby of the largest post office in the land, where each kind of postal transaction with the public is carried on at a separate window or section of the lobby. Both the large and the small lobby represent the same national system of post offices and post roads.

The village post office may appear mean and crude, but the National Government is responsible for the service performed there in the same way that it is responsible for the service performed in the largest post office at New York. The service done in the lobby for each piece of mail is insignificant compared with the service performed on the remainder of the journey. The letter mailed at the village post office finds its way quickly into the wonderfully efficient railway mail-service and travels across the country and is delivered with the utmost dispatch possible. A letter mailed in the lobby of the Chicago post office may suffer more vicissitudes and setbacks than a letter mailed in some small town. This will illustrate the essential equality of all post-office patrons and the uniformity of the service provided for every community.

Here, in the post-office lobby, is available every kind of postal service that is anywhere to be had. Stamps of every denomination may be purchased, and, with these little passports, letters may be sent

traveling to the ends of the earth. In the post-office lobby, the citizen stands in the ante-chamber of his friend a thousand miles away. It will be difficult, perhaps impossible, for this citizen to go to his friend, but for two cents he may send him a letter, and in a few days receive his reply. From the lobby of every post office, lines of communication radiate to every person in the community, in the state, in the nation, and almost throughout the world.

The greatest tribute paid to the United States Post Office is the confidence with which our citizens enter its lobbies and deposit mail. Few people give much attention to the manner in which the postal service is performed, but in mailing letters they seem to have absolute faith that somehow, by whatever agency or at whatever expense may be necessary, the post office will safeguard the letter, carry it to its destination speedily and deliver it to the person for whom it is intended. This confidence is not misplaced, for the percentage of lost and mishandled pieces of mail, when compared with the vast volume of the national mail safely delivered, is infinitesimal. Nevertheless, too much should not be taken for granted, and each person should learn how to use the post office to best advantage, and how to cooperate with the post office to the end of securing better service for all.

Many services are performed in the lobby. The

facilities of the postal system are organized to safeguard and expedite all the mail entrusted to the post office for dispatch and delivery. The handling of ordinary mail is the main business of the postal service. Special facilities, however, are provided for the extraordinary protection of registered mail, and the extraordinary expedition of "Special Delivery" mail. These facilities are to be commanded in every post-office lobby by the prepayment of special postage and by giving the necessary directions. Postal cards and private mailing cards, as well as letters, may be mailed in the "drops" provided in the lobby. Parcel-post packages may be presented for mailing, and the postmaster or his clerk will give expert advice about the proper method of packing, wrapping, and addressing, and will weigh the parcel and rate-up the necessary postage. The publisher of the local newspaper comes to the post-office lobby to make out the necessary forms of application in order that he may secure the second-class mail privilege, and here he makes deposits of money to cover the postage at the second-class rate on the mailings of his publication.

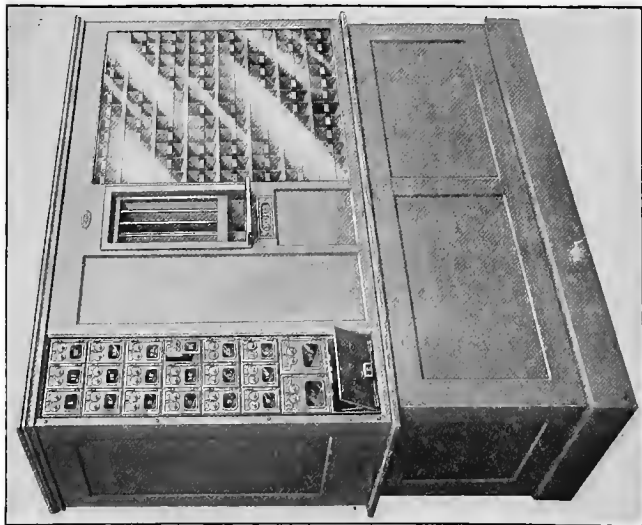
In the lobby of the post office, mail from everywhere is assembled for delivery. The box holder comes to draw his accumulation of letters and cards, papers and parcels. If the box is too small for all his mail, he finds a bit of paste-board in it which instructs him to present it at



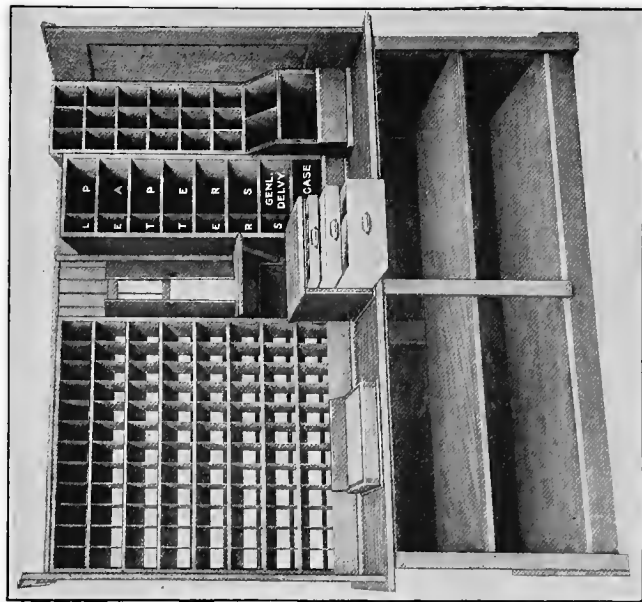
A POST OFFICE LOBBY



LOBBY WINDOWS FROM WORKROOM, SHOWING COMPACT FILES FOR SUPPLIES



Exterior



Interior

EQUIPMENT FOR A FOURTH-CLASS POST OFFICE

the window and when he does so he receives in return the remainder of his mail. A class of patrons who are especially dependent upon the lobby are the travelers, those who have no fixed abode in the community. Mail for such patrons is especially arranged in the General Delivery section, and is to be had on call at the post-office lobby. Any one who is about to change his domicile to another community, or who has recently arrived in the community, may call at the lobby to make the necessary request for the forwarding of his mail.

The principal services that the post office performs for the people have been described, and they may all be had at the lobby of any post office. In addition, this is the place to make inquiries regarding mail-matter, to ask that a letter which has been mailed be withdrawn and not delivered to the addressee, to make suggestions or to lodge complaints. Some information, however, can not be given, such as the addresses of other post-office patrons, or any information about the mail they receive or send.

To the transactions that may be carried out in the lobby, there must be added the buying and cashing of money-orders and postal-savings certificates, the making of requests for the repayment of money-orders which are not sent or which have been destroyed, and of arrangements for the disposition of postal-savings accounts of deceased

depositors. In practically all post offices these money-order and postal-savings facilities are available for the convenience of the patrons.

Waiting for the mail "to be put up" is almost a social function in many small communities. Decorum must be preserved and the postmaster has entire authority to eject disorderly or objectionable persons and, if necessary, to clear the lobby. In the exercise of this authority he may call in the peace officers of the local community.

On the wall of the lobby many notices are seen. This space is used by the Post Office Department for the posting of information for the public. The postmaster announces here changes in the time for closing mails, and changes in the hours of service at the post office. The privilege of advertising in the post-office lobby is much sought by public and private institutions. The rule is to permit no private business advertising nor any notice of any kind that might be objectionable to any patron. All branches of the Federal and State Governments are permitted to use the lobby and walls on obtaining permission from the Post Office Department, and in the discretion of the postmaster. Municipal authorities, churches, and charitable institutions may be permitted to post their notices provided no partiality is shown.

A special effort is made by the Post Office Department to enforce uniform conditions of cleanliness, light, and ventilation in all lobbies, and these

elements are carefully considered before approving plans for new federal buildings for post offices. In quarters leased by the Department the lessor is required to provide a satisfactory lobby and keep it in good condition. The ideal in arranging post-office lobbies is to have everything provided for the convenience of the post-office patrons. The postmaster and the clerks are available there to give expert advice and assistance in the preparation of mail and in the use of all the postal facilities. At suitable places in the lobby, desks are provided on which pens and ink are furnished. It is desirable also that the arrangement of the building be such that the operations in the workroom of the post office may be seen from the lobby. The postmaster and the postal employees should keep constantly in mind the aspect which the post office and its work presents to the patrons. It is important that sympathetic and friendly relations be maintained between the personal representatives of the post-office service and the patrons; and such relations will be promoted by giving the patrons the fullest opportunity to understand what is done in the post office.

The undue ornamentation of post-office lobbies is not desirable as this constitutes an unnecessary expenditure of public funds and is too frequently accompanied by a lack of adequate consideration of the real needs of the service and of the patrons.

The lobby of the post office at Washington, D. C., is a striking example. Here the architectural interest was so strong that it has been deemed improper to equip this lobby with conspicuous signs for the guidance of the patrons. The correct ideal for a post-office lobby is that it should not be ornate, but serviceable; that the size should be only sufficient to accommodate the number of patrons that may reasonably be expected to use the postal facilities at that point; that the windows and sections devoted to the different kinds of service should be arranged as compactly and as logically as possible for the convenience of the patrons. The lobby is the place of business and of delivery for the post office, and it should be constructed to carry out this function in the most effective manner possible. The amount of space needed should be used, but the working force should not be deprived of room needed for the best handling of the mail, in order that the lobby may present an ostentatious appearance.

X

THE WORKINGS OF A POST OFFICE

EVERY post office, large or small, is essentially the same. It is the local agency of the postal service, and the postal service must provide for every citizen, as far as possible, the same facilities for communication. Every piece of mail collected or received at a post office must be delivered to some one in the same community or dispatched by a transportation line to another post office; every piece of mail received at a post office from a transportation line must be delivered to some one within the community or forwarded to another post office. To do these things safely and quickly is the prime function of every post office.

At the small post office one man performs all the postal duties, while at the large post office the great volume of mail to be handled necessitates the employment of hundreds or thousands of men. The larger the post office the finer is the division of labor and at the largest post offices each step in the postal operations is taken by a different and specialized worker. Essentially, the same operations are performed at the smallest post

office, but everything there is on a smaller scale. The duty of the postmaster at New York City is the same as that of the postmaster at the smallest post office in the land; it is, to provide the means whereby every person in the community may communicate with every other person in the United States as quickly and as safely as possible.

A clear conception of the working of a post office will be more readily formed by restricting the discussion here to the primary postal function—the handling of ordinary mail. The registry and special delivery services and the postal savings and money-order features are treated elsewhere.

The handling of ordinary mail involves (1) the selling of postage, (2) the accepting of matter offered for mailing, (3) the dispatching of mail, and (4) the delivering of mail.

The selling of postage at any post office requires that the postmaster shall know the demands in the community for the various denominations and kinds of stamped paper. He must make requisitions on the Post Office Department from time to time for adequate supplies. These supplies, when received, must be carefully checked and safeguarded. At the larger post offices stamp-clerks are designated by the postmasters to make the sales direct to the public. Each of these clerks is given a credit of from \$100 to \$10,000, under which he is entitled to draw stamp-stocks for use at the windows.

Stamp-clerks are protected in their responsibility for the safe-keeping of the stocks issued to them by having their desks and windows enclosed by substantial wire screens and by being furnished with locked cabinets in which to keep their supplies. Their work demands precision and care. They must be prepared at any moment to account for the stock that has been issued to them. They must always have on hand cash or stamped paper equivalent to the stock charged to them. They are not permitted to accept checks or other evidences of personal indebtedness, as the protection of the postal revenues, which must be collected in small sums from every community in the entire country, requires that the transactions be maintained strictly on a cash basis.

In addition to their direct financial responsibility in the selling of postage, stamp-clerks must also be expert in their knowledge as to the acceptability of matter offered for mailing. They must be familiar with the laws, rules, and regulations governing rates of postage, the classification of mail, the form and manner in which matter must be prepared for mailing, and innumerable other details affecting both domestic and foreign mail. Ordinarily it is to the stamp-clerks that inquiries of this kind are addrest by the public, and the information given out must be accurate.

The accepting of matter offered for mailing is done in no specially prescribed manner. As has

been indicated a portion of the responsibility rests upon the stamp-clerks. It is likewise true that practically all other employees engaged in the handling of mail participate in the performance of this function.

In the early days of the postal service, before the advent of the postage-stamp, the mailing of a letter was a transaction requiring the joint personal attention of the sender and of the postmaster, or their representatives. The letter was offered by the patron, examined by the postmaster or his clerk, the amount of postage announced according to the number of sheets and the distance to be carried. The postage was paid in cash by the patron, or the request was made that it be transmitted "collect," and the postmaster or clerk marked the letter accordingly.

The adoption of postage-stamps and uniform postage-rates, and the common use of postal facilities, have created a condition under which, except in rare instances, the mailing of a letter or card is no longer a formal transaction. Postage-rates are known generally and every one is expected to conform to them; collection boxes are placed on the streets of cities and "drops" are provided in post-office lobbies to facilitate the mailing of letters and cards without requiring the immediate personal attendance of any one to receive them. Every person is in honor bound to affix sufficient postage to everything that he drops in a letter-

box or deposits in a letter-drop at the post office. So far as letters and cards are concerned, examination to determine the correctness of the postage and the mailability of the matter is rarely made until the matter reaches the distribution clerks. The hand of the distributor is extremely sensitive to letters weighing more than one ounce, and he will discover and withdraw every letter that does not bear sufficient postage. If the letter bears no postage at all, it will be returned to the sender provided his name and address is on the envelope; otherwise, request is made on the addressee to furnish the required postage before the letter is dispatched. Overweight letters that are prepaid with the single rate of postage are forwarded to their destination, but the amount due is collected from the addressee before delivery.

Parcel-post mail is subject to postage according to weight and distance. To enable the postmaster to determine whether proper postage is paid on each parcel and that it is otherwise acceptable for mailing, the regulations require that this class of mail shall be presented for mailing at the post office or at a postal station. It is mandatory that parcels bear the return address of senders; also that they be packed and wrapped so that the contents will not be spoiled or damaged in transit or will not injure or damage other mail.

The third phase of the work of handling mail is to dispatch it to its destination. The first step

is to cancel the postage-stamps so that they can not be used again, and to postmark each piece of mail so that it will show the name of the post office at which it was mailed. The postmark used on letters and cards shows also the date of mailing and the hour of dispatch. As a check on the correctness and legibility of the postmarking, the postal regulations require the postmaster to make an impression of the postmark on an office record every time any change is made in the die. This record is examined by post office inspectors from time to time to insure strict adherence to the requirement that the hours of dispatch be shown on every letter and card.

Matter bearing uncanceled postage-stamps is received at post offices in a number of different ways. It may be deposited one or more pieces at a time through the "drops" in the post-office lobby or, if the quantity to be mailed by a single patron is large, it may be passed directly through one of the windows in the "screen" which separates the lobby from the workroom, or delivered at the wagon-platform. At post offices having city delivery-service the greater proportion of the mail is collected from street boxes. This collection service is performed by letter-carriers, who may be engaged either in combination delivery and collection work or exclusive collection work. The class of carriers first mentioned gather the accumulations of mail from the boxes on their routes

as they deliver mail from house to house, depositing the collections into the post office when they return from their trips. The carriers assigned to exclusive collection work, who may be either on foot or ~~equipped with bicycles, automobiles, or horse-drawn vehicles,~~ make frequent collections from the street boxes, depositing accumulations of mail into the post office at regular intervals, in accordance with fixed schedules. These schedules are always arranged so as to afford the closest possible connection with outgoing trains or subsequent local deliveries. The organization and management of the collection service is a phase of post office work in which the officers of the service are, and must be, constantly striving for perfection. It is a most important factor in efficient postal service.

Altho mail is collected from street boxes and is deposited in the post office "drops" continuously throughout the day, it is not until the late afternoon hours that the vast quantities are received. The work of the average business concern is organized so that the dispatching of the mail is the last thing to be done each day. As a consequence millions of pieces of mail are dumped into post offices between the hours of 4 and 8 P. M. every day. This mail must be postmarked, sorted, and dispatched within the briefest possible time so that outgoing mail may be put on trains that will take it to destination in time for the first possible

delivery and so that local mail may be prepared for the next morning's delivery.

Business men, as a rule, are familiar with the schedules of trains and carrier deliveries, and they are prompt in complaining if more than the minimum amount of time has been consumed in the transmission of mail-matter. These same business men, however, do not, as a rule, understand that the accurate and speedy distribution of mail demands a high order of skill, which can be acquired only as the result of intensive study and considerable training. Nor are they cognizant of the fact that their practise of putting off until the late afternoon the dispatching of their mail creates a condition under which the vastly greater proportion of the most important work of the post office must be performed at night. To improve this condition the Post Office Department, in recent years, has directed an energetic campaign of publicity to make the facts known to business men, and to induce them to deposit their mail as frequently during the day as may be practicable. This suggestion has been favorably received by boards of trade and other civic organizations, and appreciable response has been made by business men who understand that earlier and more frequent deposits of mail constitute effectual cooperation and make for better postal service. However, in the ordinary course of business there is a great deal of mail that can not be completed

and signed until near the close of the day, so that in spite of every effort to deposit mail in the post office earlier in the day, the evening will doubtless continue to be the period during which the greater proportion of the mail must be distributed and dispatched in post offices.

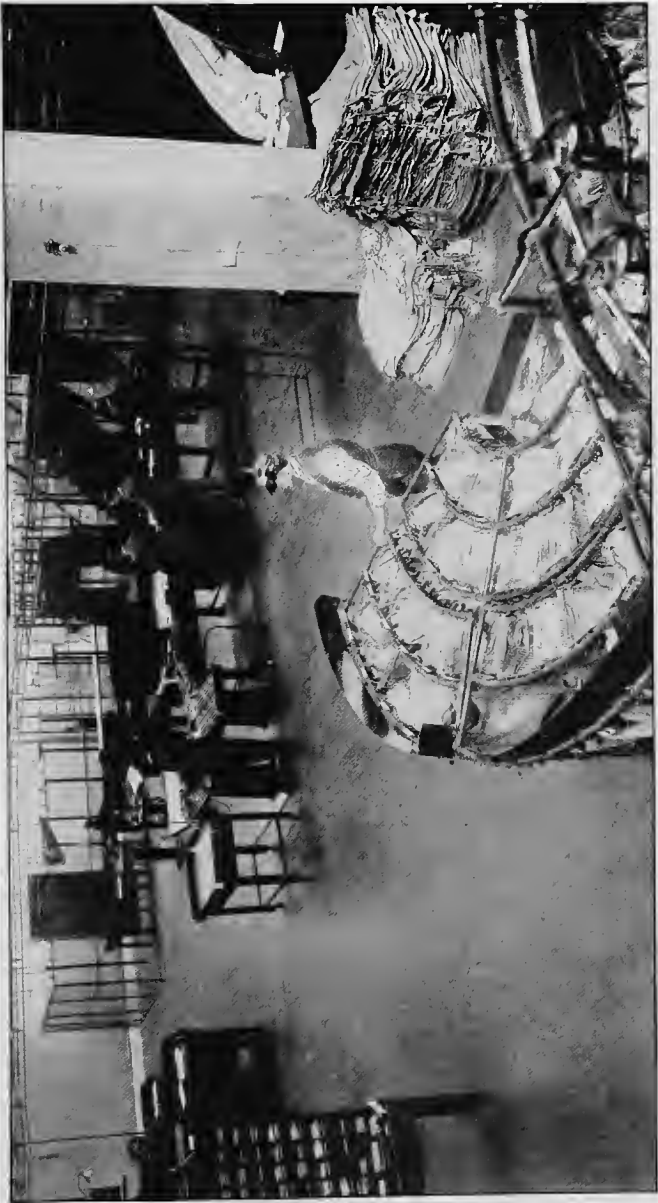
Of all matter received at post offices, that which is accorded promptest treatment is the mail deposited in the "drops." It is recognized that mail which patrons go to the trouble of bringing to the post office is probably of greater urgency than the mail which is deposited in street boxes. Letters deposited in the drops are sure of dispatch by the first train offering, altho it is possible that part of the mail in a sack brought in at the same moment by a collector might fail to connect with the same dispatch.

Mail as it is received by the post office is commonly known as "raw" mail. Four principal divisions of this mail are recognized: *First*, letters and cards; *Second*, letter-sized circulars; *Third*, papers, including single newspapers, newspapers in bundles, large circulars, calendars, and small parcels; and *Fourth*, heavy and bulky parcels.

In the process of distribution and dispatch, the several divisions of mail are handled separately. The methods of handling differ only as may be necessary on account of peculiarities of shape and size, and the process may therefore best be

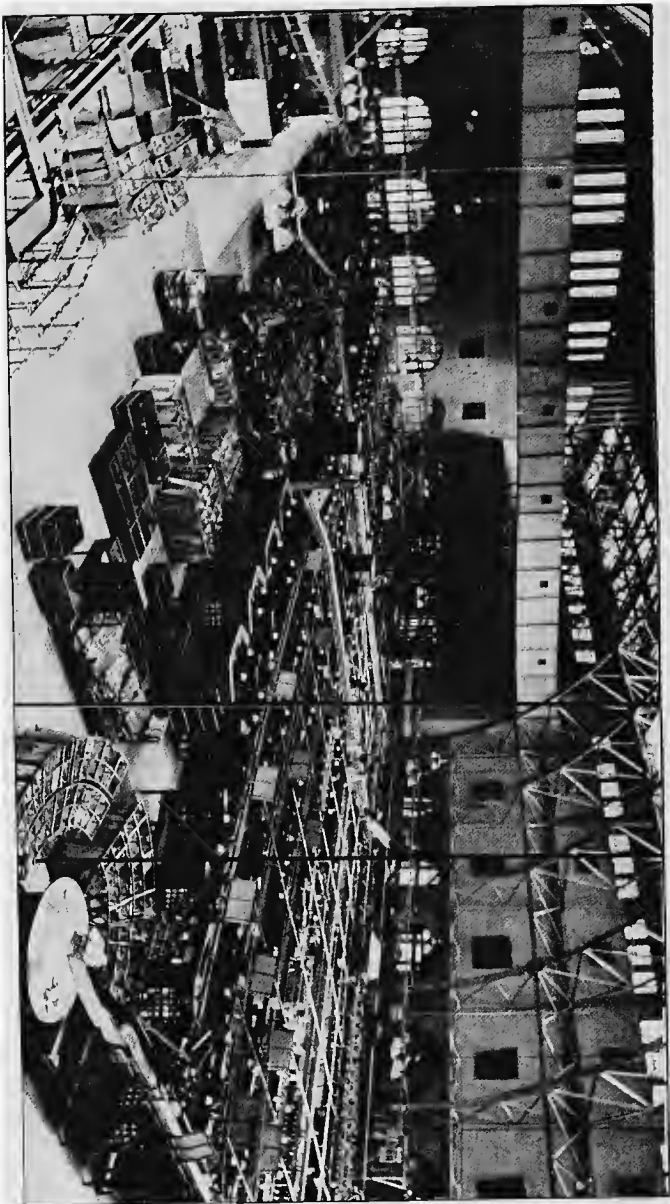
observed in the letter section of a large post office. Here the greatest effort is made to secure speed and accuracy. |

The raw mail, as it comes from the drops or from the collectors' sacks is dumped on "facing tables." Here a number of men, working side by side, arrange the letters so that the stamps of all are put in the same relative position. The long letters must be separated from the short, as must also packages and odd-sized envelopes which will not go safely through the canceling machines. Large post offices are equipped with mechanical facing tables, known as "pick-up" tables. These are metal tables capable of holding thousands of pieces of mail. At the front edge of the table, running lengthwise, are two slots—one for short letters and the other for long letters. Under these slots is a moving belt. The letters are dropped edgewise into the slots and are conveyed by the moving belt to a stacker at the end of the table, where the long and short letters are stacked, separately, ready for cancelation by machines. At the opposite edge of the table are three "hoppers," or large vents resembling the ventilation tubes seen on steam vessels. Into these "hoppers" are thrown packages, papers, and other matter which can not be accommodated by the slots and which must be canceled by hand. At the nether opening of each hopper is placed a large basket, or a receptacle on wheels, which



CORNER OF A WORKROOM IN OPERATION
Bag Rack and Distributer in Foreground

MAIN WORK ROOM OF THE POST OFFICE IN ST. LOUIS, MO.



may be taken away as frequently as the accumulation of mail therein may make necessary. Eight or nine men usually work at the table and "face up" from 75 to 100 letters each per minute.

Stacks of long and short letters are transferred from the stacker of the facing table, by canceling-machine operators, to the feed mechanism of the canceling machines. The letters are postmarked and canceled at rates of speed varying from 250 to 750 per minute. Parcels and papers, which have been thrown aside in the course of facing raw mail, are taken to the sections to which they belong, and odd-sized envelopes and envelopes on which the stamps have been affixed otherwise than in the upper right-hand corner are taken to separate tables in the letter section where they are canceled and postmarked by hand.

As the letters pass through the canceling machine they are again automatically stacked. From the stacker of the canceling machine they are removed in large quantities to the "primary cases."

The "primary case" is the device with which the first separation of mail is made. It is a cabinet of pigeonholes, with a ledge projecting from the cabinet at a level with the bottom of the lowest row of pigeonholes. This ledge accommodates the supply of mail which the distributor works through the case. All of the pigeonholes are within easy reach of the clerk as he stands

before the case. The number of pigeonholes, or separations, depends upon the number of main divisions into which it is desired to divide the mail for further distribution. The principal consideration at the primary case is speed. Therefore, the number of separations is usually small. There will be a pigeonhole for all local mail, a pigeonhole for each nearby State or group of distant States, a pigeonhole for each of several very large cities for which the quantity of mail is great, and a pigeonhole for "nixie" mail, which is mail without postage affixed or address in such illegible or incorrect manner as to prevent proper dispatch to destination. This simple distribution of mail requires no special skill, and is usually performed by clerks just entering the service.

For each pigeonhole, or separation, on the primary case, the post office maintains a secondary distribution-case. For example, a pigeonhole on the primary case will be labeled for the State of Pennsylvania, and all of the mail distributed into this pigeonhole will be removed and turned over to the clerk who makes the secondary distribution of mail for the State of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania case may have from 50 to 200 separate pigeonholes, each labeled for an individual post office receiving a considerable quantity of mail or for a Railway Post Office (RPO), on which this division of mail will be further distributed. Where the pigeonhole is

labeled for a post office, it is known as a "direct" separation, because the mail from this pigeon-hole is tied in a package and goes in this form directly from the State case to the post office of destination. The packages of mail which are tied out from the RPO separations are opened in the respective railway post offices and are associated with the contents of other packages received from other post offices, with a view to bringing together sufficient quantities of mail for individual offices to make up "directs" for these offices. In the large post offices cases are sometimes maintained exclusively to accommodate mail for the post offices for which direct packages are made up. For example, the mail for the State of Pennsylvania, after it leaves the primary case, may be turned over to two distributors, one working the state, or RPO case, and the other working the Pennsylvania "direct" case. Each clerk will remove from the mail he receives from the primary case that which he can distribute into his case. The clerk distributing to the "direct" case will put into the respective pigeonholes only such of the Pennsylvania mail as belongs to offices to which direct dispatches are made, turning over to the other clerk mail which must be sent to railway post offices for further distribution before being dispatched direct to the offices of destination.

This secondary, or commonly called, final dis-

tribution, demands a great amount of knowledge and skill on the part of the distributor. He must know not only the name and location of every post office in the State or group of States for which he distributes mail, but he must also know the schedules of the trains on which this mail is dispatched and the most expeditious manner of dispatching letters from hour to hour. It may be that mail for a certain post office or RPO is dispatched via one railroad at a certain time of the day, whereas mail for the same post office or RPO is dispatched via a different railroad at a different time of the day. The amount of knowledge and skill required for secondary distribution varies in different post offices according to the state or groups of states for which mail is distributed. Finer distribution, of course, is made of mail for near-by states. Mail for distant states is usually "massed," or dispatched in bulk, or is separated into a small number of divisions and dispatched in this way to a distant railway post office for further distribution. It has been said of the most expert distributors in the largest post offices that they are required to know and be able instantaneously to call into use more separate facts than any other kind of skilled or professional worker.

The number of primary and secondary distribution-cases maintained in any post office depends upon the size of the post office and the volume of the mail to be dispatched. In the smallest post

office it is not unusual for the postmaster to dispatch all of the mail for the day in one small package labeled for a railway post office. Here the primary separation consists merely in separating the local mail from the outgoing mail. A larger post office may dispatch its mailings in two packages, one going in either direction. Here the primary separation consists in dividing the raw mail into three parts: (1) local mail; (2) eastbound mail; and (3) westbound mail. As the office grows larger the division of the mail for dispatch grows finer, the purpose always being, as far as practicable, to bring together in one package the mail for an individual post office. Every post office faces the possibility of dispatching mail to every other post office in the United States, and the underlying principle of all distribution is to eliminate unnecessary handling of the individual piece of mail.

Just as every post office may be called upon to dispatch mail to every other post office in the United States, so every post office must be prepared to receive mail from every other post office and deliver it to its patrons. The distribution of mail for local delivery, in principle, is performed in the same way as the distribution of outgoing mail.

Mail deposited in any post office for local delivery is separated from outgoing mail on the primary case and immediately transferred to

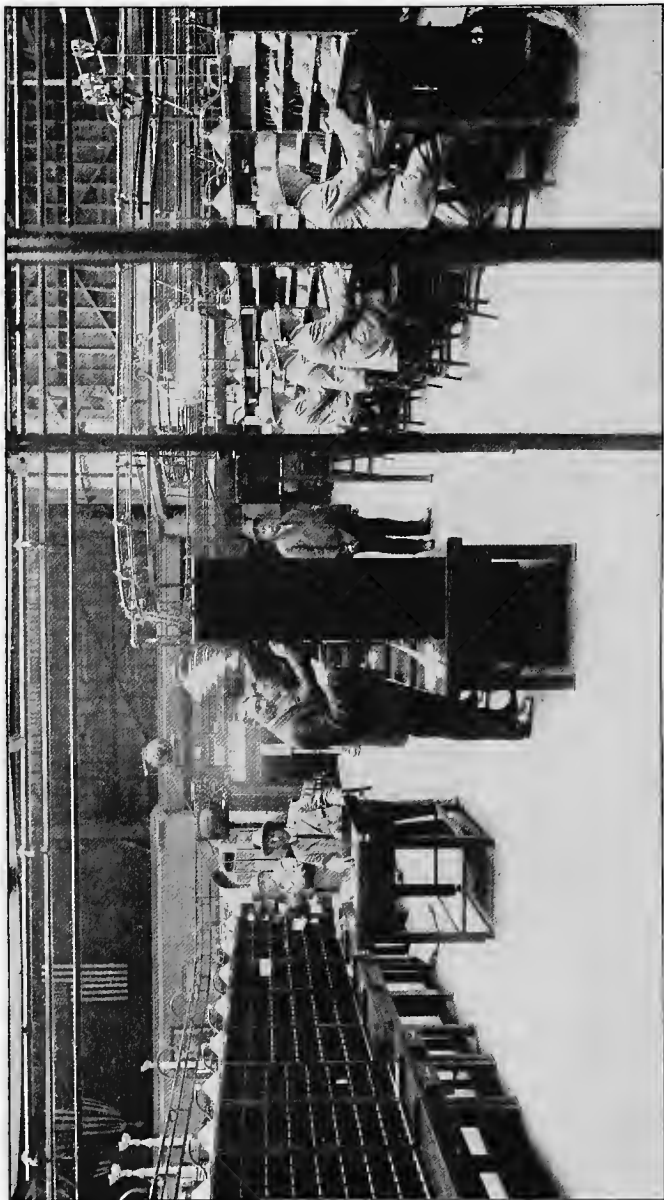
the incoming, or city letter, section. Here it is merged into the mass of mail received from all other post offices for local delivery. On appropriate cases or cabinets of pigeonholes, this mail is divided first into divisions representing the lock-boxes, the general delivery, and the various districts served, respectively, through the main post office and its branches and stations. Each of these divisions of mail is passed through a secondary distribution. The mail for the lock-boxes is distributed into the boxes of individual patrons. The mail for the general delivery is separated in alphabetical order so that it may be readily available for delivery to individual patrons upon call. The separations representing the main post office and station districts are further distributed into pigeonholes representing individual letter-carriers. The mail is removed from these pigeonholes by the respective carriers and by them arranged, on suitable routing cases, in the order in which it is to be delivered to the residences and places of business on the routes. The carriers' routing-cases are equipped with shelves which, by means of wire or wooden separators, are divided into small spaces representing from one to five business places or residences. The carrier distributes the mail according to the street name and number. Actual delivery, of course, is governed by the name of the addressee. The carrier removes the mail from his routing



DISTRIBUTERS AT WORK



ROUTING MAIL FOR DELIVERY



CLERKS AND CARRIERS

case and straps it in bundles of size convenient to handle. These bundles are packed in the satchel and removed as the carrier progresses over his route, in the order of delivery.

The efficient distribution, dispatch, and delivery of mail depends absolutely upon the completeness and accuracy of the addresses. The first element is the name of the State. Practically speaking, the primary distributor is not concerned with any other element in the address. The next element is the name of the city or town. Aside from verifying the name of the State which has guided the primary distributor in his work, the secondary distributor is concerned with no element in the address except the name of the city. When the letter reaches the office of destination the distributor of city mail is concerned only with the name of the street and the number of the residence or place of business. The letter-carrier is enabled to make prompt delivery only when the name of the addressee and the street name and number form a correct address. Whenever a piece of mail is deficient in any of these elements of address it is shunted aside, either for return to the writer for better direction, or so that it may be corrected or amplified by means of books of reference in the post office or through the special knowledge possessed by some expert employee.

XI

RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE

BEFORE the advent of the railway, postage rates were high and the volume of mail was small. The mail from the National Capital to New York, the national metropolis, was carried in one sack in the boot of the stage-coach. The nature and extent of the Government's control over mails in transit will be suggested by the circular issued by an early postmaster-general to the stage-coach lines in which he urged that a hole be bored in the bottom of the boot so that rain-water might be carried away and not be permitted to damage the mails.

Mail for all post offices on a route in the early days was placed in one pouch and each postmaster along the way sorted the entire contents and took out the part that belonged to his own office. Between offices of importance, where the mail was sufficient, as between Washington and New York, direct pouches were early interchanged under special lock. This avoided the necessity of repeated sortings and guarded against loss.

With the growth of the country and the development of railway facilities the number of these

direct pouches increased very rapidly. Post offices at the terminal or junction points of railroads came to be designated to receive, assort, and forward the mail for other post offices, making up as far as possible a direct pouch or package to each office. In turn each post office forwarded to these "head" or "distributing" offices their outgoing mail in the same manner. The distributing post offices also exchanged with each other. Mail between points having no direct exchange was sent to some one of these distributing offices, where it was forwarded to its destination.

It became necessary to provide some system to do away with the multitude of direct pouches, each containing in most instances only a small amount of mail. These pouches passed in all directions over the country, under the charge of no particular person and suffered neglect on every hand.

The reform devised to improved the system under which pouches were exchanged was that of the "route agents." These were postal employees assigned to duty on railroad trains. Distributing offices sent to each route agent all mail for post offices on his line. The agent assorted the mail while in transit, made up one pouch for each office on his line and carried to the next distributing office mail for points beyond. This system provided a complete exchange of mails between offices served by the same route agents.

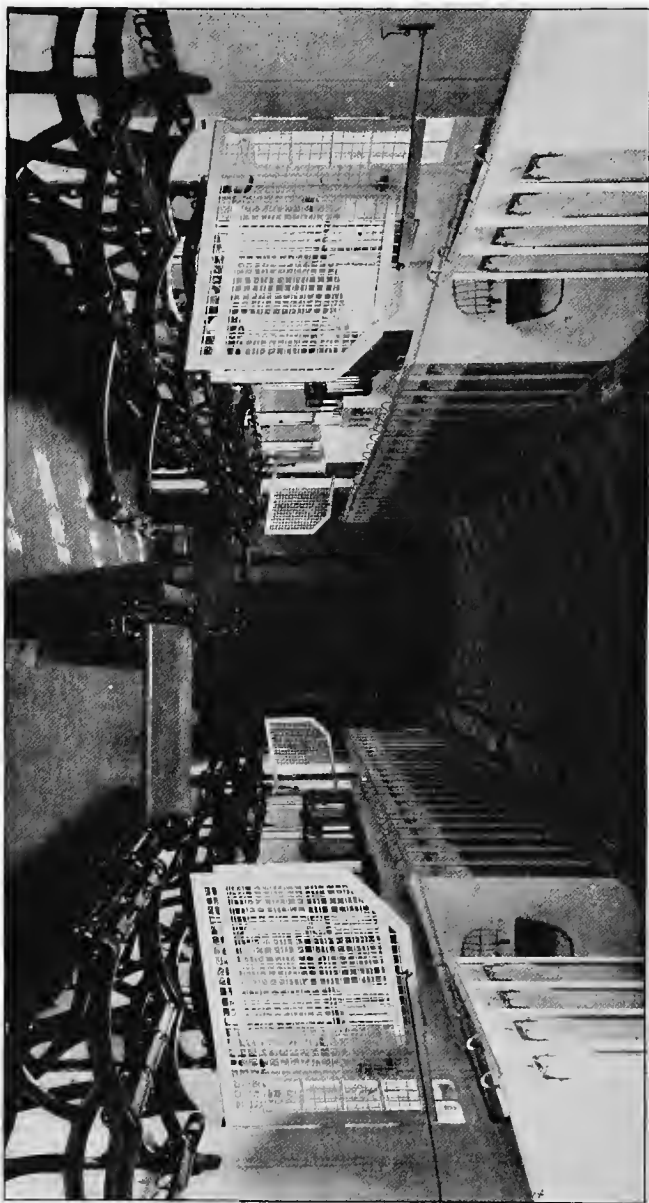
With respect to offices beyond the termini of the route agent's run, the mail originating on his route was subject to the same delays as formerly at the distributing offices. To offset this delay, clerks from distributing offices familiar with the general distribution of the mails were detailed to travel upon the trains, making the proper separation and distribution for all connecting roads, thus avoiding the delays in the distributing office by having the mails ready for dispatch immediately upon arrival at the terminus of each route. This experiment was successful and prompted the establishment of the railway mail-service.

The railway post office or "traveling and assorting carriage" was used in England as early as 1838, between London and Birmingham; but it was not until 1860 that Postmaster-General Holt in the United States took the first steps toward improving the "route agent" and Distributing Post Office (DPO) system of handling mail in transit. In 1864 George B. Armstrong, Assistant Postmaster at Chicago, was authorized by Postmaster-General Montgomery Blair to commence an experiment in the practical operation of plans worked out by him for "a post office on wheels." The first railway post office in the United States was run between Chicago, Illinois, and Clinton, Iowa, and its trial trip was made August 28, 1864. Clerks for the railway post office were first taken from among the most expert distributors in the



BAG RACK AND OVERHEAD COMPARTMENTS
for Distributing Papers and Parcels in a Railway Mail Car

INTERIOR OF A RAILWAY POST OFFICE



distributing post offices. It was recognized from the outset of this service that efficiency was absolutely imperative. At a time when all positions in the civil service were regarded as the spoils of the victorious political party the importance of the public service performed by distributors on board trains was so clear that politicians did not often appoint mere place-holders to positions in the railway mail service.

In the beginning the Department did not prescribe the manner in which railway mail-clerks should perform their work, but left to each man the responsibility of finding out the proper manner of distributing mail on his line. In this way the "facing slip" on which the modern efficiency of the railway mail-service largely depends was originated. Each railway mail-clerk took great pride to perfect and maintain in proper condition his "scheme" of distribution. Several adopted the practise of attaching to each bundle of letters, consigned by them to a post office, a distributing office, or a railway post office, a slip on which they wrote informally "In case of error report to _____" followed by their signature. From this crude beginning the modern system of facing slips has developed. These slips are of great variety, and are used in post offices as well as in the railway mail-service. The railway postal clerk places one of these slips on top of every package of letters which he distributes and ties out for another rail-

way post office or for a post office. On this slip he stamps his own name and the number and name of his railway post office. On the slip is also printed the name of the railway post office or office to which the package is going. When the package is opened at the point of destination for further handling any error which is discovered is noted on the back of the slip by the clerk receiving it, and forwarded through the proper channels. Eventually the clerk who made the error is notified, in order that he may perfect his knowledge of the correct scheme of distribution, if necessary, and the slip is filed at a central office for consideration in connection with the efficiency of the employee.

The schedules of any railroad operating frequent trains will show that all trains can not be made available for postal service. Many trains start at hours when there is little or no accumulation of mail and arrive at points of destination at unseasonable hours for delivery or too late for connection beyond. It may also be observed that trains first leaving important points are frequently not the first to arrive at the other end of the line, or that they are somewhere along the line merged with other trains leaving at later hours. The Post Office Department avails itself of all trains by which mail can be expedited to destination, as far as practicable.

From 1864 to 1917 the length of lines on which

railway post office service was in operation increased from 22,000 to 234,000 miles and the annual travel from 23,000,000 miles to 502,000,000 miles. In the same time the number of employees increased from 572 to over 18,000. Applicants for entry into the railway mail-service are required to pass a rigid physical and mental test. Special information as to entrance-examinations may be secured by addressing the Civil Service Commission at Washington, D. C. After being accepted the appointees are given schemes of distribution to learn. A "scheme" is a list of post offices arranged so as to show the railway-lines, or other sources of mail supply, for each post office. This list may comprise all the offices in a State or in several States, or only the offices in a portion of a State.

It is not an unusual requirement for a clerk to have to memorize 10,000 separate items of information to enable him to properly distribute the mail coming into his hands. This information consists of the names of the post offices, the railway-lines, or other means by which the post offices are supplied with mail, and the schedules of connecting trains.

For the purpose of administering the railway mail-service, the country is divided into fifteen divisions, each in charge of a superintendent. These divisions are subdivided into districts in charge of chief clerks. Each division superin-

tendent is charged with the duty of devising schemes of distribution for his division that will insure the most expeditious exchange of mails between the post offices and between his division and other divisions of the railway mail-service. As the clerks report for duty they examine the bulletin posted in the office of the Chief Clerk for changes which may affect their schemes of distribution. Weekly, these changes are included in the general orders of the division superintendent. Each postal clerk also receives at intervals of one or two months a consolidated schedule of time-tables of all trains in his division. The scheme of distribution is furnished the clerk in printed form and he must enter all changes as he is notified of them. He must also keep up to date the schedule of time-tables.

The requirement of learning every change in the post offices or in the schedules of railways as it affects his daily distribution of large quantities of mail, devolves upon the railway postal clerk an immense amount of arduous study and practise which must be done outside his regular tour of duty.

The railway mail clerk's efficiency is constantly under review. Through the medium of his facing slips his errors are noted by clerks who re-handle his mail. The clerk in charge of the crew or the chief clerk will examine the condition of his distributing case from time to time to see

whether it is properly labeled according to the latest changes and whether any letters have been misthrown. He must be prepared at any time to meet the examiner and attain a grade of not less than $97\frac{1}{2}$ on a case arranged in the same manner as the one which he operates on board the train. In a single year more than 40,000 of these examinations are held throughout the railway mail-service. The number of dummy cards, addrest to represent letters and used in these tests approaches 40,000,000. The percentage of these cards handled correctly by all the clerks examined exceeds 99.

From the beginning postal officials insisted that the mail must be placed upon an equality with the passengers, and an early development that has continued to be one of the most valuable features in the railway mail-service is the fast mail-train.

It was on September 16, 1875, that the first exclusive mail-train was placed in service. Leaving New York, it arrived on schedule time in Chicago the following day after a journey of 26 hours. Great interest was taken at that time in this all postal train, which carried the western mail from New York to Chicago at a speed greater than any passenger could command, and furthermore delivered that mail at Chicago distributed and arranged for immediate dispatch by other lines or for delivery by carrier in Chicago. With the beginning of the year 1899, the mail between New

York and San Francisco also traveled on fast mail-trains consuming less time than the fastest passenger train. As a part of this service, the fast trains between Chicago and Omaha, running 500 miles in less than ten hours and often reaching a speed of sixty to seventy miles an hour, have been a theme of wide-spread interest and comment. An important feature of the improved service is that by which mail-bags are caught without stopping the trains, and intermediate points at which the train does not stop get the advantage of fast mails.

City distribution by railway post offices is another important feature of the postal service. The clerks are trained to separate mail for the individual-carrier routes in large cities so that immediately on arrival, the mail may be turned over to city carriers for delivery. This obviates the delay that would occur in the delivery, were this distribution not made on the train.

During the fiscal year ended June 30, 1887, 864,700,000 pieces of mail-matter were distributed on railway mail-cars, and the percentage of errors was $\frac{4}{100}$ of one per cent, or 2,500 pieces correct to every error made. This good record has been so far surpassed that in recent tests 14,369,582,586 pieces of mail-matter were distributed and the percentage of errors was less than $\frac{2}{100}$ of one per cent, or 6,366 pieces correct to each error.

Railroad companies are now required to furnish

mail-cars built and fitted up in accordance with the Government's specifications. The structural features of the mail-cars and their equipment have been given close attention so that the clerks and the mails may be protected as much as possible. It is said that of the railway postal clerks who have been in the service for twenty years not less than one-half have been injured in railway-wrecks and collisions. Fortunately, the hazards of this employment have been greatly reduced in recent years by legislation requiring that within a reasonable time all cars furnished by the railroads for use by employees in the distribution of mail must be of solid steel construction. In case of a wreck or collision these steel cars resist a far greater amount of shock than wooden cars, which in years gone by have been frequently demolished or telescoped. The number of steel cars increased from 26 in 1909 to 2,431 in 1916. The number of wooden cars is constantly decreasing. Since July 1, 1917, all cars used entirely as railway post offices are required to be of steel construction.

The improvement in mail-cars has materially reduced the number of injuries and fatalities to clerks. In 1907 there were 21 clerks killed and 787 injured while in 1916 there were 5 clerks killed and 544 injured. A substantial recognition of the hazardous nature of this employment is given in a more liberal wage scale and provision for compensation for injuries and deaths in line of duty.

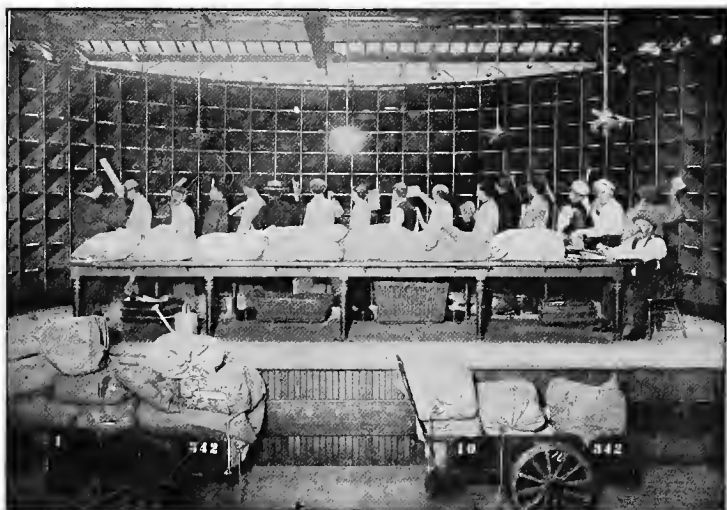
The administration of these benefits was taken over in 1917 by the Employees' Compensation Commission, under the law extending to all Federal employees the same protection which railway postal clerks have enjoyed for a number of years.

Railway postal clerks are detailed as transfer-clerks at many railroad-depots and junction points of railroads to supervise the transfer and dispatch of mail from one train to another and from depots to post offices.

Terminal railway post offices under the supervision of the railway mail-service have been established for the purpose of handling parcel post and ordinary mail. These terminal railway post offices are located at important commercial and railroad centers in railroad stations, where practicable, or in buildings convenient to the railroad station. By this arrangement and at times when otherwise it would be lying still, mail which heretofore was distributed in the costly space on board trains, is separated into packages or sacks for direct dispatch to post offices or railway post-office lines. These terminal railway post offices care for a large amount of parcel-post and advertising matter which would congest the cars and tend to impair the efficiency of the distribution of letter-mail and news-matter. The distribution in the terminals is of a simple nature, such as working mail into sacks labeled directly to offices of destination and, therefore, can be per-



A RAILWAY MAIL CLERK DISTRIBUTING LETTER MAIL
EN ROUTE



DISTRIBUTING NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES



LOADING PLATFORM

formed by clerks with less preparation and study than is required for the more complicated distribution made in railway post-office cars. When the mail is thus made up it can be forwarded in storage-cars or baggage-cars with maximum expedition. This system has provided a practical method of handling parcel-post matter which could not have been successfully and efficiently handled in railway post-office cars.

XII

HOW THE FARMER GETS HIS MAIL

THOSE who live in rural districts are served with mail by fourth-class post offices, by "star-route" carriers, and by rural mail-carriers.

The Middle West, and later the Great West beyond the Mississippi, was populated by European emigration and by migration from the Eastern sections of the United States. The settlers established themselves first in communities along the navigable water-courses, stage-coach lines and transcontinental railroad-lines. The boat, the stage and the railway train carried the mail, which was received and distributed through post offices. Every community, however small, had a post office and a postmaster.

Post offices have been kept in every conceivable kind of place. At one time a post office inspector who was sent to confer with an out-of-the-way postmaster whose accounts were in arrears, after having announced his business, was surprised to be handed a cigar box with the curt remark, "Here's your post office, take it along." It appeared that this receptacle had provided ample

quarters for incoming and outgoing mail, and for the postage stamps and postal revenue of that community. When Abraham Lincoln was postmaster at New Salem, Ill. (1833-1836), it was said that he "carried the office in his hat." Few letters were received at that place and, when Postmaster Lincoln found it necessary to step out of the office, he would put the letters in his hat in order that he might deliver them to the parties address should he meet them or go near their residences or places of business. Other offices were located in box-cars, tents, blacksmith shops, bar-rooms, and even in the hollows of trees. As rapidly as outlying settlements were established off the regular lines of communication, post offices were created and contracts made for star-route service so that the post offices could be served with mail. To the close of the century the increasing need for rural mails was met by the rapid extension of the network of railways and star routes and by establishing additional post offices.

The compensation of postmasters was based on the receipts of their offices from postage. Up to a certain amount of receipts the postmaster received as compensation the entire revenue of the office, and he was required to devote to the work whatever time was necessary to care for the mail coming in and going out of his office. In this way it was possible to maintain post offices without expense, except for the transportation of mail, at

places where the postal revenue was only nominal. Under these conditions, the duty of acting as postmaster often devolved upon some public-spirited citizen who accepted the responsibility as a matter of accommodation to the community.

As long as the rural population collected in the vicinity of small communities, the post offices located in those communities afforded quite satisfactory mail service. Such villages were important meeting-places for the farmers who came to town on other business frequently enough to get their occasional letters from family and friends and to carry home the weekly newspaper. Prior to 1890 rural residents remote from the village post office were too few and scattered to represent an important need for rural mails.

The United States Census of 1890 brought out for the first time the interesting and suggestive fact that the isolation and inconveniences of farm-life were making the rural residents an easy prey to the social and economic attractions of the city. That census recorded an actual depopulation of the rural districts of several of the States. The publicity given these conditions through the 1890 census reports and their discussion by economists and others focalized the thought of the time on means of arresting the drift of population from the farm. Early in the consideration, better mail facilities were thought of as a practical way to relieve the loneliness and isolation of country life.

Extensive road-building by counties aided this movement. In some instances the forerunner of the Government's delivery-service was found in private arrangements made by farmers for having their mail delivered from the post office by private carriers.

By 1896 education was universal, and personal and business correspondence became a necessity on the farm. The rising interest of the American farmer in state and national politics made him an earnest reader of daily and weekly newspapers and the national magazines. His increasing prosperity and his dependence on machinery made him an important market which the manufacturers desired to reach with their advertising.

The dependence of the city on the farmer was now being felt and recognized. Interest was developing in the agencies by which the national crops were moved and distributed. Free delivery of mail in rural districts was earnestly desired by all classes of the people in the country and only the expense stood in the way. As late as 1893 the Post Office Department opposed the establishment of rural delivery on the ground that such an extension of the service could by no possible way be made self-supporting.

Rural delivery was a popular measure. In many respects it is the most far-reaching and significant of all recent public efforts to promote the general welfare. It was inaugurated on Octo-

ber 1, 1896, during the postal administration of Postmaster-General Wilson, under an appropriation of \$40,000. Experimental service was established simultaneously on three routes in West Virginia, one from Charlestown, one from Uvilla and one from Halltown. From the outset the establishment of the service was eagerly sought by rural communities and in Congress the friends of rural development advocated liberal appropriations for bringing the United States mails to the doors of the farmers. The century closed with about 1,000 rural routes in operation and an annual rate of expenditure of about \$400,000. From that time the development has been very rapid. At the close of business June 30, 1916, there were 42,927 routes in operation, served by 42,766 carriers, covering 1,091,852 miles. This service reaches nearly 5,750,000 patrons, representing a total population of nearly 26,500,000. The total cost of the service is nearly \$52,000,000. The average length of the routes is about 25 miles.

Rural mail service has become so widely established that in some of the older settled sections of the country what is known as "county rural service" has been established, that is, every road in the county is traveled by rural carriers and every farmer served with his mail by carrier.

During the first four years of the administration of Postmaster-General Burleson, commenced in 1913, rural mail-service was established and ex-

tended in more than 1,000 localities and delivery accorded to 658,000 additional families representing a population of about 3,000,000.

The cost of the free delivery of mail in rural districts has exceeded even the fears of those who opposed its establishment. The service, however, has justified itself and the Post Office Appropriation Act for the fiscal year 1917 contained the direction "that rural mail delivery shall be extended so as to serve as nearly as practicable the entire rural population of the United States."

It is gratifying that the effect of the rural mail-delivery service on the happiness and contentment of the rural residents has not been without the desired effect. The drift towards the city is nothing like so great and the farmer is the most independent and prosperous of our people. Foremost among the things which are responsible for this happy condition will be given the rural mail-service, the telephone, improved sanitation, and the automobile.

The apparent cost of maintaining carrier-service in rural districts is offset by several considerations. In the first place the extension of the rural routes has made it desirable to discontinue a large number of small post offices, and the expense of maintaining these post offices has been cut off. Reference has been made previously to this important phase of the postal service as the result of which there are to-day 20,000 fewer post

offices than there were in 1900. Again, altho the sale of postage by the rural carriers and by postmasters for use on mail collected by the rural carriers does not by any means equal the cost of maintaining the routes, there has been a large increase not only in correspondence originating in the country but more especially in the correspondence originating in cities and intended for delivery on the rural routes.

An important effect of the establishment of rural mail-service has been to increase the sale of postage in cities. By far the most important consideration favoring the maintenance and extension of the rural mail-service is the advantageous effect which it has had in increasing the production of agricultural products; in improving the conditions of farm life; in promoting the general level of intelligence and education; in developing the home market for American manufactures and in encouraging the good roads movement on which all agricultural development depends.

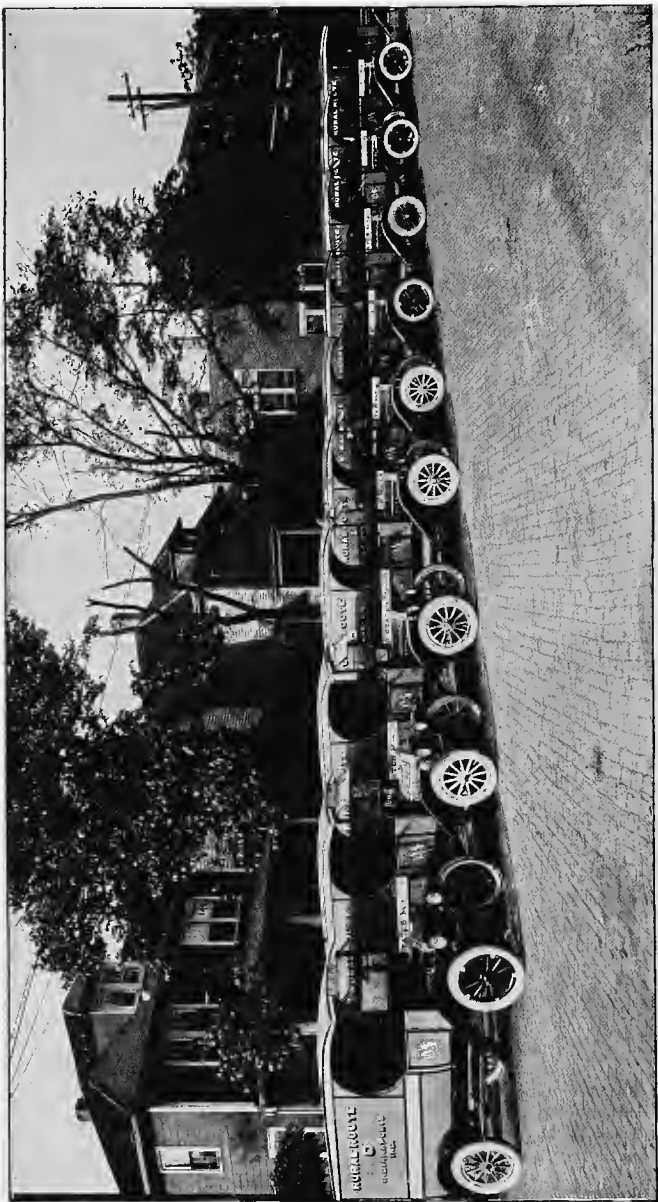
There are about 2,200,000 miles of public roads in the United States and the total rural population is about 45,000,000. More than 1,000,000 miles of the roads are regularly traveled by rural mail-carriers, in the service of the United States Post Office Department. The remaining one million miles of public roads which are not served by rural carriers lie in the less thickly settled parts



A RURAL MAIL CARRIER AND CART



A RURAL MAIL WAGON



AUTOMOBILES IN RURAL SERVICE

of the country. Of these 140,000 miles are covered by star-route service. The carrier on the star route is not an employee of the Government but a contractor or an employee of a contractor. Nevertheless, the Government has arranged to provide on these routes free service similar to that afforded by regular rural mail-service. The star-route carrier is authorized to collect and deliver mail altho he can not sell postage or handle money order or postal savings funds. Altogether by rural routes and star routes about 80 per cent of the rural population is regularly provided with mail delivery and collection, and the trend of this service is so clear that the date can not be far distant when every rural resident of the United States will have the opportunity of transacting any kind of postal business on his own premises.

The greatest benefit of the rural mail-service is derived when its facilities are extended gradually and advantageously and not under arbitrary "blanket" methods. Altho the development of the service has been exceedingly rapid this sensible procedure has generally characterized its administration, and, as a consequence, the rural mail-service has not only brought to the rural districts of the country at large its own benefits, but it has also encouraged and promoted the building of good roads to a greater extent than any other cause. The Post Office Department has adopted the policy of not extending rural delivery until

the State or county has provided satisfactory road conditions. This reasonable requirement has given in countless communities the necessary impetus to road-building activities. The improvement of the roads has brought proper mail-service and many other benefits. Agricultural societies and organizations have advocated road improvement and have succeeded in creating such interest in the subject that now the automobile may be employed for the transportation of farm-products and also for use in the mail service. It is desirable that this requirement should be continued to be enforced and that rural delivery should be extended just as rapidly as good roads are created. The expenditure necessary for rural mail-service can usually be justified if the condition of the roads is such that travel at all times of the year is easy and rapid.

The cost of rural mail-service has increased from year to year as the service has grown, and it is estimated that to extend it throughout the entire country an annual expenditure of \$100,000,000 will be required. Unquestionably this extension will eventually be undertaken by the Government as it is the means by which a large class of citizens may be brought within the sphere of communication created by the National Post Office. Meanwhile the star-route service, which has an old and honorable history in the extension of mail-service to outlying communities, will blaze the way along

which the rural mail-carrier will follow and the rural post office will continue to be a feature of the postal service in outlying communities until the entire face of the United States is organized into a compact agricultural unit.

The close relationship between star-route service and rural mail-service has recently been recognized by adding to each service duties formerly performed exclusively by the other. Star-route carriers, as has been stated, are now authorized to perform a limited mail-service for the patrons on their line of travel, and recently the rural mail-carriers have been employed to carry mail to supply outlying post offices, which is the function ordinarily of star-route service or other transportation lines. For the most effective coordination of these combined services the administration of them in the Post Office Department has been consolidated in one office, the Division of Rural Mails, under the immediate supervision of the Fourth Assistant Postmaster-General. The effect of this administrative arrangement is to eliminate duplication of service and to make the combined service more elastic and efficient.

The extensive development of the rural mail-service was a prime support to the establishment of the domestic parcel post. At the time the establishment of the parcel post service was under consideration, it was proposed by some that the parcel post should be limited to shipments

originating and ending on a rural route. Before this service came the only express service in this country was that between towns. The farmer was under the necessity of sending and receiving parcels at the nearest town or village in which was located an express office. The parcel-post service has therefore the potentiality of bringing express facilities to every man's door. Postmaster-General Burleson, from the beginning of his administration, applied great energy and effective intelligence to the development of the system, and since January 1, 1914, the user of parcel post has been able to mail and receive small shipments at his home up to fifty pounds for distances not exceeding 150 miles, and up to twenty pounds for greater distances without making a special trip to town. The departmental officials appreciate that the full development of the parcel-post service for the farmer, however, depends on the improvement of roads, the use of superior transportation equipment, and the cooperation of the rural carrier. It is to this end that so much attention has recently been given to the introduction of motor equipment where conditions will permit. Department officers believe that the success of the service depends on the maintenance of adequate equipment, and on the carrier's activity in acquainting the patrons with the possibilities of the parcel post and teaching them how to secure the greatest benefit from its use.

XIII

COLLECTION AND DELIVERY IN CITIES

IN the larger cities of the United States carriers were connected with the post offices from very early days. They were not at first employed or paid by the Post Office Department and had no official status. In many instances they were merely private carriers, each acting as agent for a number of patrons. They derived their compensation from a fee of one or two cents for delivering a letter, and one-half a cent or a cent for delivering a paper.

The necessity for government-carrier delivery in the larger cities was recognized by the Act of 1825 which authorized the Postmaster-General to designate cities in which an official carrier-system might be established by attaching sworn carriers to the post office somewhat in the manner that special delivery messengers are employed by modern post offices. The carriers were to receive under the Act of 1825 two cents for each letter delivered by them. The important legislation of 1836 under which the Post Office Department was reorganized and many reforms effected again continued the provision for carrier service in cities

and authorized the delivery of newspapers and pamphlets at half a cent each, and provided that letters intended for local delivery by carrier might be deposited at carrier post offices on the prepayment of two cents each. The Act of 1851 recognized the carriers as a branch of the service and authorized the placing of collection boxes and "drops" for receiving letters, which if intended for local delivery by carrier were to be prepaid at the rate of two cents each.

In a letter dated November 14, 1860, John A. Dix, postmaster at New York, submitted to Postmaster-General Joseph Holt, "a full statement of the condition of the system of collecting and delivering letters in this city by carriers and mail-messengers." The letter reads in part as follows:

To facilitate the receipt, delivery, and transmission of letters written here, and to expedite the delivery of those received by the mails and address to persons within the city, six stations have been established in different localities; the nearest about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the post office and the most distant about three miles. . . . From these stations, and from the principal office, the carriers depart four times in each day to deliver letters to the persons to whom they are address within certain allotted districts. The whole number of carriers is 89.

The carrier's department at the post office is organized, under a superintendent, with a corps of clerks, whose principal duty it is to receive and assort all letters intended to be delivered by carriers. These letters are separated and sent 7 times a day to the respective stations from which they go out for delivery. . . . The letters collected from the lamp-post boxes within about one mile of the post office are carried

directly to the office. Those collected from boxes more remote are carried directly to the nearest stations to be sent out for delivery by the carriers, address to persons in the upper districts, or to be taken to the post office, if intended for transmission by the mails, or to be delivered in the lower part of the city.

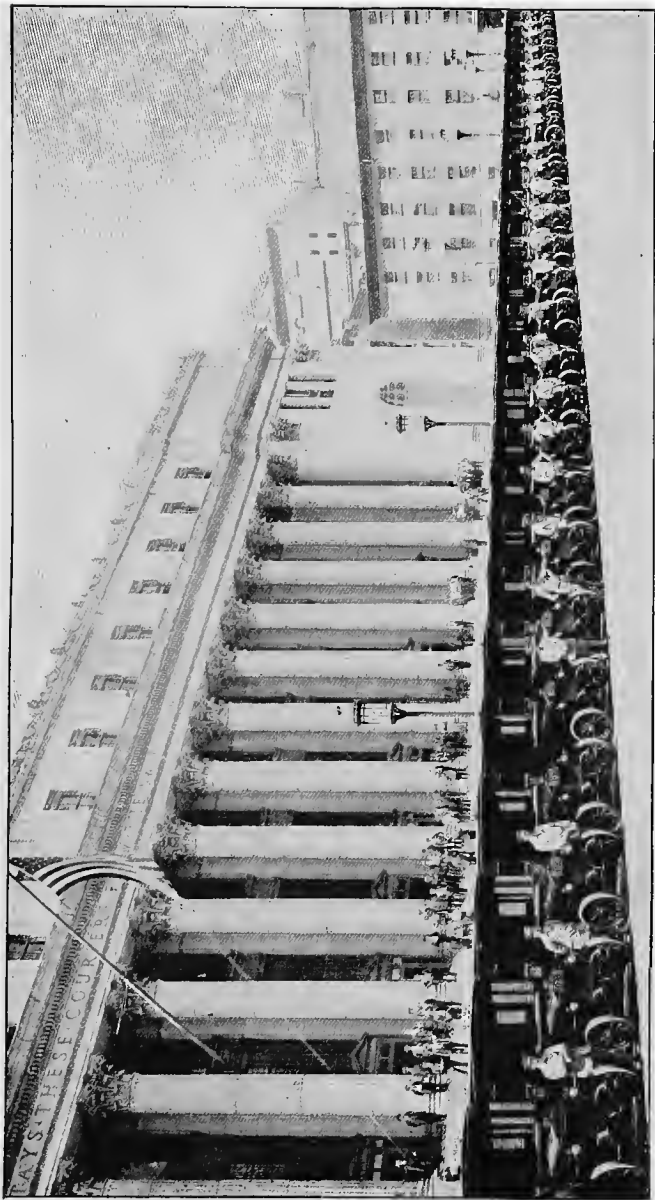
The carriers and collectors are paid from the carriers' fund, which is composed of the postage on city letters, one cent each, one-quarter of the fees on letters received by the mails and delivered by the carriers. Also one cent each, and the fees (one cent each) on letters collected from the lamp-post boxes and carried to the post office to be transmitted by the mails. Three-quarters of the fees on letters received by the mails and delivered by the carriers are paid to the respective carriers by whom the deliveries are made and constitute a part of their compensation.

It will be seen from the foregoing statement of the New York postmaster that the necessities of the postal situation in that rapidly growing city were met by a special arrangement, without direct authority of law, but which very much resembles the later system of carrier-stations and city delivery which are familiar features of the postal service to-day. In many of the cities besides New York, the delivery of mail by carriers attached to the post office was in vogue and they were entitled to charge one cent for collecting a letter and one cent for delivering a letter. The patrons, however, were free to accept the service of the carriers or not.

The modern city-delivery service originated in the following recommendation of Postmaster-

General Montgomery Blair in his report for the fiscal year 1862: "I also recommend the abolition of the one-cent carriers' fee for the delivery and collection of letters in cities, and in lieu of that annoying and dilatory tariff on delivery and collections, recommend that the charge upon local (or drop) letters be made uniform at the prepaid rate of two cents; and that all prepaid mail and local letters shall be delivered and collected without charge by the carriers, they being paid by salaries. This will prepay and transfer the carrier's charge from mail to local letters in effect, greatly accelerate deliveries, and promote the public convenience." Mr. Blair also expected that this uniform delivery by carrier would supersede delivery through post-office boxes, but this expectation has not been realized.

The postage rate for distances less than 3,000 miles remained at three cents for single letters weighing not in excess of half an ounce, and for local delivery the charge was two cents. At city-delivery post offices all letters prepaid at these rates were entitled to collection and delivery without further charge. It will be seen that the establishment of city-delivery service in 1863 did not reduce the cost of sending local letters, but eliminated the cost of delivery and collection from letters mailed at one post office for delivery at another. At the same time local correspondence was encouraged by the uniformity of the



A FLEET OF MAIL AUTOMOBILES IN NEW YORK CITY



INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR OF THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED GARAGE OF THE CHICAGO POST OFFICE

two-cent charge and the regularity and responsibility of the new carrier service established under the law of 1863.

Since its establishment, the number of city-delivery post offices has increased from 49 to nearly 1900, the number of carriers from 449 to 34,000 and the annual cost of carriers' salaries from \$300,000 to nearly \$40,000,000. The average compensation of a letter-carrier in 1863 was about \$500; the average compensation now is approximately \$1130.

The Postmaster-General is now *required* by law to employ letter-carriers for the "free delivery of mail matter as frequently as the public business may require in every incorporated city, village, or borough, containing a population of 50,000 within its corporate limits," and the Postmaster-General is *authorized* by law to employ letter-carriers for the free delivery of mail matter "at every place containing a population of not less than 10,000, within its corporate limits," according to the last general Census taken by authority of State or United States law. Again, the Postmaster-General may inaugurate this service at any post office which produced a gross revenue for the preceding fiscal year of not less than \$10,000.

City-delivery service has so long been established in cities and towns having a population of 50,000, that the Post Office Department is concerned now, under the legislation quoted above,

only with cities and towns in which the free delivery of mail may be established if the population amounts to 10,000 or the annual receipts to \$10,000. In pursuance of the discretion accorded by the law the Postmaster-General authorizes the establishment of city-delivery service at about 100 additional post offices each year. As a stimulus to the material development of communities and to facilitate the delivery and collection of mail, the Postmaster-General requires that before city-delivery service will be established, the town or city under consideration must be equipped with sidewalks, paved streets, (or cross-walks at street intersections) street lights and street signs, and that the houses shall be numbered according to a uniform system for the city or town and that the residences and places of business to which mail is to be delivered must be equipped with private mail-receptacles. This requirement is so important that it is stipulated not only in the case of the original establishment of delivery service in a city, but also in case of the extension of the service to new sections of cities already enjoying the benefits of delivery service.

The advantages to the patrons and to the service of house mail-receptacles are manifest. Where a receptacle is provided the carrier may deliver the mail at the residence or place of business whether the occupant is at home or not and

thus is obviated the necessity of awaiting a response to his summons at the door. It is found that from one to two minutes are consumed by the carrier awaiting a response at every place of delivery not equipped with a mail-receptacle. When it is considered that each carrier serves at least 500 residences or places of business, the enormous waste of time in a force of 34,000 carriers will be appreciated. The Department does not prescribe any particular size or style of mail-receptacles for patrons. This is left entirely to the judgment of the individual patron, and if he sees fit he may merely cut a slot in the front door through which the mail may be delivered. Postmasters throughout the country at the instance of the Department are constantly bringing this matter to the attention of patrons, pointing out to them that this simple cooperation not only reduces the cost of performing the service, but tends to advance the time of delivery to practically every patron.

Since the beginning of city-delivery service in 1863, the growth and changes in the form, kind, and weight of mail have made it necessary to employ other forces for this service than the letter carriers. Vehicles of practically all kinds have been employed at different times. During recent years the Post Office Department has devoted itself earnestly to the task of standardizing the vehicles used in this service with respect to power,

capacity, and style. The question of employing horse-drawn vehicles, automobiles or bicycles is now determined on the basis of what is best and most advantageous for the service. Vehicles of different kinds are used by delivering carriers, whose routes are in the suburbs and sparsely settled sections of cities; by collecting carriers in sections in which heavy deposits of mail are made in the boxes, and by carriers engaged in the parcel-post delivery and collection service where the bulk and weight of the mail make this necessary. For these various purposes there are now employed more than 1,400 horse-drawn vehicles, about 700 automobiles, and over 400 bicycles and motorcycles. These vehicles are secured in different localities under different contractual arrangements, the arrangement in each instance depending upon what is best for the service from the standpoint of both economy and efficiency. In some instances the carrier furnishes his own wagon or automobile under an allowance made by the Department, in addition to his regular salary, to cover the cost of maintenance and operation, with fair allowance for depreciation and interest on the investment. In other cases, notably in the larger cities, horse-drawn vehicles and automobiles are secured under annual contracts with successful bidders among those citizens who have submitted proposals in response to advertisements.

In other cities the automobiles are owned and operated by the Department. This arrangement is a radical departure from established custom, and has been developed in the past few years. It has been extended rapidly and at the present time all of the vehicles employed for the transportation of mail from railroad stations to the post office and its branches, as well as in the city delivery and collection service, in the cities of Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Saint Louis, Pittsburgh, Washington, Indianapolis and Nashville are owned and operated by the Post Office Department. The number of these automobiles is 540 and the approximate annual cost of their maintenance and operation is \$1,220,000.

Street cars are used in a few cities in collecting mail. In some instances letter-boxes are attached to the cars, in which mail may be deposited while the cars are standing still, and in other instances carriers are assigned to the cars to make collections from boxes on street corners along the route. However, this kind of service is giving way to the automobile for which the line of travel is not restricted.

The total annual cost of maintaining the delivery and collection of mail in cities is approximately \$50,000,000.

City-delivery service is the branch of the postal establishment which is in the closest connection with the greatest number of people. The condi-

tion and effectiveness of the service is therefore largely judged by the city-delivery service. The army of railway mail-clerks and of clerks in post offices, and the administrative officials of the Department and in post offices, are not associated in the minds of the public with their daily mail so intimately as the uniformed mail-carrier with whom they come in contact every day.

An unusual kind of city-delivery service is that accorded by the post office at Detroit to the vessels plying the Great Lakes. As the mammoth whalebacks and freighters pass through the Detroit river they are met by a boat letter-carrier in midstream. The mail is collected and delivered without even requiring the steamer to slacken its speed. This hazardous and important service is continuous throughout the twenty-four hours of each day.

Mail address to the boats is sent to the Marine Station of the Detroit post office and is there separated according to the names of vessels, arranged alphabetically, and put aboard a steam-tug. The tug proceeds to midstream to await approaching vessels. When the vessel arrives within a certain distance of the tug, one of the letter-carriers enters a rowboat with the mail for the approaching vessel, and rows toward a point in the river at which he will converge with the oncoming vessel. Near the point of convergence the carrier throws a line up to one of the crew of

the passing vessel, who catches and makes it fast. As the rowboat is towed with dashing speed alongside the large vessel, some one aboard the vessel lowers a bucket or hamper containing mail for dispatch. The carrier removes this mail and places in the hamper or bucket mail address to the vessel. The bucket is then drawn aboard the vessel, the line released, and the carrier returns to the tug to await the arrival of the next vessel.

When the traffic is heavy and two or more vessels are passing at the same time, the carrier in the rowboat serves one vessel while the carrier who remains on the steam-tug serves another from the tug by means of a bucket fastened to a long pole. In the latter case the tug steams alongside the larger vessel while the exchange of mails takes place.

The operation which has been described is performed by the carriers about 20,000 times during each shipping season, extending from April to December. Almost a million pieces of mail are handled each season. In this mail are to be found orders from headquarters to the masters of the boats, the reports of the masters to their employers, messages exchanged between members of the crew and their families on shore, and innumerable communications of other kinds, including, since the establishment of the parcel-post service, packages containing laundry and other necessities for the men.

As already stated, city-delivery service can not be established at any post office under the law, until the gross receipts have amounted to at least \$10,000 or until the population has reached 10,000, but to accommodate the residents of small towns in which the post-office receipts amount to not less than \$5,000 per annum, a service known as "Village Delivery" is now being developed. This service was first established experimentally October 16, 1912, and has been gradually extended until it is now operated from 280 offices and requires the services of approximately 400 carriers. The entrance salary paid to village-delivery carriers is at the rate of \$600 per annum and after twelve months of satisfactory service this is increased to \$690 per annum.

Where village delivery is inaugurated at offices of the third class the appointment of the carrier is not subject to the Civil Service rules, as such offices are not classified, but when the receipts thereof amount to \$8,000 a year the office is advanced to the second class and the employees thereat, including village-delivery carriers, are given a civil service status.

City-delivery service, together with rural service and village delivery, constitutes a type of service that is rapidly becoming universal. For different reasons the people in the country and the people in the city may best be served with their mail by carriers. Each city-carrier serves



MAIL CARRIER APPROACHING A STEAMER



THROWING THE LINE



CARRIER PLACING MAIL IN THE SHIP'S BUCKET
DETROIT MARINE SERVICE

Illustrations Copyright Detroit Publishing Co.



A MODERN SEA-GOING MAIL CARRIER



POST OFFICE ON AN OCEAN LINER

[See Chapter XXI]

an average of 1,500 people and it is better that a man should be engaged to perform this work than that such a number of patrons should be required to call at the congested post office. Already the larger post offices with their force of city and rural carriers serve all the territory surrounding the post office for many miles, both city and rural. Where the city carrier leaves off the rural carrier begins. There is also evidence of consolidation between the two services especially in the smaller cities. Hundreds of mounted city carriers are serving territory that is essentially rural in character. Then rural carriers are delivering mail within the city limits to the city patrons located on their line of travel to the beginning of their rural routes. Rural carriers also sometimes take out bundles of mail for the convenience of city carriers whose routes are located in the environs of the city.

As the organization of the postal service passes from a large number of post offices to a small number of large postal districts, affording more opportunities for efficient management, the postmaster and the post office will no longer be the direct agency for reaching the patrons, and the post office will no longer be a family community center—the carrier will intervene, and will bring to the door of every person in the land, and to every place of business all the facilities of the postal service.

Every city and rural carrier is in effect a postmaster. At the post office a special distributing case is assigned to each for his letters and papers. This case has usually 160 small compartments and these are labeled with the names of his patrons in the order in which the route is served by him. He collects his mail from the post-office clerks and arranges it in this case, before he commences each trip. His procedure is essentially the same as that of the small postmaster, except that instead of delivering the mail through the window he carries it out on the street or the rural route and delivers it at the home of the patron.

XIV.

ADDRESSES

EVERY person in the United States has a post-office address, which consists of his name, the name of the post office from which he receives his mail, and the name of the State or Territory within which the post office is located, as "John Smith, Bennettsville, South Carolina." Usually, the correct post-office address must also include the box-number, the number of the rural route, the name of the street and the house-number, or the words "General Delivery," as in the following examples:

JOHN SMITH,
GENERAL DELIVERY,
BENNETTSVILLE,
SOUTH CAROLINA.

JOHN SMITH,
BOX 63,
BENNETTSVILLE,
SOUTH CAROLINA.

JOHN SMITH,
241 WASHINGTON STREET,
BENNETTSVILLE,
SOUTH CAROLINA.

JOHN SMITH,
RURAL ROUTE #2,
BENNETTSVILLE,
SOUTH CAROLINA.

The post-office address is not correct unless it gives sufficient information for effecting the quickest handling, dispatch, and delivery of the mail.

In these times of publicity and advertising, it should not be difficult for any citizen to recognize the value and importance of his post-office address. It is a personal and business asset, and it widens the circle of his opportunities. If he makes it known in its full and correct form, he will establish a sound basis for the quick and sure delivery of his mail. This is one of the many good reasons for always placing a request for return, together with the name and full address of the sender, in the upper left-hand corner of the envelop of every letter, and on the wrapper of every parcel. The correct position of the address, return card and stamp are shown in the following illustration. Any variation from this general form is almost sure to delay the mail.

After 10 days return to JOHN SMITH, 241 WASHINGTON STREET, BENNETTSVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA.	STAMP.
JOHN JONES, RURAL ROUTE 6, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA.	

The name of the State or Territory should never be omitted from the post-office address. It

is needed for the quick reference of the distributor. This highly trained employee is, of course, familiar with the fact that there is a post office named Boston in the State of Massachusetts, but the omission of "Massachusetts" from a letter intended for the New England city will cause him to hesitate. There are eleven other Bostons besides the one intended. This pause may interrupt a "spurt" of high speed distribution just at a time when only seconds remain before the closing of the sacks for a big Eastern dispatch on an 18-hour Chicago-to-New York train. Thirty or forty letters miss the connection in this way and are delayed from six to twelve hours each. Thus, in the aggregate, delay amounting in time to more than ten days may result from writing "Boston" instead of "Boston, Massachusetts." This warning applies equally to any omission or abbreviation in writing addresses on mail-matter and to writing addresses illegibly.

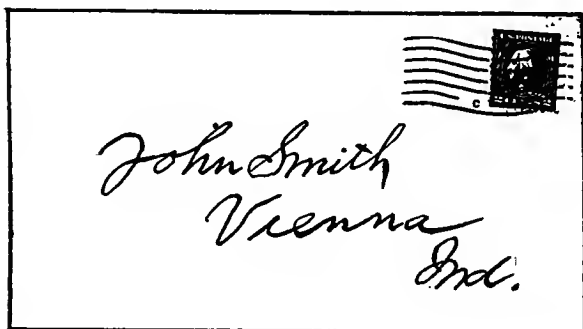
There is another reason for never omitting the name of the State from the post-office address. Many post offices bearing the same, or very similar names, are located in different States as, for example, Chicago, Illinois, and Chicago, Kentucky. It is now the rule of the Post Office Department not to approve of a new name for a post office if it is the same as the name of another post office in the United States. Unfortunately, this rule has been applied only for a few years,

and thousands of post offices still bear names in common with other post offices. A letter addressed to John Smith, Birmingham, might be intended for any one of twelve States from Alabama to Washington. It may be natural to think of Cleveland as being in the State of Ohio, but people in twenty-six states besides Ohio receive their mail through post offices in places bearing the same name. Troy is a post office name claimed by twenty-eight States. It is apparent, therefore, that the name of the State or Territory should always be added to the name of the post office in order to give a clear and unmistakable direction to the postmaster.

If the post-office address is written in the same way at all times, each person and business will establish his or its identity as a post-office patron. The name should be used always in the same form. Mr. Smith should choose John Smith, John Arthur Smith, J. A. Smith, J. Smith, or J. Arthur Smith, and stick to it.

Abbreviations of the post office or State are undesirable and should not be used. Abbreviation of the State name is a common cause of mail being missent or misthrown by post-office clerks. When abbreviated in the usual way, Maine resembles Missouri, and Pennsylvania, Tennessee. It happens that a letter addressed to Winona, Mississippi, reaches Winona, Minnesota, owing to the desire of the sender to save time in writing

the full address. Mail for Vienna, Maryland, and Vienna, Indiana, is very easily confused, if the State name is abbreviated, as in the following illustration:



To avoid the danger of such confusion, and to facilitate the work of the post office, it is best to write the full address, without abbreviation of any kind, and especially to avoid the use of such words as "Local," "City," or the like, to indicate that the letter or card is intended for the city within which it is mailed. A letter address in this improper way by a man in Brooklyn, and intended for some one in the same city may easily be carried by him across the East River and mailed in the postal district of New York. In that event, the letter may go to the dead-letter office; at the best, it will be seriously delayed. If

this kind of address be used, and there is no return address on the letter, it may also happen that the postmark may become blurred and obscured, so that if the letter is inadvertently mis-thrown into the outgoing mail it will never be returned or delivered. Such instances are, no doubt, rare, considering the great volume of mail handled by the United States Post Office, but the Division of Dead Letters at Washington continues to receive multitudes of letters which the senders had no idea would go there.

Legibility is of utmost importance in post-office addresses. A plainly written or typewritten address enables trained workers handling a piece of mail to maintain the wonderful speed of hand and eye which makes their services valuable to the post office. Pencil addresses are objectionable, as they are liable to become blurred. These and other slovenly and freakish addresses slow up the postal machinery from the beginning to the end of the postal journey. Thereby, other mail is delayed, the patience of distributors is sorely tried, and an unnecessary element is added to the cost of postal service. Postal experts in the great mailing centers have said that the additional cost of handling mail on account of illegible addresses must amount, for the whole country, to not less than \$1,000,000 annually. This waste caused by a part of the people, is paid for by all the people both in money and in delay.

It is a boorish and discourteous act to mail a letter, card, or parcel with an address that requires painful deciphering. This reprehensible practise is far from being confined to the uneducated and illiterate, who use the post office seldom. These infrequent correspondents are usually quite painstaking in writing addresses on mail. Some people actually strive to address their communications in an obscure manner for the purpose of testing the ingenuity of the postal clerks. "Character" handwriting produces many bad addresses which confuse and perplex the distributors. Flourishes, dashes, and other mutilations of penmanship, if used at all, should be reserved for the letter inside. The person who receives the letter may read, or not, at will. The post office, however, must read the address on the envelop, not once, but many times,—a service which should not be expected for the two-cent postage charge.

The address of a person who receives mail through a rented box, by city-delivery carrier, by rural carrier, or through the General Delivery, should include the box number, the street and house number, the rural route, or the words "General Delivery," as in the illustration. To omit these special directions will almost surely result in some delay and may actually prevent delivery. The post office makes every reasonable effort to deliver each piece of mail received, but the preference is naturally given to correctly and plainly

address mail. A letter directed to a street and number of a large city is distributed in the railway post office to station and carrier and its delivery then greatly advanced. Directory mail is massed on the main office. A letter address simply "John A. Williams, Providence, Rhode Island," goes to the directory section of the post office at Providence, and there the clerks supply the missing street and number, so that, first, the clerks may know which carrier should take it, and, second, the carrier may know where to deliver it. This service is all lost motion; it takes time and means delay and unnecessary expense.

Some business men in the largest cities, who are aware of the directory service performed by the post office for insufficiently address mail, purposely omit their street addresses from the advertising and stationery of their businesses, with a view to impressing casual correspondents with the idea that they are important enough to be known to the post office. As a result, mail received for these business men is incompletely directed and therefore passes regularly through the directory section. If these men could understand the delay and risk of loss to which their mail is subjected, it is probable that they would forego the doubtful advantages of this practise.

The postal regulations state that each person shall have his mail delivered to him as address,

or, if he so requests, he may have his choice of one of three methods of delivery, which will be used no matter how the mail is address. These three ways (at city delivery offices) are (1) by carrier, (2) through a rented box at the office, and (3) through the General Delivery. It is desirable, however, in the interest of efficiency and good service, that post offices be relieved as much as possible of special orders for the treatment of mail. The full street, box, or rural route address on stationery, advertising, and requests for the return of mail, tends to establish a uniform style of address, and helps both the patron and the post office.

The Post Office Department holds that the addresses of its patrons are an inviolate trust. Postmasters are not permitted to divulge any information about mail-matter or about those receiving mail at their post offices, except in rare instances to aid an officer of the law in apprehending a fugitive from justice or in obedience to the order of a court. Mailing lists which are sent to postmasters may be corrected, but only by crossing off the names of those whose addresses are not correctly stated on the lists. Forwarding addresses may not be furnished by postmasters, and names of their patrons must not be added to such lists or divulged in any other way.

In one year nearly eleven million pieces of dead mail were received in the Division of Dead Letters

and somewhat more than three and one-half million of these were finally delivered. Over 800,000 contained valuable enclosures, representing an aggregate value of more than \$2,000,000. About 100,000 pieces are annually held awaiting reclamation and seven million are destroyed because they are undeliverable and of no apparent value. A great number of the dead letters handled are incorrectly or insufficiently addressed. They are directed to the wrong state, to the name of the town which is not the name of a post office, or they fail to give the name of the post office, or the name of the city is omitted. More than 100,000 bore no address or name whatever. Lack of proper information accounts for some of these bad addresses but carelessness on the part of the writer is the chief cause.

The quantity of dead and undelivered mail is so great that the Department maintains four branch dead letter offices. The branch at New York receives undelivered letters from all post offices in the states of New York, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. The branch at Chicago receives undelivered letters from the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Montana. Branches are located at Honolulu and San Juan for handling the dead letters of the territory of Hawaii and

Porto Rico. The territory not provided for by these branches sends in its dead mail to the headquarters of the Division of Dead Letters at Washington.

In addition to these branches of the Dead Letter Office intended for handling letter-mail, there are twelve post offices to which undelivered parcel-post matter is sent for final treatment from the offices in their respective divisions of the country. These branches are located at Boston, Massachusetts; Atlanta, Georgia; Cincinnati, Ohio; St. Louis, Missouri; San Francisco, California; St. Paul, Minnesota; Fort Worth, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; Seattle, Washington; Omaha, Nebraska; and Chicago, Illinois.

Under the postal laws and regulations, valuable letters are held at the Dead Letter Office for a period of one year awaiting reclamation. Undelivered parcels are held six months only.

The Division of Dead Letters is operated according to the principles of good business. It recognizes as its first duty prompt and effective service to the greatest number of people. No time is lost in endeavoring to decipher cryptic letters deliberately designed as obstacles to prompt service but every possible consideration is given to deserving cases.

Directories of all principal cities are kept in constant use and clerks engaged in this work become expert in deciphering and interpreting the

addresses of letters written by the illiterate. These experts experience less difficulty on account of ignorance than on account of the disposition of those who deliberately write the address incorrectly.

XV

POSTAGE AND MAIL CLASSIFICATION

POSTAGE is the charge imposed by the Government for the service performed by the system of post offices and post roads. The purpose of postage is twofold: first, to offset the cost of maintaining the postal establishment, and second, to regulate the use of the mails.

It was within the power of Congress to establish and maintain postal service without exacting any payment from those directly benefited. There is nothing in the Constitution suggesting that all mail-matter should not be carried free at the expense of the whole people. Iceland had at one time a service of this kind which was maintained on the grounds of public policy and paid for out of the general receipts from taxation.

However, there are good reasons for regarding free postage as undesirable. Such an arrangement would result in charging all the people for service which is used by some to a much greater extent than by others. Expenses of the general Government, such as those incurred for the army and navy, are clearly chargeable to the interest of all the people, but it is equally clear that the

post office may properly be paid for by those who use it.

Altho the Constitution says nothing about using the postal establishment for revenue purposes, postage, as a matter of fact, was charged both before and after the establishment of the present form of government, and was no doubt contemplated by the founders.

The early administrators of our Government were not blind to the public nature of the post office, but there is no doubt that they would have been glad to make it yield a large revenue if any scale of postage rates could have been devised to produce that result.

The United States Post Office has seldom been used as a means of taxation. The disposition to employ it in this way may have existed as late as 1820, but the sparse population and great distances of the country, together with the imperative need for interstate communication, forced the National Government even prior to that date to pursue a more liberal policy toward the post office than was expressed by some of the public men of that day. At no time since John McLean became Postmaster-General in 1823 has the United States Government had any other policy with respect to the Post Office than to make it of the greatest use to all the people and at the same time to maintain it on a self-supporting basis. Every change in mail classification and postage rates has

been intended to insure the realization of this dual purpose. The present law classifying mail matter was enacted in 1879. The four classes are: (1) Written (including typewritten) and sealed matter. (2) Periodical publications complying with the law governing second-class mail privilege. (3) Miscellaneous printed matter. (4) Merchandise, which is the parcel post.

From the beginning of the Government to the present time the principal revenue of the postal establishment has been derived from the postage on first-class mail-matter, that is, on letters or other sealed or written matter. The first letter rates were based on single sheets of writing paper and varied according to distance from six cents for not exceeding thirty miles to twenty-five cents for distances greater than four hundred and fifty miles. These rates were multiplied by the number of sheets that each letter contained. Envelops were not used, the sheet or sheets of the letter being folded in the form of an envelop, sealed, and address on the back.

There was no material alteration in postal charges until the important legislation of 1845 which made any letter not weighing more than one-half ounce a single letter without regard to the number of sheets it contained, and established a five-cent rate for distances under three hundred miles and ten cents for all greater distances. Two years later postage stamps were adopted, and in

1851 these rates were reduced to three cents for any distance less than three hundred miles, if prepaid, and five cents if not prepaid, and, for a greater distance, six cents if prepaid, and ten cents if not prepaid.

Prepayment was made compulsory in 1855, and at the same time the rate for distances greater than three thousand miles, which was intended to cover the correspondence between the Eastern states and California, was increased to ten cents. The uniform rate of three cents for single letters not exceeding in weight one-half ounce, and for all distances was adopted in 1863. The present rate at two cents was established in 1883, and the weight limit of the single letter was increased from one-half ounce to the present limit of one ounce in 1885. There has been for several years an active agitation for one-cent letter-postage, and the Post Office Department has recently advocated the establishment of a one-cent drop-letter rate. However, in 1917, as a war revenue measure, letter postage was increased from two to three cents an ounce. This is the first instance in over a century of using postage in the United States for the purpose of general taxation.

The Act of 1792 provided that newspapers be carried in the mails for one cent each, except that when the distance exceeded one hundred miles, the rate was one and one-half cents. Two years later this legislation was amended by stipulat-

ing that the rate should not exceed one cent within the state in which the newspaper was published. A special rate for magazines and pamphlets was provided in 1845. This was one and one-half cents a sheet for any distance not more than one hundred miles and two and one-half cents for greater distances. Beginning with 1845 there was a great deal of legislation affecting the postage rates on periodical printed mail, which reflected the contending desires of those who advocated and opposed the extension of privileges to publishers. At the present time there are seven different rates of postage applicable to second-class matter, of which the principal ones are the general rate of one cent a pound on periodicals mailed by publishers to subscribers and news-agents and as sample copies, and the free-postage rate on copies mailed to subscribers residing in the counties where the publications are printed and published, provided the addressee does not receive his mail at a city-delivery post office.

The Commission on Second-Class Mail-Matter, headed by Charles E. Hughes, which was appointed under a joint resolution of Congress, went into the matter of rates very thoroughly and reported in 1912 that the rates of postage on second-class matter should be simplified and that the rate should be increased to two cents a pound. In its report to Congress the Commission said:

Such an increase will not, in the opinion of the Commission, bring distress upon the publishers of newspapers and periodicals, or seriously interfere with the dissemination of useful news or information. A reasonable time should be allowed, after the rate is fixed, before it is put into effect. While the new rate will be very far from compensating the Government for the carriage and handling of second-class matter, it will to some extent relieve the existing burden and result in a more equitable adjustment of rates.

It may be stated in this connection that according to the computations made by the Department from time to time the cost of handling and transporting second-class matter amounts to from eight to nine cents per pound. Those who seek the continuance of the present low rate on second-class mail contend that periodical publications are necessary to the social and business welfare of the country and that they are entitled to the credit for originating, through the advertisements carried in magazines, a large amount of the first-class mail, from which the Department receives its principal revenue.

The second-class mail privilege encourages magazine advertising, which has become an important element in creating a national market for standard brands of merchandise. In 1917, the proposal to tax the value of this advertising as a war revenue measure was vigorously opposed in Congress.

The third-class of mail is of little importance since the establishment of the parcel post. It is

generally referred to as comprising miscellaneous printed matter; formerly it also included books which are now admitted to the parcel post. The third class is retained merely as providing a special rate of one cent for two ounces of printed matter (not included in the second class) which, if it exceeds four pounds in weight, comes under the classification of parcel post.

The creation of parcel-express facilities under the fourth class of mail-matter has brought back into the postal system the zone method of postage. Uniform letter-postage for all distances was justified on the ground that the transportation of the individual piece was a small element in the total cost of handling and transportation. With parcels, however, the case is much different. The average size and weight of the parcel is much greater than that of the letter, so that the cost of transporting parcel-post matter is a very material part of the total cost, and distances can hardly be ignored in fixing postage rates. The advantages of uniform postage have been retained to some extent in the scale of rates for parcel post by prescribing uniform rates within extensive zones. Unlike freight and express rates, postage rates for merchandise are uniform for a great number of different destinations and there is no classification according to the character of the shipment.

It is estimated that more than twenty billion

pieces of mail-matter of all kinds are now handled throughout the postal system in one fiscal year. About one-half of this number of pieces consists of letters and cards. The Department has maintained a careful cost accounting system covering the operations of the service as related to the fourth-class mail, which is parcel post. The commercial nature of this public undertaking has made it essential to know at all times the relation between the revenue derived from parcel-post matter and the cost of the service performed. The law, moreover, stipulates that this class of mail shall not be handled at a loss. Altho the parcel-post rates have been repeatedly reduced and a volume of traffic aggregating a billion parcels a year has been developed, the service has been maintained consistently on a basis which brings the Department a somewhat greater return than is expended in the maintenance of facilities necessary for the parcel post.

The existing postage situation in the United States may be briefly described. Periodicals, newspapers, and magazines constitute about one-third of the number of pieces and more than one-half the weight of all the mail. Sealed and written communications constitute about one-half the number of pieces and but a small fraction of the total weight of the mail. The remainder of the mail-matter is represented by third and fourth-class matter.

In addition to the revenue producing matter, there is a vast amount of mail carried free. This free matter is made up of official mail of the Members of Congress and of the branches of the Government, bulletins of agricultural colleges and experimental stations, reading matter for the blind, and second-class matter within the county of publication. The last-named alone amounted, during the fiscal year of 1916, to 64,175,674 pounds, and it is estimated that the mailings of free official matter were somewhat greater.

The United States has no franking privilege in the sense in which that term was used in former times. Especially in England, and in our own country in early days, private citizens were very commonly accorded the free use of the mails as a special privilege. Postmasters in early times were given the franking privilege as a perquisite, and this covered not only their personal correspondence but also newspapers. In consequence of this privilege, which existed until 1845, many postmasters were editors. The English poet, William Cowper, who lived in the latter part of the eighteenth century is credited with writing: "I have said so much, that if I had not the frank I must burn my letter and begin again." This indicates the complacent attitude of those who held the franking privilege, and also suggests that it was a material advantage in the days of high postage rates. In the United States to-day

the franking problem is merely one of accounting and of reducing the unnecessary use of the mails for official purposes.

The official mail of all the Federal Departments and of Members of Congress is carried free. Obviously the cost of carrying this mail must be borne by the Government. It has been urged, however, by the officers of the Post Office Department that some record should be kept of this service in order to make it possible to ascertain at any time the financial condition of the postal service. Furthermore it is thought that the prepayment of postage by means of stamps charged against the several Departments and Members of Congress would have the effect of reducing the volume of official mail or at least of making the officers of the Government more careful in the distribution of Government literature and merchandise. Many instances have come to light where large quantities of seeds were received under the frank of a Member of Congress for delivery in a congested tenement district where such seeds could not be utilized. The same lack of care results in unjustifiable expense in the printing and of distributing of public documents.

Nine-tenths of the entire revenue from postage is derived from the sale of postage stamps. These are now issued in all denominations from one cent to twelve cents, and in denominations of fifteen cents, thirty cents, fifty cents and one dollar. The

number of denominations has been increased since the advent of the parcel post so that every rate of postage may be made out without using a large number of stamps. Other forms of postage are afforded by the postal card, the stamped envelop, and the newspaper wrapper. The Post Office Department issues annually more than twelve billion stamps, one billion postal cards and two billion stamped envelops, aggregating in value \$300,000,000. Three thousand men and women are engaged in the production of the paper, the finished stamps, cards and envelops, and in supplying them to the 56,000 post offices of the country.

Postage is paid in cash, without the use of stamps, for second-class matter which is mailed periodically in large quantities and for "permit matter," which is advertising circulars or samples mailed in bulk by special arrangement. For example, a business house which intends to send out a large number of circulars advertising its business may secure a permit under which, by depositing in advance a sum of money from which the postage charge may be deducted, it may mail these circulars with the number of the permit stamped on the face of each piece, and these are accepted and forwarded up to the amount of postage deposited.

Postage constitutes practically the entire revenue of the postal service. It is invariably paid in advance, either by the affixing of postage

stamps to mail-matter or by the special arrangements described in the preceding paragraph. It is held by postmasters as a trust fund and must under no circumstances be mingled or confused with any other money. Postmasters are not permitted to make any disbursements from postal funds without direct authorization from the Department. When they have received authority to make disbursements they may use the postage receipts up to the amount of the formal authorizations which have been issued to them and are on file in their offices. Postage receipts in excess of the expenditures of each office are remitted by postmasters to the depository post offices and finally find their way into the sub-treasuries of the United States from which they are checked on warrant by the Post Office Department to supplement the inadequate revenues of smaller post offices and for the payment of mail-contractors and others performing services for the Post Office Department.

XVI

PARCEL POST

PRIOR to the coming of our parcel post, a post-master-general said that there were four reasons why the United States could not have a domestic parcel post. The reasons were stated as the four leading private express companies of the country. There were, however, reasons more fundamental why the United States was the last of the great nations to establish parcel post as an adjunct to its mail service.

There is a fundamental difference between mail service and express service; one is communication and the other is transportation. It is true that letters and newspapers must be transported; but this transportation is merely a means of communication. Moreover, the things transported in mail service are so slight in bulk that the cost of transportation in each instance is negligible as compared to the cost of handling. In mail service, therefore, the rates are uniform for all distances. Even the admission to the mails of small parcels at uniform postage-rates was no departure from the essential character of the mail service.

The rate imposed for this limited merchandise-service was high—one-half the rate of first-class sealed mail.

Express service was very different. In its purpose and methods, in its rates and classifications of commodities, it was freight-service and not mail-service. It is not mail-service to-day. It was, however, an important public utility and the Government had in the Post Office an established institution capable of handling it.

This fact that the parcel post was a distinct enlargement of the postal power of Congress, and a decisive entrance upon the field of the public utilities controlled by private enterprises no doubt delayed the establishment of a parcel post in the United States.

Another more practical consideration delayed the United States parcel post. The vast extent of the country and the difficulty of controlling the great number of postmasters at outlying points made the transportation and accounting features of an express service formidable to a strictly postal establishment.

The two impelling causes of the parcel post were the popular dissatisfaction with the express service of the private companies and the potentiality of the rural mail service in this field. Representative David J. Lewis, an earnest advocate in Congress of parcel post, urged that the million miles of rural routes be connected with the steam

transportation lines so that express service might be carried to the farms. The universal extent of the mail lines and the common control of the postal service stood out in contrast to the conditions which made the private expresses unsatisfactory to the people. Altho there were several of the private express companies, the monopolistic nature of the business prevented competition and as a consequence the rates were high. The companies, moreover, quite naturally did not enter unprofitable territory, and altho assiduous in carrying service to such points as would yield a net profit, they were unable to reach thousands of out-of-the-way places. Millions of people who were receiving daily delivery and collection of mail were thus deprived of express service.

The parcel-post law went into effect January 1, 1913. In the organic act, postage was to be paid according to a zone system of rates and individual shipments were limited to 11 pounds in weight. The service provided was express service but differed essentially from that provided by the private express companies. The parcel post was the adaptation of mail-service principles and methods to the small freight business. Unlike express rates, the parcel-post rates provided no classification of articles according to their value or urgency. The principle of fixing rates according to what the traffic will bear has no place in parcel-post rates. The vast extent of the coun-

try and the great distances which parcels would have to be carried in some instances, together with the prevailing method of compensating transportation lines, made it impossible to provide uniform flat rates for parcel post, but within large zones of distances rates to all destinations were the same.

The parcel post was popular from the beginning. In all parts of the country enthusiastic advocates of the service celebrated its advent by mailing thousands of "first parcels to be sent by parcel post." The new postal facility was heralded as the means by which the cost of living was to be reduced. It was expected that large quantities of food products would be shipped direct by mail from the producer on the farm to the consumer in the city. This expectation, however, was not immediately realized, and the popularity of the service rested on the convenience which nearly every one experienced at some time of sending small parcels by mail. The rates, moreover, were substantially lower than the previous postal rates on merchandise or the previous express rates.

Naturally, the first important use of the parcel post for commercial purposes was made by the large mail-order houses located mainly in Chicago and New York. Up to 11 pounds they were afforded an express service at low rates direct to the door of every rural-mail or city-delivery

patron of the post offices. With their organizations trained and waiting through months of anticipation these companies were ready and willing to put the parcel post to the most effective use.

Not the least important result of the coming of the parcel post was the filing of entirely new and lower schedules of rates by the express companies and the amalgamation and organization of these companies so as to enable them to perform service more efficiently and economically. These companies performed many messenger and agency services and carried packages larger than were admitted to the parcel post. The development of the parcel post service was very rapid. Postmaster-General Burleson, under the wide discretion given by Congress and with the consent of the Interstate Commerce Commission, rapidly reduced the rates and liberalized the conditions of mailability. It was found that the cost of handling the "short hauls" was much less than the rates of postage prescribed, and accordingly the rates up to the sixth zone were materially reduced. By 1914 the weight limit was increased from eleven to fifty pounds in the first and second zones and from eleven to twenty pounds for greater distances. The size limit was simultaneously increased from seventy-two inches to eighty-nine inches combined length and girth of measurement. The cost of insuring parcels has

been reduced and it has been provided that indemnity might be paid for partial damage as well as for total loss. Prior to the parcel post, books were originally included with other printed matter in the third classification of mail, so that they might enjoy the preferred rate of one cent for each two ounces. The result was that books were not included in the parcel-post classification which embraced only such matter as was not included in the first three classes of mail. Postmaster-General Burleson, with the consent of the Interstate Commerce Commission, removed this inconsistency in July, 1915, by admitting books to the parcel post but retaining the preferred third-class rate for books weighing not more than eight ounces.

While these improvements in service were being placed in effect, the postal establishment was adjusting itself internally to handling the new kind of mail. A change which afforded satisfaction to the patrons as well as promoted efficiency in the service was the discontinuance of the distinctive parcel-post stamps. Uniformity is the first principle of postal efficiency and these distinctive stamps had the effect of slowing up all classes of mail. The discontinuance of the distinctive parcel-post stamps did not result in mingling this class of mail matter with other classes. From the beginning all parcels larger or heavier than ordinary mail pieces have been handled separately



PARCEL-POST COMING IN FROM TRAINS



ARRANGING PARCELS FOR DELIVERY



LOADING PARCEL-POST DELIVERY WAGONS



MINING CAMPS RECEIVE FOOD BY MAIL



COUNTY FAIR EXHIBIT OF PARCEL-POST SHIPMENTS

and special means devised for perfecting the Government's express business.

Parcels are treated like letters but they are treated separately. There is no record kept of the individual piece and the distribution and separation of masses of parcels is carried on in much the same way as the distribution and separation of letters, but the equipment provided for this purpose is necessarily different and a separate force of employees is engaged in handling the parcel post in the large city post offices. It was soon found that to adequately protect all parcels through the mail it would be necessary to secure the cooperation of the patrons in preparing their parcels and also to make special provision within the service for handling fragile and perishable matter. Consequently, at the direction of the Department the postmasters have conducted a persistent campaign of publicity urging patrons to pack and wrap their parcels carefully and to address them plainly.

In the case of perishable matter to be transmitted by parcel post patrons are notified to consult the post office regarding the schedule of trains so that the parcels may be mailed at a time when they will make the best connection and not be held in the post office. Postal employees have become keenly vigilant in refusing to accept parcels that are not properly prepared and in assisting and instructing patrons in the best

methods of wrapping and packing different kinds of commodities. Strictly fragile parcels are not placed in the mail sacks but are marked conspicuously and kept outside the containers. Throughout the processes of distribution and from the beginning to the end of the journey through the mails these parcels are not to be thrown or placed with other mail-matter but must be passed from one hand to another or laid in a safe place outside of the distribution cases and outside the mail-sacks.

At all times in the past the heavy use of the mails during the Christmas holidays has taxed the resources of the postal establishment, and the advent of the parcel post has greatly accentuated this problem. It is a gratifying fact that each year the post offices are handling this extraordinary situation with less difficulty. Postal employees have become more expert in the handling of heavy and bulky mail. Better collection equipment has been made necessary by the parcel post. Automobiles and other vehicles are employed for collecting and delivering to a greater extent than ever before, and the entire service has been organized by the Department in such a way that the needs of the post offices are anticipated weeks in advance by issuing special allowances, and by authorizing the employment of whatever emergency force may be necessary. Large post offices also secure in advance whatever additional space

will be needed for the great avalanche which commences about one week before Christmas day and continues until after the first of January following.

Much has been accomplished in relieving the congested situation in the latter part of December by enlisting the cooperation of patrons, who respond satisfactorily to requests that parcels containing gifts be mailed several days in advance of Christmas day and marked, if desired, "Not to be opened until Christmas," or with other like expressions. Newspapers and civic organizations have joined with the postmasters in advocating the "Shop Early" and "Mail Early" idea at Christmastide. These suggestions are so reasonable both on the grounds of good service and in the interest of employees that the feeling that they shall be complied with is now general. It is a matter of pride with the employees that they must not "go stuck" on Christmas day. As the result of this spirit throughout the service together with the plans which are made in advance and the cooperation of patrons, there is practically no post office in the United States that does not deliver before the close of Christmas day every parcel received at the post office up to that time. It often happens that many parcels intended as Christmas gifts are received Christmas night or the day following. The responsibility for this delay, however, is almost invariably

with the mailer who has waited until the eleventh hour before depositing the gift at the post office.

The Post Office Department has made every effort within its power to encourage the so-called "farm-to-table" movement by parcel post. A number of post offices were designated at which the postmasters were authorized to print lists of the names of farmers offering to sell farm products by mail. These lists were printed and distributed by carriers to the patrons of the city-delivery service. Newspapers in these cities were invariably interested in the efforts being made. A traffic, large in the aggregate, in butter, eggs and other food products has grown up at the different post offices, especially under alert postmasters, but it can not be said that this traffic is yet fully developed or sufficient to influence materially the cost of living for the whole country. A sound and conservative view of the farm-to-table movement will recognize that this traffic between the individual farmer and the individual consumer in the city is unquestionably on the increase everywhere. Such a view will recognize that the parcel post, in conjunction with the mail service, offers a convenient means at low cost by which any farmer and any resident in the city may establish direct relations. As the farmer invariably receives for his product much less than people in the cities pay for the same product it must be seen that there is a tangible incentive on both

sides to establish the direct relation by mail. It must also be seen, however, that there are inherent difficulties in the farm-to-table movement of doing business. For example, considerable quantities must be purchased by the city consumer in order to secure the lowest postage rate.

The city consumer, accustomed to market methods, naturally desires to see and examine food products before purchasing. On the other hand, the farmer who goes to the trouble of preparing commodities for shipment by parcel post acquaints himself with market quotations and has the disposition to charge the same prices that are paid in the city markets. This tends to deprive the city consumer of the incentive to maintain the relationship. Correspondence by mail, moreover, is irksome to most persons, especially in the rural communities, and arrangements between producers and city consumers are frequently discontinued through discouragement resulting from delays in answering letters or filling orders. Moreover, the city consumer can not always be sure of getting the kind and amount of commodities ordered unless an extensive arrangement is maintained with a group of farmers.

A satisfactory farm-to-table arrangement is quite dependent on acquaintance between the two parties or confidence built up through a large number of transactions.

The parcel post undoubtedly has already had

some effect on the cost of living and is destined to exercise more. In individual cases it brings wealth and profit and it stands always as latent competition to the established system of distribution. Whenever the cost of distribution so reduces the price paid the farmer, or so increases the price charged the consumer that either is aroused to take the steps necessary to establish direct relations between the supply and demand, the parcel post will be waiting to carry the goods.

The parcel post has had an important effect on the institutional efficiency of post offices. It has had the definite effect of improving all branches of the mail-service. The mail-service is an enterprise that responds very generally to the economic law of increasing returns. The increase in the volume of mail distributes the overhead charges among a greater number of transactions, requires the employment of more men and consequently permits greater division of labor and supervision. The increase in the volume of mail due to parcel post has brought many innovations which have improved other branches of the service. For example, in the collection service the parcel post has brought into the service a great number of vehicles, especially automobiles. These vehicles were necessary for the delivery of heavy and bulky parcels, but they become available also for the collection of letter-mail.

The competition of the private express com-

panies constitutes an important problem in the development of the parcel post. The express companies are a development downward of the railway freight-service, while the parcel post is a development upward of the mail-service. Express rates are made in accordance with the same intricate and complex principles as govern the making of freight rates. These intricacies have to do with the relative value of the service rendered in transporting different kinds of commodities, and in different directions. The cost of performing the service is not distributed evenly over all commodities, but such rates are fixed as will induce the greatest possible volume of traffic producing the maximum of profit. Opposed to this system is the parcel post carrying all commodities at a uniformly low rate and making only a few distinctions on account of distance. The parcel post depends for its efficiency on the uniformity and simplicity of its rates. The result is that the private companies are enabled to take much profitable business from the parcel post and to leave with the Government's institution the business which to them is relatively unprofitable.

The Government's monopoly does not extend beyond the carrying of written communications and matter which is sealed against inspection. It has no monopoly over the transportation of merchandise in parcels of any size. The parcel post remains, with the money-order service and

the postal savings system, a service incidental to the mail-service, called into existence at the will of the people, as a convenient facility which could be maintained at reasonable cost in connection with the postal establishment. It constitutes no assertion that the business done is necessarily a Government function. Evidently there exists yet in this country a useful and profitable function for the independent express companies to perform. As long as this place in the economic field is filled by those companies as well as it could be by the Government, there is little likelihood that Congress will authorize the taking over of all express business by the post office.

XVII

SPECIAL SERVICES

THE post office provides two principal kinds of special services for preferred mail—special delivery and registration. All mail is safeguarded and is expedited to the greatest possible extent, and the same protection and expedition is accorded to every piece of ordinary mail of the same class. Extraordinary protection or extraordinary expedition may be secured, however, for any piece of mail by the payment of additional postage.

If the greatest possible protection is desired, a letter or other piece of sealed first-class mail may be registered on the prepayment of ten cents, in addition to the regular postage. Parcel-post matter is not registered, but it may be insured for a nominal charge against loss or damage; any such parcel may be registered of course, if first-class postage is paid on it.

If it is extraordinary dispatch and delivery rather than extraordinary protection that is desired, this service may be secured for any piece of mail by the prepayment of the “special delivery” postage-charge of ten cents.

Special delivery and registry service are often confused. From the foregoing it will be seen that the purpose of each service is distinct from the other. Registering a letter does not necessarily advance its delivery, on the contrary it may actually retard delivery owing to the necessity of obtaining a receipt from every employee through whose hands it passes.

A special delivery stamp on a letter or parcel does not make it any more secure than other mail, but on the contrary makes it more conspicuous so that it is inadvisable to enclose anything of intrinsic value in a special-delivery letter or to place a special-delivery stamp on a valuable parcel without also insuring the parcel.

A registered letter, or other piece of mail on which first-class postage has been paid, is not handled with the ordinary mail, but receives individual treatment. Its progress through the mails is recorded step by step and there is not a moment in which it is not charged to a sworn employee of the postal service who is responsible for its safe-keeping. In case of loss a registered letter may be quickly traced to the employee responsible. The registration of a letter carries with it insurance to the extent of \$50. Registered mail is now so thoroughly safeguarded at all points in the service that losses are reduced to the minimum. Private insurance companies, which sometimes insure registered mail over and

above the amount for which the Post Office Department pays indemnity, consider this the safest risk they are called upon to assume.

The earliest mail registration system of which there is record originated in France. It provided a cheap system for sending money-letters to be receipted for by each person receiving them. In the United States, registration was first advocated by Postmaster-General McLean in the following words quoted from his report for the fiscal year 1828:

It may be advantageous to the public and the Department, at some future time, for it to become the insurer of monies transmitted in the mail, being authorized to charge a high rate of postage in such cases, to indemnify for the risk incurred. To guard against frauds, this responsibility must necessarily be limited to packets mailed at the principal offices, under such regulations as show the greatest possible security.

Commenting on this recommendation President John Quincy Adams said: "The suggestion of the Postmaster-General, that the insurance of the safe transmission of monies by the mail might be assumed by the Department for a moderate and competent remuneration will deserve the consideration of Congress."

The registry service was established in 1855. It was designed to afford a special security for letters containing money and other valuable enclosures. It was also designed to free the ordi-

nary mails from carrying this valuable matter, which was a constant source of danger to all the mail, as in case of robbery or depredation large quantities of mail were apt to be destroyed in the operation of thieves and robbers.

The early registration system of the United States was not altogether satisfactory as will be seen from a contemporary reference to it as "that funny assurance office where the Department for a handsome premium insures letters against itself on condition of paying no losses." It is probably true that the early system identified the valuable letters without affording them any extraordinary protection, so that robbery and depredation were, as a matter of fact, stimulated. After a few years, however this condition was entirely changed. In 1868 a system of receipts and accounts was adopted which definitely fixt the responsibility for handling each piece of registered mail on the postmasters and other agents of the Department through whose hands it passed. With the growth and improvement of the service all complaints against the registry service have disappeared. On the fiftieth anniversary of the registry service Postmaster-General Cortelyou said: "There is no private enterprise in the world with a better record." Recently, improvements have been made so that registered mail, in addition to being safeguarded almost beyond any possibility of loss, is now ex-

pedited in dispatch and reaches its destination in many instances as quickly as ordinary mail.

The registry service is a mail-service separate and distinct from the ordinary mails. So far as practicable, it is handled by separate clerks in separate rooms or at separate windows; it is dispatched in separate pouches with separate locks. When the domestic parcel post was established, it was recognized that the registration of parcels would throw an undue burden on this smoothly working system and interfere with the effective registration of letters. Accordingly the insurance system was adopted. A parcel may be insured for amounts ranging from \$5 to \$100 on payment of fees or from 3 to 25 cents. These parcels are handled in no different manner from other parcels, and the service rendered for the special fee paid is purely one of risk-taking or insurance.

The C. O. D. service was established on July 1, 1913. This service applies to domestic unsealed mail which can not be registered and is operative only between post offices to which the money-order service has been extended. As its name indicates, it provides a means for collecting from the addressee the price of the shipment, which is returned by means of a money-order to the sender. When the fee is paid for sending a parcel C. O. D. the parcel is automatically insured for its value up to \$50.

The total indemnity paid for the fiscal year

ending June 30, 1916, on account of registered, insured, and C. O. D. mail was \$231,047.73, divided among 33,032 claimants. There were 70,473,197 pieces of mail registered, insured and sent C. O. D. during the year, on 65,507,459 of which fees were paid, the remainder being registered free. The fees for the year aggregated \$5,124,329.99.

Special-delivery service was established in 1885. The facility provides that as quickly as the special nature of a piece of mail is identified it will be taken out of the mass of ordinary mail and given preferential treatment at every point where it must be relayed and, especially, at the point of delivery. Before each tie-out, the special-delivery letters are placed on top of each package of letters so that the next distributor to handle the package may sort the "specials" first. On reaching the post office of destination the law requires that the postmaster, even at the smallest office, shall deliver it at once within the hours of 7 A. M. and 7 P. M.; at city delivery offices immediate delivery must be made up to as late as 11 P. M. The Department specifically notifies its patrons that special-delivery service does not insure unusual safety or a personal delivery to the party addrest. Money or other valuables should be registered or insured. When the special-delivery letter or parcel can not be delivered a notice is left at the place of address and the piece

of mail is returned to the post office after which it is handled as ordinary mail.

At the larger post offices the deliveries of special-delivery matter are made by messengers regularly attached to the post office. The postmaster may select for these positions any one not under 16 years of age. The compensation to the boys is eight cents for each delivery. Where there are several boys attached to an office the clerk in charge of their work is required to see to it that the "specials" to be delivered are equitably apportioned among the messengers. The messengers are required to use bicycles or motorcycles in the performance of their delivery duties. These equipments are furnished and maintained at their own expense.

These special services of registry, insurance and special delivery may be regarded as mail services as distinguished from the money-order, and postal-savings facilities. These latter have no relation to mail matter, but are services incidental to the mail service.

XVIII

POSTAL BANKING

THE post office is also a bank. It receives deposits, pays interest, exchanges bonds for deposits, and sells exchange. The postal money-orders provide the most convenient method of sending small remittances and afford practically all the convenience of a bank checking-account. The postal savings system is the safest and most convenient savings-bank in the world.

This great post-office bank has nearly 700,000 depositors with about \$135,000,000 in savings-accounts. In addition, deposits to the amount of more than \$10,000,000 have been converted into United States Postal Savings Bonds. The remittance business of the post office is patronized by practically all the people in the country. In a single year more than 100,000,000 money-orders are issued and the aggregate face value of these instruments approaches close to \$700,000,000. About 4,000,000 money-orders payable in foreign countries, in the aggregate amount of about \$100,000,000, were issued annually prior to August, 1914.

The banking business of the post office can not

be adequately treated merely as an adjunct to the postal system. It is a great national institution performing important services which are but slightly related to the mail-service. The treatment here accorded this important subject is limited to a brief review of the history and present condition of the money-order and postal-savings systems and an attempt to state the relation of these services to the postal establishment.

Money-order service was conducted in connection with the postal service in England as early as 1792. Three officers of the General Post Office at London engaged in this enterprise privately. They arranged to draw orders on certain post-masters, who drew on them in return. The rate of exchange was high and variable and the volume of business insignificant. This private system continued in England until 1838 when the proprietors were compensated by the government and the money-order service was formally established in connection with the British post office. By 1854 more than 5,000,000 remittances were made annually through the post offices of the United Kingdom and the average amount of each order was nearly ten dollars.

The feasibility and desirability of postal money-order service was a subject of debate in the United States prior to its establishment in 1864. The establishment of the service was urged on two grounds: To eliminate "money letters" from the

mails; and to provide a convenient and safe means for sending small sums of money by mail. The establishment of the registry service in 1855 was in partial recognition of this growing sentiment, but the registry service was somewhat of a disappointment in the first few years of its operation and appears to have caused as many depredations as it prevented. The establishment of money-order service it was thought would free the mails entirely of all small sums of money and leave to the registry service the duty of safeguarding only special shipments of large sums of money and articles of value.

Postmaster-General Blair's recommendation of 1862 was renewed in his report of 1863 with the further argument that the establishment of the service would afford a convenience much needed by the soldiers of the Union armies in remitting money to their families. Congress acted favorably on this recommendation and the service was placed in operation in 141 of the largest post offices under a special set of regulations and according to a plan carefully worked out in advance. The service was popular from the beginning and was extended before the end of the first year to 419 post offices. During the first eight months over \$400,000 was transmitted by money-orders issued at the headquarters of armies in the field.

From its establishment in 1864 to August 1,

1891, the money-order system was an independent bureau of the Post Office Department. Throughout that period the superintendent of the bureau was Dr. C. F. McDonald, who rendered most important service in establishing this system. He is known as the father of the money-order system. On his death, in 1893, it was found that Dr. McDonald had bequeathed \$2,000 to the Secretary of the Treasury for the use of the Postmaster-General in the improvement of the money-order system. A period of twenty years elapsed before this cash bequest was finally accepted and an appropriation in the same amount made by Congress under which the Department has perpetuated the memory of Dr. McDonald by having a fine vignette of this loyal and distinguished public servant placed on the forms which are used by the Postmaster-General in the transfers of money-order funds within the service. In 1891 the money-order system was discontinued as an independent bureau and made a division under the immediate supervision of the First Assistant Postmaster-General. Since December 1, 1905, it has been attached to the bureau of the Third Assistant Postmaster-General.

The first limit on the amount in which money-orders might be issued was \$30. This was believed to be ample for the reason that the average amount enclosed in money letters which reached the Dead Letter Office in 1864 was about \$5. The

establishment of the money-order service created a different situation and it was soon found that there were frequent applications for remittances in such amounts that two or more orders had to be drawn. As a result the limit in 1866 was raised to \$50 and in 1883 to \$100. A limit is retained as a protection against the raising of money-orders to large amounts and as a practical method of restricting the volume of money-order business between any two offices to an amount that can be conveniently handled by the postal system.

The money-order form which takes the place of money in the mails is of great importance as it must satisfy several important requirements. The form should make counterfeiting difficult and at the same time should facilitate the negotiation of the instrument by the addressee as well as the process of auditing in Washington. Including the present form seven different forms have been used in the course of the development of the service. The first form which was used until 1893 was issued in duplicate with the name of the payee entered on the duplicate and not on the original. The duplicate or "advice" was forwarded by the postmaster to the postmaster at the paying office as a means of identification and to prevent the presentation of the original by any person other than the payee. This condition caused embarrassment to patrons because frequently the payee was not sure of the precise manner in which he

should indorse the money-order nor was he sure that it was not issued to some other member of his family or business firm. These difficulties were overcome in 1893 by adding the name of the payee to the original. In 1894 Congress prescribed by law a special form with a coupon to be retained by the purchaser and a marginal device for protection against raising. This form was found unsatisfactory and in 1899 a law was passed placing the matter of money-order forms under the control of the Postmaster-General. The new form issued at that time retained both the advice and receipt features. In 1905 safety paper began to be used in making the money-order forms. In 1910 an important step was taken in eliminating the duplicate feature of the money-order forms. These advices were costing the Department more than \$500,000 a year. Subsequent events have justified those persons who maintained that the advice was not necessary as a means of protection either to the Government or to the patrons using the money-order service. The money-order form now in use was first issued July 1, 1914, by Postmaster-General Burleson, and provides that a money-order shall be payable at the office on which drawn at any time within one year or payable at any money-order post office in the United States within thirty days after issue. The three important liberalizing steps in the development of the money-order service have been connected with

changes in the form. The first was adding the name of the payee to the original money-order, the second the discontinuance of the "advice," and the third was the provision in 1914 for the universal payment of money-orders at any post office in the United States.

At one time postal notes were issued by the post office in addition to money-orders. The need for these instruments arose after the withdrawal of fractional currency in 1875. The postal note was adopted in 1883 and was used for sending sums less than \$5. The fee was 3c and there was no advice. Later it was found undesirable to have two systems of postal remittances. Accordingly, the postal note was abolished and a 3c fee provided for money-orders up to \$2.50 so that all the practical advantages of the postal-note were transferred to the money-order. Authority was later given the postmaster-general to reissue postal notes, but no action has been taken under this authority. It may be observed that in 1892 the postal note as well as the postal money-order was in use. There was some demand for a "postal remitting card" to provide for remittances of the smallest amount and to prevent the use of postage-stamps for that purpose.

The money-order system is now so thoroughly developed, with more than 56,000 agencies (post offices and postal stations) in this country and arrangements with practically all the civilized na-

tions and with the universal payment privilege, that there is little excuse for sending money or stamps through the mails. Money in the mails is constantly subject to loss or depredation and stamps in addition to this disadvantage seriously interfere with the accounting system of the postal service. The compensation of postmasters and the allowances issued to post offices are controlled to a large extent by the stamps sold at each post office. This system of accounting is based on the assumption that the stamps sold at each post office are to be used in mailing letters and parcels at the same post office. If on the contrary postage-stamps are purchased and used for remittances the result is that one post office gets the credit for the sale of postage which will be used in sending mail matter at another post office.

Neither should small remittances be sent by registered mail. Registration minimizes the risk of loss but the money-order eliminates it entirely. The registration service is maintained for carrying money and valuable papers and articles which either are not in the nature of remittances or are in amount too great to be sent by money-order.

The money-order service gives every citizen the facility of a checking account at small expense. For example, the wage-earner may have from ten to twenty private bills and accounts to pay monthly. It is desirable that he should have a

convenient, uniform record of payments which can not be questioned. Many people in this class would find it difficult and inconvenient to maintain a checking account in a private bank, and in some cities small checking accounts will not be carried by banks unless a certain sum is carried on deposit. This service may be secured from the post office for a charge of 3 cents up for each remittance, aggregating less than 50 cents for the principal monthly remittances of the ordinary family. The purchaser's receipt attached to each money-order should be filled in with the name of the person to whom the money-order is going and the purpose of the payment. This receipt bears the amount and the serial number of the money-order and constitutes a receipt endorsed by the authority of the Government. In case of dispute or litigation the original money-order may be produced from the files of the Post Office Department.

The Government has itself used the money-order service for two important purposes. After the Civil War money-orders were issued to former soldiers in order that the payment to the correct person might be insured by the postal service; and during the Spanish war nearly \$2,000,000 was collected by a two-cent tax on money-orders. This tax was imposed for the three-year period commencing with July 1, 1898.

International money-order service was first ar-

ranged with Switzerland in 1869. A convention was concluded with Great Britain in 1871, and Germany and Canada were the next countries to enter into money-order relations with the postal administration of the United States. At the outbreak of the war in Europe money-orders were being exchanged between the United States and more than sixty foreign nations. When the first conventions were entered into, the currency of the United States was fluctuating in value and consequently it was necessary to arrange that money-orders issued in the United States for payment abroad be sent to exchange offices where conversion was made at the current rate of exchange. After suitable monetary conditions had been established in this country it was possible in 1880 to discontinue this unsatisfactory arrangement, and since that time money-orders have been issued at our post offices in terms of money of the countries to which the money-orders are going. Tables of money conversion are furnished to the postmasters so that they may readily convert amounts in American currency to the corresponding amounts in foreign money. The first limit on international money-orders was \$50 but this was increased in 1889 to \$100 so that the limit to-day is the same as for domestic orders.

Each year has closed with the Post Office Department of the United States owing the foreign postal administrations, for the reason that a

greater amount of money is sent from this country by means of money-orders to other countries than is received in this country by money-orders issued abroad. This condition necessitates large remittances by the American postal administration to the foreign departments, which is effected by means of bills of exchange. This exchange on other nations has been purchasable below par for the reason that the United States has exported more goods than it has imported. The gain on foreign exchange has been one of the most important elements in the revenue of the United States money-order system. During the European war this gain amounted to about \$500,000 annually.

A considerable part of the revenue of the service comes from money-orders which are never presented for payment. As large numbers of money-orders are constantly outstanding, the amount of claims which may be presented at any time can not be ascertained. The money-order funds are kept distinct from the ordinary postal funds, but the expenses of maintaining the service are so merged with postal expenses for salaries and equipment that the exact cost of maintaining the money-order service can only be estimated. The charges paid directly from the money-order revenues exceed two million dollars annually. The cost of administering the service at Washington and of auditing the money-order accounts

amounts to about one-half million more. The cost per year of the operation at post offices is estimated at over five million. The sum of these items (\$8,000,000) is practically equivalent to the annual income from fees secured from issuing money-orders plus the gain on foreign exchange. Hence the profit made from the service, if any, is realized from the lapsed money-order funds, the small percentage of orders which are never presented for payment but which aggregate several hundred thousand dollars annually.

In the fifty years elapsing between 1865 and 1915, the amount of money-orders issued annually in the United States increased from 74,000 to 105,000,000 and the value of the orders from \$136,000 to \$665,000,000.

There are more postal money-order offices than post offices, altho some small post offices are not money-order offices. This anomaly is explained by the fact that among the money-order offices are included a large number of branch post offices and postal stations in cities.

About 150,000,000 money-orders annually are issued in the United States, or in foreign countries payable in the United States. Practically all of these orders are paid at other post offices, making a grand total of 300,000,000 separate debit and credit entries to audit. Most of the money-orders originate at the 45,000 small post offices and are paid in the large cities. Approxi-

mately 25 per cent are paid at Chicago and New York, and fully two-thirds of them are paid at the fifty largest post offices of the country.

The duty of auditing these transactions is assigned to the Auditor for the Post Office Department, who is an officer of the Treasury Department. The fifty largest post offices make reports to the auditor daily, and reports are required from the remaining offices monthly or semi-monthly, according to the importance and number of their money-order transactions. A complete audit is effected every three months. Each postmaster sends in a list of the money-orders issued by him and another list of the money-orders paid by him accompanied by the paid orders as vouchers. The Auditor must first verify the credits claimed by the postmaster who pays the money-orders. He must then ascertain whether the amount of each money-order corresponds with the amount on the issued list. Practically all of this work is now done by machinery. The numbers of each paid money-order are transcribed to a card by means of holes punched through the card. These perforated cards indicate the office number, serial number, amount, fee, month of issue, and identification symbol of each paid money-order. Each operative who makes these cards averages 3,000 per day. After the paid lists are verified the cards are reassembled according to the states and post offices where issued

and according to numerical sequence. This also is done by an automatic electrical machine which assembles the perforated cards in any desired sequence or arrangement.

For many years prior to the establishment of the postal-savings system in 1911, post offices were used for the deposit of savings or for the temporary deposit of money for safe-keeping. Patrons secured this service by purchasing money-orders payable to themselves at the office of issue. The postal savings system has so extended the banking facilities of the post office that money may be placed on deposit in any amount up to \$1,000 without the payment of any fee as was the case when money-orders were purchased, but on the contrary with the assurance that interest at the rate of 2 per cent per annum will be paid on all deposits left with the Government for a period of one year.

The sending of money-order remittances is analogous at least to the sending of messages, and consequently the money-order service partakes to some extent of the nature of mail-service. The postal money-order system, as has been noted, was necessary to free the mails of money letters and prevent the use of postage stamps for remittance purposes. The postal savings system, however, has no relation to the mails or the mail function, but is an outgrowth of the purely banking feature of the money-order sys-

tem. It is operated by the post office for practical reasons.

The postal savings system is a national institution for the encouragement of thrift and for bringing hoarded money into circulation. Those who are reluctant to place their savings with commercial banks may make deposits at the post offices with the full assurance that the faith and credit of the United States is pledged to the repayment of the principal and interest on their deposit whenever it may be demanded. Experience has shown that a large number of people in the United States, especially those born in foreign countries, will entrust their savings to the Government whereas they will not at first patronize private institutions. Postal-savings facilities are made available at little expense at nearly all the post offices in the United States, whereas private savings-banks are not maintained except in places where they can be operated at a profit.

Any person ten years old or older may open an account at the post office and deposit any number of dollars at any time, until the balance amounts to \$1,000. Deposits are evidenced by non-transferable certificates which are issued like paper money in denominations of even dollars. These bear simple interest at the rate of 2 per cent per annum. For deposits in amount less than \$1.00 savings-cards and stamps are sold for ten cents each.

The financial effect of the postal savings-system on the private savings-banks was not at first appreciated. It is now recognized that the post office in performing this service acts as the intermediary between the private bank and the timid depositor. All the money placed on deposit by the people is turned over by the post office to banks in the same communities from which the money is drawn. The postal savings-system does not therefore compete with private savings-banks but acts rather as a training school for foreign-born citizens and others who are not sufficiently informed to have confidence in the banking institutions of this country. Experience in handling a postal savings-account leads many of these depositors eventually to enter into banking relations with the private institutions which pay a higher rate of interest and offer other facilities which the Government does not undertake.

The proper objective in the administration of the postal savings-system is to create as many depositors as possible for the private savings-banks and for the commercial banks. With this objective properly understood there can be no valid reason for retaining the limit of \$1,000 on postal savings-deposits, and bankers as well as all others should cooperate with the Post Office Department in encouraging the operations of this financial branch of the Post Office.

An interesting and important service rendered

to the country by the postal-savings system is the examination into the acceptability of bonds offered as security by state and national banks for deposits of postal-savings funds. This bond examination by the Department has established a criterion for the soundness of state and municipal bond issues. This has come to be a recognized feature in the financial affairs of the nation.

XIX

POSTAL INSPECTION AND CONTROL

THE central control of the postal establishment requires the employment of a force of surveyors or inspectors. It is necessary to enforce uniformly at the 56,000 post offices and throughout the mail transportation lines the laws of Congress and the regulations promulgated by the Postmaster-General and his assistants for the conduct of the service. While the laws and regulations must be enforced uniformly throughout the country, it is also necessary that due consideration be given the special requirements and conditions of each community. This uniform and impartial control of the service by the Post Office Department at Washington can not be maintained effectively by reliance solely on correspondence; nor can the laws and regulations be intelligently framed without first-hand knowledge of the field service. The gap between the Department and the post offices is filled in the United States by a force of about 400 post-office inspectors.

Formerly field agents were attached to several of the bureaus and divisions of the Department. These men were experts in the phases of the

postal service administered by the office at headquarters to which the agents were attached. Such independent agents were maintained so that the administrative offices at Washington in charge might be kept in the closest possible touch with the service in the field. For administrative reasons all field agents were in time brought under one immediate control,—a Chief Inspector.

The inspection service of the Post Office Department is divided into fifteen divisions assigned to fifteen territorial sections of the United States. Each division is supervised immediately by an inspector in charge and all the divisions are coordinated and controlled at Washington through the office of the Chief Post-Office Inspector.

The post-office inspector is the traveling representative and agent of the Post Office Department. He is expected to be familiar with the postal laws and regulations and to be prepared at any time to instruct or reprimand an employee or officer of any kind or rank in the service. At a moment's notice it may be necessary for him to supersede a postmaster and take charge of the office. In the language of the Department, inspectors' reports "are privileged and confidential" and inspectors report freely on all conditions which they find at post offices and in the railway mail-service. The most damaging and dangerous testimony against individuals and institutions both in and out of the postal service is safely immured in the

well-guarded files of the postal inspection-service at Washington. The reports are made available only to those officers of the Government who are entitled in the performance of their official duties to have no available postal information withheld from them. These reports, which are deemed to be necessary for an enlightened administration of the service, should be handled by officers of the Post Office Department with the utmost circumspection and discretion.

The ideal post-office inspector is a man of wide postal experience, varied talents, and rare personality. He should know the postal technique in all its branches more thoroughly even than those who specialize in any one branch, for he is called upon to give instructions in all. He must understand the policy and view-point of the Department, and understand, as well as the postmaster understands, the local needs and conditions in every post office he visits. He should be keen to detect error and omission in the conduct of all classes of postal employees. He should at the same time maintain a highly constructive attitude so that he can encourage and help those with whom he comes in contact in the field, and also suggest to the Department more effective means of utilizing the postal facilities in the service of the people. He should be thorough in his investigations and impartial in his reports and recommendations. An error of judgment on his

part may result disastrously to the welfare of the service and to the officers and employees to whom his recommendation relates.

The rare combination of qualities required for an ideal post-office inspector is seldom met. It is expected, of course, that all inspectors will endeavor to approximate this ideal as nearly as possible. The work of the force as a whole is improved by specializing groups of inspectors in different lines of work.

The most important work of post-office inspectors is the routine investigation of post offices. Every post office is subjected to an official inspection as frequently as the limited force of inspectors and the many demands on them for regular and special work will permit. In a routine inspection, the inspector ascertains whether the Government funds have been misappropriated or mismanaged in any way, whether remittances have been made promptly to the Department and funds on hand safely kept and promptly deposited. The condition of the files of the office are examined to ascertain whether all official communications are received, answered, and properly preserved. The condition of the post office and the work of every employee is scrutinized in the light of the postal laws and regulations and the latest orders of the Post Office Department. All irregularities are noted and promptly reported to the Department. If it appears to the inspector that there is special

need for disciplinary action, or for special instructions to the postmaster, or for rearranging or improving the service in any way, a special report of the facts is made for consideration by the appropriate bureau and division at the Department.

Inspectors are constantly at work in detecting criminals in the vast army of postal employees. However, the splendid integrity and security of the United States mails is not primarily due to this work of the inspectors, but rather to the fidelity and loyalty of the 150,000 men and women, including inspectors, into whose hands the people of the United States entrust more than 50,000 pieces of first-class mail every minute of every day in the year. Mail-matter in the mass is safeguarded against robbery, damage or loss, but the safety and prompt dispatch of each piece depends on the honesty and fidelity of post-office employees. Many letters contain enclosures of value. People still persist in sending money loose in letters. Every letter contains possibilities of grief or gladness or of profit or loss. Postal employees, more than others, are keenly sensitive to the pregnant importance of mail, and the inviolability of a sealed letter bearing the canceled postage of the United States represents to every postal clerk and carrier, supervisor and postmaster a solemn trust which he is sworn to preserve and which it is his pride and honor not to violate.

Post office inspectors recognize the splendid morale of the post offices and the railway mail-service. Men who enter the inspection force with the idea that every postal employee is a potential thief or other criminal should find themselves ostracised and be eliminated from the service. The post office inspector's work is, of course, to seek out the criminal who has secured a place in the ranks of honest employees. It is the rule rather than the exception that such thieves are quickly apprehended, and the folly which usually accompanies crime is present in an unusual degree in the case of any man who would select the United States mails as the place to steal. Detection is practically certain and conviction carries the severest penalties. However, the knowledge that a number of inspectors are working constantly on such cases, altho representing an almost negligible percentage of loss in the mails, should deter the people of this country from sending loose currency in letters, if for no other reason than that it may present to some unfortunately weak person the temptation which he is unable to resist and which will place him in the criminal class.

As important as it is, the work of tracing depredation is but a fractional part of the diversified service of inspectors. These employees are called upon to conduct all kinds of special investigations. The Department in the administration of the service naturally depends very largely

on the judgment and discretion of the postmasters. The postmaster, however, must devote his entire time and attention to studying the needs and demands of his community and to devising the most effective manner for serving his community. He is not familiar with the operation of the service at other post offices or, possibly, with the views of the Department, except as he may gather these by correspondence and from the Department publications. To preserve an even-handed and standardized administration of the entire service and to secure uniformity as far as possible at all post offices, the Department depends on the post-office inspectors to secure an independent and unbiased opinion on problems in correspondence between the Department and the postmasters. The procedure is for the bureau having immediate jurisdiction to ask the chief post-office inspector to detail a suitable inspector to make an investigation. This request is transmitted by the chief post-office inspector to the inspector in charge in the division where the post office in question is located. At the division office this request is properly filed and recorded and its further prosecution is entrusted to one of the inspectors at the division headquarters. Each inspector usually has a number of pending cases which are handled in the order in which they are received unless directions are received to expedite one case in preference to others. In due course he

makes his investigation, conferring fully with the postmaster, and submits his report to his immediate superior or inspector in charge. The inspector in charge examines the report and, if in his opinion it is satisfactory, forwards it to the chief post-office inspector at Washington. The principal work of the Washington office is to act as a clearing-house for the reports of inspectors and each report received from the field is recorded as "Closing the case," but a complete record is kept so that the matter may be called up again should occasion arise. After these recording operations have taken place the report of the inspector is transmitted without delay to the bureau which originated the request.

Examples of the matters which are made the subject of special investigations by post-office inspectors are, the location of post office quarters; the establishment or alteration of rural mail routes; the establishment or discontinuance of post offices; the establishment or extension of city delivery service; requests for large additional forces of help at post offices; the assignment or need of equipment at post offices; the introduction of important changes in the schedules of mail-service; the selection of postmasters at small offices; the establishment and maintenance of uniform and standardized methods of work; the reorganization of the post-office service of a city; important complaints by responsible citizens against local

postal service; charges against postmasters or other postal employees; the detection and apprehension of violators of the postal laws and regulations.

There is great need in the United States postal service of some type of control that will delegate immediate supervision of routine matters to coordinate field divisions while retaining in Washington only large matters of national policy. This is shown by the almost impossible position in which the post-office inspector is placed by the nature of his duties. It is exceedingly difficult for any man to be simultaneously critical and creative. The two functions are naturally opposed to each other. The inspector, however, must approach every post office with the broad vision of constructive administration and at the same time he must be constantly on the alert to detect irregularities and omissions. Even if he can solve this difficult ethical problem satisfactorily to his own mind he will nevertheless be hampered by the attitude of postal officers and employees who can hardly be unconscious of the fact that it is the duty of the inspector to notice and to report every deviation from correct practise and conduct. Altho the duties of the inspector are exceedingly difficult and exacting the position has proved to be attractive to many men of high capabilities and character. This is probably not surprising as the inspection service offers the widest opportunities

for one to become familiar with all branches of the service. It is, therefore, not surprising that this branch of the postal establishment has given to the Department and to the post office a large number of its supervisory and executive officers.

XX

POLICING THE MAILS

ANY one is at liberty to deposit mail at the post office, and the mail received there is as different in form and purpose as the people who send it. Just as some individuals in every community are so vicious that they must be restrained by the police-power of the city, so the police-power of the Federal Government is invoked to free the mails of messages, literature, and commodities that Congress has barred from the mails.

The Federal statutes which are designed to keep the postal avenues of communication open for the legitimate uses of the people and to close them against all other uses provide punishments for those who attempt to put the United States mails to improper use.

Unmailable commodities include all intoxicating beverages. The law provides that any one who shall knowingly mail such commodities shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than two years, or both. Repeated offenses of this kind are treated in a severe manner by authorities. In first offenses the

shipment is destroyed and the sender's attention directed to his violation of the law which is assumed to have been committed unwittingly. In case of a second offense, the facts are submitted to the United States District Attorney with a view to the institution of criminal proceedings.

Other articles excluded are poisons, explosives, inflammable matter, and any material which by its nature is liable to kill, or injure, those handling the mails or to damage or deface other mail-matter with which it comes in contact. Under the necessary prohibition against poisons the Department has had great difficulty in framing a regulation which will permit the wholesale drug manufacturers and distributors to send through the parcel post useful medicines and drugs containing small percentages of poison, without making it difficult to prosecute successfully those who use the mails for sending poisons in an irresponsible manner or for malicious purposes.

Federal legislation also bars from the mails all liquor advertisements and solicitations for orders for intoxicating liquors, if address to persons living in States or Territories where it is unlawful to advertise or solicit orders for liquor. This legislation provides a penalty of fine and imprisonment, or both, for those who deposit such matter in the mails. The enforcement of the criminal provision of this law is in the hands of the Department of Justice, but the provision that

advertisements and solicitations of orders of intoxicating liquors shall not be carried in the mails requires all the employees of the postal service to withdraw, whenever found, such matter from the mails.

In addition to liquors and, in some States and Territories, liquor advertising matter, the kinds of mail which the Post Office Department, under the law, must hold as pernicious fall into two general classes: first, advertising and correspondence in the furtherance of schemes to defraud; and, second, all matter repugnant to morality and decency as defined by the Federal statutes.

Since the inauguration of the postal service the mails have been used by swindlers to defraud the ignorant and the credulous. A generation ago the Post Office Department waged successful warfare against the green-goods swindlers, and the imitators of the discredited Louisiana lottery. But the methods of the swindler keep pace with the times, and to-day the principal fraudulent mail-order business is devoted to the sale of worthless "get well quick" and "get rich quick" schemes.

Over thirty thousand complaints and inquiries concerning the improper use of the mails are received in the Department annually. Each of these complaints, accompanied by evidence substantiating the charge, is given a case-number in the office of the Chief Post-Office Inspector at

Washington, and referred for investigation to the proper inspector-in-charge in the field, by whom it is assigned to an inspector. The report of the inspector is forwarded to the Chief Inspector by whom such action as may be necessary is initiated.

The Chief Post-Office Inspector has two methods for dealing with these "fraud" cases which are established by the reports. The offender may be prosecuted in the Courts under the criminal statutes, or proceedings may be instituted against him before the Solicitor for the Post Office Department with a view to having the use of the mails denied the offender by order of the Postmaster-General.

In the event that criminal prosecution is warranted, the inspector who investigated the case is detailed to assist the United States Attorney and other agents of the Department of Justice in preparing the case for trial. Work on these cases has required inspectors to travel into all parts of the United States, Canada, Mexico, South America, and even Europe, on the trail of the criminal or in pursuit of evidence necessary to secure conviction. The Post Office Department has been highly successful in these criminal prosecutions. From the bookkeeping and office records of companies and individuals that have been prosecuted in this way, and from other sources, it has been ascertained that the following amounts, approximately, were filched during the years

stated from "victims" of mail frauds in the actual operations of these concerns:

Fiscal Year	Estimated Amount Filched	Fiscal Year	Estimated Amount Filched
1911.....	\$77,000,000	1914.....	\$68,000,000
1912.....	52,000,000	1915.....	35,500,000
1913.....	42,000,000	1916.....	18,400,000

These figures do not represent all of the fraudulent operations for the period covered, but only the amount of money taken from the public by the concerns and individuals actually discovered and arrested. However, the amounts are probably a representative index to the total amounts as the work of the inspectors and of the Department of Justice has been pursued with uniform vigor continuously.

The decline in the use of the mails for fraudulent purposes is due in large measure to the application of the Post Office Department's most effective remedy—the issuance of "fraud orders." Under Federal statutes, the Postmaster-General may, on satisfactory evidence that a fraud scheme is being conducted, issue an order to the postmaster at the office where the offending concern or person is receiving mail to return such mail to the senders with the stamped notation "Fraudulent—Mail to this addressee returned by order of the Postmaster-General." Mail received without the return card of the sender is forwarded to

the Dead Letter Office to be opened and returned to the sender or destroyed. The "fraud order" also forbids the payment of money-orders to the concern or person in question. The effectiveness of the remedy is at once apparent. The post office has no effective means of preventing swindlers from depositing their advertising matter and letters in the mails, but it can prevent the swindlers from receiving through the post office any mail or remittances. The remedy is in fact so effective that it is called into play only with the utmost circumspection and care, in order that by no combination of circumstances any innocent person may be prevented from prosecuting his business by mail.

If it appears to the Chief Post-Office Inspector that an alleged case of the use of the mails for fraudulent purposes has been well established by the report of the inspector and that the issuance of the fraud order would be warranted, the report of the inspector, together with all the evidence secured, is submitted to the Solicitor for the Post-Office Department, who issues a citation requiring the appearance of the person charged with the offense. A full and fair hearing is accorded at which all the evidence in the possession of the Government is submitted, and the respondent is given an opportunity to submit whatever evidence or arguments he may desire to show why a fraud order should not be issued against him. As a

result of the hearing the Solicitor advises the Postmaster-General as to whether a fraud order should be issued. The findings of fact by the Solicitor are made public in all cases in which fraud orders are issued, and this publicity in itself operates as a valuable deterrent to those who might otherwise attempt the operations of such schemes.

The lottery law has been so rigidly enforced that this type of fraudulent enterprise no longer invades the mails with its advertising and correspondence in the flagrant manner of a quarter of a century ago. To-day, so-called advertising and prize schemes, endless-chain enterprises, and bond-investment "propositions" are put into operation with the idea of evading the law and holding forth the hope of getting something for nothing. Many of these affairs masqueraded as contests of skill are so ingeniously devised that their unlawful nature can be determined only by careful study. The law prohibits the carrying in the mails of matters relating to all such schemes, and a number of fraud orders are issued each year against the promoters, as well as against the forwarding of mail and the certification of money-orders to persons or concerns operating lotteries in foreign countries.

In recent years many of the more important fraud-order cases have related to the use of the mails by pseudo-medical and alleged health in-

stitutions which secure the confidence of their victims by convincing literature and testimonials. In this way money is secured unfairly, and persons are induced to place confidence in worthless remedies or systems of treatment, thereby losing the opportunity of seeking effective relief from physical ailments.

The law prohibits the sending through the mails of any matter that contravenes the established public sense of morality and propriety, as defined by statute. Matter of a scurrilous, defamatory or threatening character is unmailable if it appears on the outside cover or wrapper of any mail, and under this provision "dunning" postal cards fall. All cards which show on their face that the addressee is being asked to make payment of an amount due by him are unmailable.

The field of mail-order swindlers is becoming more hazardous and less fruitful every year. This fact will be recognized by any one who will compare the class of advertisements carried, even by reputable magazines and newspapers, a few years ago with those appearing in similar magazines and newspapers to-day. To this end the activities of many organizations and agencies have contributed to eliminate dishonest advertising and to encourage the establishment of sound ethical standards in advertising. Many publications now have the policy of scrutinizing all advertisements submitted to them and even hold themselves re-

sponsible to their subscribers for losses resulting from misrepresentation by advertisers. Adequate postal policing for the protection of the public against false advertising contributes to this end and deserves its full share of attention and cooperation on the part of all good citizens.

XXI

WORLD MAIL SERVICE

TO UNDERSTAND the condition of the world one hundred years ago, it is first necessary to be reminded that at that time the most frequent mail service between the capitals of Europe was twice a week. Mail service among nations has lagged behind the great development of domestic postal facilities for communication in all civilized countries. Such improvements as have been effected in mail service between nations are among the most important signs of approaching international accommodation.

Practically all countries passed through the same stages of postal development and at about the same time. The great steam and electrical discoveries and their application to transportation and communication brought about in every country a demand for the reduction of postage-rates. The postal reforms successfully carried out in England between 1837 and 1840 established the important principle that postal efficiency depends on uniformity of rates and standardized

conditions. That was an age of national development. Those who were most active and successful in each country in bringing postal facilities to a high state of perfection and serviceability did not always see the desirability of taking steps to improve the chaotic condition of the international mails.

Even after the acceptance of low uniform postage by European nations, those nations maintained foreign rates of postage that were not only high but actually discriminatory. A letter mailed at an inland post office for delivery to the addressee at a seaport post office was charged with the domestic rate of postage, but the charge for sending the same kind of letter the same distance to be put on board ship, and forwarded to another country, was in some instances two or three times as great. Postage on foreign letters in early days was regarded as a source of revenue and it was thought that the tax should be high enough to discourage the doubtful practise of corresponding with foreigners. The desirability of encouraging international correspondence in the interest of trade or of peace and understanding was not recognized either by any concessions in postage-rates or by Government action to secure the safe and expeditious transit of foreign letters and parcels. The sending nation collected its postage from the person with whom the mail originated; the letters were entrusted to ship-

masters or transportation lines without any definite or enforceable regulations for their safe-keeping and dispatch; the country of destination collected another charge from the addressee. The postage-rates were fixt largely on the basis of retaliation, each nation considering it necessary to impose the same charges as were imposed by nations with whom it exchanged correspondence. In addition, as has been indicated, many nations included in the charge to the sender or addressee a special inland postage charge or tax.

The attitude of the United States Government toward foreign mail service has always been liberal. An Act of 1825 authorized the Postmaster-General to make suitable arrangements for receiving and dispatching mail intended for foreign countries. Under this law the practise was to make up this mail at the Boston or New York post office and send it under cover addrest to the postmaster at a seaport post office of the country of destination. Postmasters corresponded with foreign postmasters directly and made such arrangements as were possible for improving the service by securing assurances of practises to be followed and reports of the condition of the mail and the time of its receipt.

In 1833 a daily mail was established between London and Paris, but for some time there was no improvement in the international mail service to and from other European capitals or between

Europe and America. The great discoveries in transportation which came out about that time were utilized first in the domestic mail service of nations to the exclusion of any consideration to foreign mails. In 1840 the English post office discontinued its sailing-packet service with the United States and established the Cunard Steamship line, heavily subsidized by the British Government. The French Atlantic line, which followed a few years later, was also supported by substantial grants from the French Government. The expense of these subsidies induced the governments of France and England to look to foreign postage as a means of reimbursing their treasuries and this short-sighted attitude for many years stood in way of better mail service between Europe and America.

• A delicate matter between nations has always been and perhaps still continues to be the handling of transit mails. By this is meant mails which to reach the countries of destination must pass through a third country which performs the service of forwarding as accommodation or for compensation. In some cases a distribution service is performed by the intermediary country; in other cases the transit mails are forwarded from the country of origin to the country of destination in closed and locked pouches.

Mail service between nations was naturally stimulated by the great development of trade

and commerce which followed the application of steam to manufacturing processes. The first postal treaties, providing reciprocal guarantees for the safe and expeditious handling of mail between countries were negotiated between the German states, each of which had its own independent postal administration. Following these there were a series of agreements between France and England. The negotiations and treaties up to 1850 reflected both the growing need and demand for better mail service throughout the world and the conservative and reactionary attitude of the national postal administrations. Of all the nations it is probable that none was more willing at all times to join in any agreement for the reduction of international postage, and for the improvement of international mail service, than the United States. In 1845 Congress gave the Postmaster-General authority to enter into ten-year contracts with American vessels with a view to reducing the prevailing rates of postage. As already stated, the first advantageous postal convention between the United States and a foreign administration was concluded with Bremen, one of the autonomous German States, in 1847. Two years later a postal agreement was made with Great Britain.

In 1850, Horatio King, who became postmaster-general a number of years later, was placed in charge of the correspondence in the Post Office

Department relating to postal service with foreign nations. This "foreign desk" was the beginning of the Division of Foreign Mails which later became an independent bureau of the Post Office Department and is now an important division in the bureau of the Second Assistant Postmaster-General. Largely due to Mr. King's earnest efforts satisfactory postal conventions were made with Prussia, France, Belgium, and Canada. He succeeded in securing many important reductions in postage and in simplifying the arrangements for the handling of foreign mails.

When Abraham Lincoln became President of the United States the exchange of mails with foreign countries was regulated by separate treaties with each nation and in some cases was effective without any treaty and under mere loose agreements or understandings between postal administrations and postmasters. Any one who wished to mail a letter to a foreign destination was under the necessity of consulting numerous schedules of postage-rates and of indicating on the letter the route by which it was to go. The whole subject was so complicated that he could not be sure that even a postmaster was competent to advise him correctly. In some cases a part or all of the postage was required to be prepaid. In other cases no prepayment was required. Postmaster-General Montgomery Blair, at the outset of Lincoln's administration, recognized the im-

perative need for some standardization of the international rates of postage, of the weight limits and other conditions of mail service between nations. He therefore took the initiative on the part of this Government, through the State Department, in suggesting to the foreign postal administrations that a meeting of the representatives of all the leading nations be held to discuss the problem presented by the need for a systematic world mail service.

This convention met in Paris in 1863 with John A. Kasson, First Assistant Postmaster-General, representing the United States. Twelve European and three American nations participated in the convention and, altho no definite agreement was reached, the deliberations clarified the problems that were discust and made it easier for a large number of liberal postal agreements to be made between different nations in ensuing years. Before concluding the sessions of this convention an understanding was reached that the negotiations should be renewed at a convention to be held ten years later. This convention met actually eleven years later owing to the indisposition of France to participate in the convention at an earlier date.

The International Postal Convention of Berne, Switzerland, convened in 1874, and proceeded to bring about one of the greatest postal reforms in the history of the world. The nations of Europe

and America had increased in population, wealth and activity so rapidly that international politics and international commerce had become a subject of vital concern. The mail service between nations continued to be so dilatory and unsatisfactory that the literature and habits of thought of each nation were not known to the people in other nations. Gross misunderstandings that brought nations to the verge of war were based on national prejudices and antipathies which flourished in every country for the lack of means of communication. To correct this condition the International Convention at Berne set about framing an agreement to be presented by each of the delegates to his home government. The French and English delegates were hampered at the Convention by the desires of their governments to retain a revenue from the Atlantic mail service to offset the subsidies to the steamship lines.

The United States was represented at this Convention by Joseph H. Blackfan, Superintendent of Foreign Mails, whose position in the Post Office Department was considered so important that he held coordinate rank with the assistants to the Postmaster-General. This convention proposed that all the countries agreeing to the convention form a single postal territory for the conduct of the world mail service. Expenses were to be distributed according to the size and im-

portance of the several nations. Postage was to be prepaid in all cases and was fixt for letters at the uniform rate of five cents per half ounce. Each nation retained the postage collected on its outgoing letters and the postage-stamps and post-marks of each nation were to be recognized by all of the other nations as entitling mail-matter to dispatch, delivery, and forwarding anywhere within the consolidated postal territory of the world. A permanent organization was provided for at Berne and it was agreed that conventions should be held from time to time as might be necessary to consider changes and amendments proposed by the member nations.

Twenty-three nations agreed to the first convention of the International Postal Union. As a result any person in any of these nations, by addressing a letter plainly in his own hand and affixing postage at the uniform rate of five cents, or the equivalent of five cents in the money of that land, could mail a letter without hesitation or inquiry, in the same manner that domestic mail was entrusted to the post office.

Another International Postal Convention convened at Paris in 1878, at which many improvements and changes were considered and adopted. At this Convention the name of the international organization was established as "L'Union Postale" (Universal Postal Union). At intervals, Congresses of this Union have con-

vened in various capital cities of the world and the Universal Postal Union has reached to-day a high state of effectiveness and usefulness. Every civilized nation is now a member, and the nations of the world constitute one postal territory. These are the conditions that prevail in normal times; in war times all international postal relations are disturbed.

By direct negotiations independent of the Universal Postal Union, the United States has succeeded in effecting a number of preferential postal agreements with certain nations. In 1875 the arrangement was reached with the Dominion of Canada that domestic rates of postage should apply between the two nations, each taking the postage prepaid in its own stamps. This arrangement has also been reached with Mexico and Cuba; and with England and Germany, subject to the limitation that letters bearing only two-cent postage instead of the five-cent postage prescribed by the Universal Postal Union would not be forwarded by the fastest steamers.

The United States has held many separate conventions with individual foreign nations for the exchange of parcel-post mails and postal money-orders. These numerous conventions represent steps in advance of the world mail service maintained by the Universal Postal Union. As a result of this improvement of mail service between the United States and individual foreign countries

uniformity in the world mail service is being disturbed. A large section of the United States Postal Guide is devoted to a description of the different relations existing between the United States and each of a large number of nations with respect to parcel post, printed matter, and money-orders. It is exceedingly difficult to bring uniformity into this situation as uniformity requires the assent of a large number of independent governments. The United States has been very successful in securing the acceptance by the Universal Postal Union of proposals made by this Government, but it is under the necessity of pursuing many of its proposals in an individual line.

Recently, the United States has sought to bring about uniform mail service especially throughout the New World. South and Central American nations, with whom our postal relations have been deplorably deficient, have been urged to accede to an arrangement by which postage throughout North and South America would be merely the domestic rate of postage in each country. This reform seems inevitable and will have an important effect in bringing the countries of North and South America closer together in political and commercial understanding.

The postal system of every nation in the Universal Postal Union is federated with every other postal system in one grand planetary organization, touching almost every civilized hamlet on

the face of the earth. The satisfaction with which this organization is meeting the demands of international trade and society for communication is directly related to and dependent upon the simplicity and uniformity of the postal idea. It is the law, order, and regularity of its operation that appeals to the imagination and loyalty of the people of the world. If this world-wide organization had been carried into all the affairs of government, the war chapter in international history which commenced with 1914 might not have had to be written.

XXII

ECONOMIC UTILITY OF THE POST OFFICE

THE postage rates of 1840, if applied to the volume of mail now handled by the post offices of the United States, would bring in an annual revenue sufficient to defray all the expenses of the Government with the exception of the war budgets of the army and navy. Instead, however, of considering this expedient for meeting fiscal needs, the people have been intent on reducing still further the already low rates of postage. Parcel-post rates have been rapidly reduced in recent years.

Taxation obviously is not the motive underlying the operation of the postal service by the Federal Government; it is not permitted to be even an incidental phase of the post office administration. The people and their representatives are most jealous of any restraint of the operation of the post office. They require it to be untrammelled and have even been willing that it should be subsidized out of the Treasury to the extent necessary to make its facilities more generally useful. The reason for this attitude lies in the economic utility of the post office.

The Post Office Department, of all the branches of the Federal Government, is most clearly participating with private business and industry in the production of wealth. In the case of parcel-post shipments and of the distribution of newspapers and magazines it is obvious that the post office is creating "place utilities." The magazine in the hands of a publisher in Philadelphia, with the eastern demand for that issue fully supplied, has no value, but transported by mail to Denver, the full retail sale price is realized. Five dozen fresh eggs have much less value on the farm than in the home of the city resident after being carried safely by mail over an intervening distance of one hundred miles. The value created by this service is obvious because this service is merely transportation. The postage paid in each instance is less than the amount of wealth created by the service performed.

It is more difficult to define the manner in which wealth is created by the post office in the performance of its primary function of communication. The sending of one letter may be classed as among those personal services that add to the pleasure and increase the happiness and contentment of those for whom the service is performed. The sending of another letter may be classed among those services that make trade and commerce possible. Undoubtedly the mails perform a service necessary to the consummation and

execution of a large part of all contracts. They make the market and hold it together. They disseminate practically all price-fixing information. The instruments of trade and banking pass through the countless postal channels, and can pass in no other way. In fact, the post office creates wealth in so many ways that it is futile to attempt to enumerate them. President Hadley of Yale, has said: "Our whole economic and political system has become so dependent upon free and secure postal communication that the attempt to measure its specific effects can be little less than a waste of words."

The economic utility of the post office is so obvious that it is sometimes overlooked, and postal administrators as well as private citizens become confused in endless and aimless discussions of postal finance. Whether the postal service is self-supporting or not, and whether it pays a profit to the Government, is of relatively small concern. A postal surplus, under present conditions, is a creditable administrative achievement and indicates that the management may not properly be charged with inefficiency. But any real increase in the economic utility of the postal establishment is of far greater importance than any increase in revenues over expenditures. It is because of the economic utility of the post office that extensions of postal service, where needed, are justified, altho the return in postage receipts may not

defray the cost of the extension. From the view-point of the national welfare there is little doubt that the rural mail service is fully justified, and it is probable that every extension of that service has had the effect of increasing the national wealth immediately or eventually to a greater extent than it taxes the public treasury. From the economic view-point the rural mail service is self-sustaining. It creates far more wealth than it consumes.

The importance of a post office to business and the need for intelligent cooperation between business and the post office should be recognized. The postage paid in the transaction of business through the mails is not in any sense a tax on business, but is rather a nominal charge for services performed for which the purchasers of the postage receive value a thousandfold in return. The importance of postal service should be measured by the benefits which it confers and by the wealth which it creates rather than by the postage charge or the postal revenue. If this view-point is preserved every one will see the desirability of aiding or at least acquiescing in every change or movement designed to improve the efficiency of the postal service.

The condition of business in the country is always reflected unmistakably in the statistics of postal revenue. The relation between business and correspondence is important. When business

slackens the correspondence necessary for the performance of business also falls away, and when business quickens correspondence is increased in order that the additional transactions may be carried out. Social correspondence also depends on the condition of business. In times of prosperity people write more than in times of depression, partly because the psychological effect of prosperity is exhilarating to all classes of society and partly because the cost of postage, which does not fluctuate like other commodities, is less relatively in times of easy money and high prices. The relation between the postal revenue and prosperity is subject to many interferences, so that it is not a safe guide for any conclusion with respect to an individual city or state, altho it is an almost infallible barometer of the nation's condition. If the postal revenue of an entire year for the whole nation does not exceed the postal revenue for the preceding twelve months by from 6 to 8 per cent, the reason will be found either in some reduction in postage rates or in a decline in the business activity of the country.

XXIII

FOREIGN TRADE BY POST

FOREIGN trade depends on the establishment of communication and transportation. The two develop hand in hand. For example, the foreign trade of the United States was confined largely to Europe before the outbreak of the European war in 1914, and trade relations with Latin-American countries were almost negligible. This condition was reflected in the foreign mails of the United States, which were prompt, regular, and certain to Europe, but much less so to the countries of Central and South America. In the American mails it was not always certain when a dispatch would be made or when it would arrive at the port of destination and this condition discouraged trade. It was a condition, however, which nothing but closer trade relations could correct.

The development of trade relations and the improvement of the international mail service to those countries are parts of the same problem. Ideas pass before goods. There must be some acquaintance between nations before trade arises

between them. For this reason Germany and England have sent trade agents into all the world's markets to mingle with the people and learn their customs and habits of thought, as well as to advertise the products of the countries from which they come. Exporters of the United States have not followed this plan to as great an extent as their European competitors, but, in securing foreign trade, have confined their efforts to publishing and distributing by mail in foreign countries descriptive booklets printed in the language and in the style of the countries to which they have been sent. This missionary work depends on good postal facilities.

In our foreign trade situation the mail service is of the utmost importance. Commerce can not be developed except through regular, reliable and expeditious mail facilities. The mails must first penetrate the country and prepare the way for the exchange of commodities. After trade has been built up the successful conduct of business between countries requires that letters containing the instruments of business, circulars and advertising matter, parcels and samples, small merchandise, and repair parts may be sent through the mails safely and with the utmost possible dispatch. It is also necessary that there be some convenient and inexpensive method of remitting small sums of money from one country to another, such as is afforded by the international

money-order service and by the C. O. D. parcel-post service which Great Britain, but not the United States, has arranged with other countries. The mail service should be perfected by registration and insurance facilities providing adequate indemnity and prompt settlement of all just claims.

Trade in the New Hemisphere will be especially promoted by the reduction of the international rate of postage to the domestic rate of each country so that in the United States letters intended for any point in North or South America may be deposited in the mails at the two-cent postage rate. Mail-order business with Canada and Latin-American countries might be greatly expanded if a uniform Pan-American parcel-post could be agreed to in which the element of transportation is recognized¹ by fixing upon a zone system or distance radius similar to the zones used in the domestic parcel-post system of the United States.

In spite of the utmost endeavor of the Post Office Department, the influence of the Pan-American Union, and the efforts of public-spirited men in all American countries, the postal facilities of the New Hemisphere are far from adequate for the development of trade.

Rates of postage to near-by American countries, both for first-class mail and parcel post remain as high as the rates to European and

Asiatic countries. It has been possible thus far to conclude only a few conventions with the American countries. In some South American countries it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to secure a bank-draft for any small sum to be remitted to the United States. A parcel-post convention has been in existence with the Argentine Republic for a few years, but with Brazil we have arrangements with only a few seaport cities. A parcel can not be exchanged by mail between the United States and some of the other South American countries. The United States has no C. O. D. service in connection with its foreign parcel-post; as a result some of our exporters of retail shipments have sent goods by freight to London to be intrusted, by their agent there, to the British mails which provide C. O. D. service with practically all of the countries in the world. This is an arrangement which is not open to our exporters generally for the obvious reason that the volume of business must first be great enough to warrant shipments to London by freight.

The perfection of American foreign-trade relations is, of course, not a matter of mail service alone. Many other elements must be considered. Foreign trade waits also on adequate credit and exchange facilities. This is the field of the commercial rating companies and of the banks.

The trade of the United States with South America has been greatly handicapped. At the

outbreak of the European War there were many European but few American trade-agents; mail for the United States went to England before reaching New York; commercial paper was based on the exchange banks of London; freight and passenger service were splendidly developed between European and South American ports, but undeveloped between North and South American ports. It is not to be wondered at that the two American continents had continued to be tributaries to the trading countries of Europe.

The foreign mail service of the United States within the past few years has been greatly improved, and foreign trade is becoming more substantial and permanent in character. Further development of foreign mail service and foreign trade are of great importance to the people generally, and especially to those who may profit by selling or buying in foreign markets.

Associated with and naturally growing out of good mail service are efforts to inform the trading public of the correct principles to be observed in developing foreign trade. Exporters in the United States should understand that the business of foreign trade is a specialty to be handled separately from their domestic trade organizations and to be given consideration according to its peculiar needs. The exporter should know the language and read the literature of the country with which he is dealing or he should employ those who

are able to perform this service for him. Some of our institutions have found it desirable to employ in their foreign trade departments young men from the countries with which relations are being developed. Permanent and successful trade also requires first-hand knowledge of the customs and habits of thought of the foreign patrons. This is best gained by the foreign trade-agent. In some instances several exporting concerns employ one trade-agent who covers the foreign field for all the lines which he represents. American exporters have been guilty in the past of taking the unfortunate attitude that the foreigners should be educated "up" (as they would say) to the American habits of consumption. In other words, they have tried to force upon foreign markets the same kinds of goods that are accepted in American markets. This attitude has been very demoralizing and has enabled the manufacturers and exporters of Europe to secure a firm hold in many American and Asiatic countries in which they have painstakingly supplied to every country the exact commodities demanded in precisely the kind and size of packages that their customers were familiar with.

The successful exporter must pack his shipments for the international mails or for ocean freight in a way that will prevent deterioration and loss. Some American firms that engage in export trade to a considerable extent make no

distinction in their packing department between shipments intended for points in the United States and shipments to be sent abroad. Again, there must be in foreign trade the closest adherence to the ethics of merchandizing. The "iron-clad" guarantee is necessary. The directions of the purchaser with respect to quantity, quality, method, and time of shipment must be complied with scrupulously. For example, substitution of a "better grade" often works out disadvantageously, as the foreigner with his different ideas may not consider the better domestic grade as good for his purposes as the grade which he specified. Above all, foreign trade depends on honest advertising and sound correspondence practises. In all these things Americans will do well to inform themselves regarding the prejudices of their prospective customers. In corresponding with other nations such vulgarisms as stamping letters "Dictated, but not read," or using the rubber-stamp signature should be avoided. Foreign dealers and customers are most unfavorably impressed also by the practise of sending short-paid letters on which the postage to them is double the amount of the deficiency. Short-paid letters are sent out by many American business houses inadvertently on account of the lack of understanding in their mailing department, but the matter is of sufficient importance to receive responsible attention,—if necessary,

the attention of the man who dictates and signs the foreign letters.

It seems very desirable for the United States to develop in growing nations an outlet for its manufactured and refined products, and the new trade-routes created by the Panama Canal should gradually improve the trade opportunities of this country. Education will always be necessary and the closer and better the understanding between the nations involved, the easier and more satisfactory will be the trade results. The foreign trade problems of the United States depend for solution on concerted effort to acquire a thorough understanding of the foreign markets, and to improve the mail and transportation facilities to such extent as may be necessary to take advantage of the opportunities presented for establishing international trade and for promoting at the same time the interdependence and acquaintance among nations which are necessary for world solidarity and peace.

XXIV

POSTAL ENGINEERING

THE recent enlargement and development of the postal service along business and commercial lines is emphasized by the necessity of developing and using a class of officers best to be described as postal engineers.

Postal engineering addresses itself to the best possible utilization of the men, machines, equipment, and quarters, available for carrying on the postal service. The postal engineer recognizes that there is only one best way of meeting any situation or solving any problem in the postal service. The handling of mail has many points of resemblance to the assembling process in manufacturing plants. The administrative and the accounting branches of a post office are governed by the same principles of office management as are observed by progressive private concerns. The money-order and postal-savings systems are banking institutions with a central office in Washington and agencies throughout the country. The carrying of the mail over all the post-roads of the country is a vast and intricate transportation

problem. The postal service resembles a gigantic corporation in its purchases and distribution of supplies and equipment and its control of a vast army of employees, and in its enforcement of uniform policies with thousands of separated post offices. Postal engineering, therefore, is the application of correct principles of postal science to the performance of postal service. Its paramount object is to safeguard and expedite the mail, to shorten the time required to transmit a message or transport a parcel from the sender to the addressee. It aims to employ every means that will promote this object and to remove every condition that retards or endangers the mail.

Like those engaged in other kinds of engineering, the postal engineer must consider the practical aspects of his problems. The successful postal engineer of the future will be able to mobilize for the service and apply to it tested and approved methods from the engineering units of the business, manufacturing, commercial, electrical, and mechanical spheres as well as from the science of road-building. He must also be informed regarding the ethics of politics, for under our form of government politics will never be entirely eliminated from the operation of the postal institution. Probably nothing can quite so effectively reduce to the minimum the ill-effects of politics on this service as efficient postal engineering, demonstrating constantly the best, most effective

and most economical methods of serving the United States postal patrons.

The work of these postal engineers will include among other things: methods of cost-finding and cost-keeping, and the application at proper intervals of such findings in standardizing the service and in discovering the best method and instrumentality. This involves reratings and adjustments in city and rural delivery routes and the best equipment for such routes to the end that all localities and citizens under like conditions may receive just and equitable treatment.

The postal engineer is limited of course in many ways by the law. Employees must not be required to work more than eight hours daily, nor under a schedule exceeding ten consecutive hours. The appropriations granted by Congress for various postal branches must be allocated among all post offices, and the postal engineer must bear in mind that the expenditure authorized at each point in the postal service can not be exceeded. The utility of every proposed improvement must be measured in dollars and cents. The free delivery of mail, for example, is held to be warranted in cities, in large towns, and in rural districts, but not in small towns, where the people, as a matter of fact, prefer to call at the post office for their mail, and where it is easy for the postmaster to serve all who come to the office. Similarly, stamp-canceling machines are not fur-

nished to small post offices, altho they are great time- and labor-savers, for the reason that the cost of these machines is out of proportion to the value of the time that would be saved to the people in the amount of mail expedited. The hand stamping of the mail at such post offices does not require any great amount of labor.

Altho not a mere theorist, the postal engineer is mindful at all times of the great fundamental principles of all service, and squares his conduct and procedure as nearly as practicable in accordance with those principles. In every problem, his starting point is a knowledge of the object to be attained. This object is to provide the people with facilities of communication that are necessary to their happiness and welfare. There is no other true ideal in postal service. The postal officers in every community must be provided with quarters, certain equipment, and necessary furniture. A force of men and women must be employed, trained and kept in the most efficient condition possible, and the postal laws and regulations must be followed in detail.

The location of a post office must be considered in relation to the distribution of population and business interests and in relation to the mail-transportation lines. The size and plan of the building depend on the volume of work to be transacted, as well as on the number of clerks and carriers to be immediately provided for and

the probable future expansion. With reference to the construction of a federal building for use as a post office the opinion of the postal engineer should be conclusive; unfortunately this is not the case at the present time.

Questions of heat, light, and ventilation are of vital importance to the efficiency of the mail-service and the welfare of postal employees. The welfare of the employee is itself the greatest element in the efficiency of the mail service so that practically all engineering problems relating to the arrangement of the post office have to do with providing employees with the best possible conditions under which to do their work. The arrangement of equipment and furniture, and the division of floor space and assignment of rooms may be made in such a way as to save a great deal of lost motion and to expedite mail-handling operations. The handling of the mail can not be entrusted to the individual judgment of the employees, but is a subject that requires close analysis and tests for the establishment of the best methods. No one in the postal service to-day knows the best method of distributing mail at any post office. The finer a separation is made on a primary case the more difficult that separation becomes, but the more the primary case is simplified the more difficult and complicated is the task assigned to the distributor on the final case. The question of mail-distribution is an exceedingly

complicated one. It is determined in each post office according to the judgment of supervisory officers and various inspectors who confer with them, but it is a problem that postal engineering might solve in a scientific manner with a great benefit in time and expense.

Modern conditions and the great development of the large post offices has brought an increase in the number and kinds of labor-saving devices used for handling mail and for performing other postal operations. The purchasing agent of the Department should have the expert advice of the postal engineer and should be free to follow such advice. Canceling machines, automobile trucks, adding-machines, typewriters, conveyor-systems, and even tables and cases can not be purchased and distributed through the service to the best advantage on snap judgment or even on careful judgment of postal experts whose method of arriving at a decision is superficial and not scientific.

The scientific method of engineering, which eventually must be applied to the postal service, calls for conclusions based on actual test under actual conditions in a sufficient number of cases to be free from the possibility of error.

Under any given set of conditions there is only one best way to handle the mail, there is only one best primary case and only one best final case. There is only one best arrangement of the furni-

ture and equipment in the post office, and only one best assignment of the employees and the various desks. It may never be possible to perform all postal operations in the best way, but it is possible to fall so far short of performing in the best way that the good sense of the people will require eventually that the vast expenditures of the postal service and the still more vast and far-reaching value that it renders to the people shall be surrounded by the protection of the best possible postal engineering.

The complexity of the postal service and the thousands of different agencies by which its facilities are made effective require the broadest kind of vision on the part of every one who would undertake to approach its problems in a thoroughly correct and constructive manner. The arrangement and equipment of the railway post-office cars is a more extensive problem than the arrangement of furniture and equipment in the post offices. In the railway post office every foot of space not only represents a large cost to the Government but has potentialities of good service which may not be realized if a poor arrangement of the car restricts the movement of the employees or prevents the best layout of the mail. The distribution of mail in the railway mail service is also rather more intricate than the same problem in post offices, and the broad question of where post-office distribution shall leave off and

railway mail-service distribution begin, and vice versa, is one that involves consideration of the importance of the various classes of mail, of the relatively high cost of railway-space and the great desirability of expediting all the mail to the greatest possible extent within reasonable limits of cost. The rural-mail service, star-route service, and the steamboat service present problems of adjustment of cost, of transportation, and of service that to be decided uniformly for the whole country as they should be, require the scientific consideration of the postal engineer.

In mail-bags and locks the postal service has an equipment problem not dissimilar to that of the box-cars in the freight service. The total number of mail-bags used in transporting the mails amounts to nearly five million, and if placed end to end would reach from Boston to San Francisco and beyond. The eight mail-bag depositories receive, clean, repair and send out in a year about forty million sacks and pouches; altho the total number in use is only about one-tenth of that number, ten distributions of the equipment are necessary to relieve congestion at different points. Mail locks and keys were formerly made by contract, but during the administration of Postmaster-General Dickinson it was decided that this should be done under Government supervision. Both economy and the protection of the service against keys fraudulently

obtained prompted this course. There are now four kinds of United States mail locks,—the iron lock used on pouches, the brass padlock used on letter-boxes, the inside letter-box lock, and the rotary lock which is used for registered mail. These locks are made, as necessary, at the equipment shops at Washington which also manufacture all appliances used in mail-bag transportation.

More important than the machines and the mail are the postal employees, the vast army now employed in the postal service. The nation depends on this part of its citizenship for the maintenance and improvement of mail service which is the keystone of the national welfare. Obviously the nation owes to these employees a scrupulous regard for their individual welfare. All the problems of wage-systems, of specialization, of records, of schedules and assignments, of standards of work, of efficiency-records and promotion are to be met in the postal service as they are met in all great commercial and industrial activities, with the addition that these problems are made more difficult of solution by the peculiar conditions surrounding Government employment. The proper organization and management of the personnel, as well as of the mail-forces and equipment, are problems to which a special class of officers trained and skilled in postal engineering should be assigned.

Postal engineering calls for uniformity in post-office buildings and in railway post-office cars; uniformity in the arrangement of space; uniformity in equipment and machinery; uniformity in the assignment of work. To produce this uniformity all conditions must be standardized. The service must be viewed and studied as a whole and every detail must be accommodated to the uniform principles governing the entire service. There are some men in the Post Office Department, some in the inspection service, some in post offices and the railway mail service and other branches of the postal establishment who, by a native ability coupled with broad experience of postal affairs, may be classed as postal engineers. These men, scattered as they are, must be sought out and mobilized. It has been this class of officers that enabled the Department in recent years to take decisive and important steps looking to the standardization of conditions in the service and the adoption of uniform business-like practises in post offices, the rural and railway mail services. But the process of training such postal experts exclusively in the service channels costs too much and takes too long to meet the emergencies created by the rapidly expanding postal plant. The present need for these men of postal vision and of the necessary postal knowledge and training is much greater than the present supply. Five thousand expert postal

men could be now readily absorbed to the advantage of the service and the people. To produce them training classes might be formed at certain post offices by the authority of the Congress so that apprentices could attend a course of lectures by the supervising officers and, in addition to this and text-book study of the postal operations and the service technique, learn in the post office to do by doing.

XXV

THE HUMAN ELEMENT

THREE hundred thousand persons are employed in the postal service of the United States. A few of these are women and a few are boys between the ages of 16 and 21, but the great majority are men. All are citizens of the United States and most are heads of families or the support of families. Thus, a million and a half of the American people or one and one-half per cent of the total population depend directly or indirectly for means of support on the payroll of the United States Post Office. The welfare and interests of these people is the human element to be considered in the administration of the postal service.

The postal personnel is drawn from a virile division of our people. Entrance to the service usually requires both a mental and a physical examination. The wage scale and condition of work appeal generally to those who desire to maintain and improve the standard of living of the great middle class, and to engage in an honorable and useful calling. The work requires a

good common-school education and a high degree of mental alertness and mental dexterity. The handling of mail quickens these qualities and stimulates the imagination. Employment in the administrative offices and in the postal-savings and money-order branches provides training in business and banking methods. The important obligation and responsibility of the postal employee, who is always under oath and frequently bonded, assists in the development of integrity and a sound moral view-point. A man who stands this test of character for a period of ten years without yielding to temptation or deviating from his official duties is an honest man and a good citizen. It is not surprising, therefore, that the postal service graduates many young men to sound professional and business careers.

A large number of positions in the postal service have been brought within the classified civil service and are now filled without reference to politics. Among these are more than 55,000 postmasters, 40,000 clerks in first and second-class post offices, 34,000 carriers in the city-delivery service, 18,000 clerks in the railway mail service, 42,000 rural carriers, and some 2,000 employees in the Post Office Department at Washington. Several thousand of those engaged in handling the mails have only a contract relation with the Government. They are under contract to perform certain specified services for a speci-

fied compensation. These are the star-route carriers, mail-messengers, and screen-wagon drivers. Postmasterships of the fourth class were covered into the classified civil service by Executive Orders of Presidents Roosevelt and Taft without submitting the incumbents to tests, altho civil service procedure was provided for filling vacancies occurring after the dates of the orders. President Wilson, by Executive Order of May 7, 1913, confirmed this action with respect to the classification of the positions and required all incumbents who had not been appointed as the result of competitive civil service examination to subject themselves to such test of fitness.

Postmasters at the 10,000 largest post offices, which are the post offices of the first, second, and third classes, are appointed under the law by the President "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate." These positions for many years have been filled by the political supporters of the party in power. Under the administration of President Wilson and Postmaster-General Burleson these places were removed from the "spoils" system. The first step in this direction was the practise on the part of President Wilson of respecting the four-year commissions of postmasters of the preceding administration. The next important step was the practise of examining closely into the qualifications of candidates for positions as presidential post-

masters. Public opinion supported the Postmaster-General and the President in declining to name candidates for postmasterships whose only claim and suitability was based on their political service. Furthermore, it is made a prerequisite that persons appointed to important postmasterships should pledge themselves to make the post office their prime business and to devote not less than eight hours a day to their official duties. The final step in this reform was an Executive order issued March 31, 1917, subjecting all candidates for postmasterships to civil service procedure. As a result, postmasters are generally representative of the best executive and administrative material to be found in their respective communities.

Under this Executive Order the vacancies occurring through expiration of commissions, or resignation or death, are filled by the Department as the result of examination by the Civil Service Commission of all applicants. In the case of the Presidential postmasters, the results of these examinations are certified to the Department. From these, the Postmaster-General makes a selection for nomination to the Senate by the President. The effect of this order is to eliminate persons undesirable or unsuitable by virtue of lack of education, personality or standing to hold these important positions. The order, therefore, marks one of the most important progressive

steps taken in connection with postal administration in many years.

The postmaster is an officer of great importance to the people and the Government. He must have a broad view-point and understand the business and social needs of the community as thoroughly as any postal officer understands the technique of mail-handling operations. He should be a man accustomed to large affairs, with the liberality and directness of a business executive. The requirements for entrance to the postal service cover merely a good physical condition and a common-school education. Training in the postal service, altho a valuable experience, does not necessarily fit the employee to assume the position of postmaster. This is no derogation of the inherent qualities of postal employees, thousands of whom are fully capable of becoming postmasters under the right conditions. In the interest of the postal employees and those who are hereafter to enter the postal service, it should be recognized that the increasing complexity of the service gives rise to the need for training in some way a superior class of postal employees who may be promoted into positions of responsibility both as experts and as executives. The object of this would be to broaden the source from which the Government may secure men well prepared for the high positions, including that of postmaster.

It is just as necessary that the army of postal employees should be officered by men of specialized training as it is that our Army and Navy should secure a large number of their officers from the graduates of West Point and Annapolis. The ideal service condition will be one in which all barriers are broken down so that men may be freely transferred and promoted from one branch of the postal service to another, and from one city and one State to any other city and State. Those who enter the postal service as clerks and carriers should be eligible for promotion to any position in the postal service, but before rising above the rank of foreman they should be required to take an examination of a higher grade than that under which they entered the service. Another class of recruits to the postal service should be young men especially selected, employed at a nominal wage, and trained in the Post Office Department at Washington and in model-training post offices, as discussed in the preceding chapter on Postal Engineering. These young men should be required to pass frequent examinations, and after completing the course be available for appointment to clerkships in the Department and to any work in the field, including minor supervisory positions at post offices.

The employer of those who work in the postal service is Congress, or in other words, the People. Congress represents both the people who are

patrons of the post offices and the people who are employed in the post offices. Congressmen and Senators have not been permitted to be unmindful of this. This two-handed attitude of Congress in dealing with questions of employment in the postal service was legislatively recognized in the Post Office Appropriation Act of 1912, this accorded all persons employed in the Civil Service of the United States the right to petition Congress or any member of Congress, individually or collectively. The Post Office Department, which is the apparent employer of postal workers, represents the patrons rather than the employees, but the Department recognizes that good service to the patrons involves a careful regard for the welfare of the employees.

The United States postal service is the only branch of the National Government that bears a striking resemblance to the great business institutions which are owned and operated by private citizens. In fact, a comparison may be drawn between the postal service and any of the great corporations through which large amalgamations of capital are nowadays made effective in the activities of private business. The proceeds of taxation is the capital, the People are the stockholders, Congress is the board of directors, the President of the United States is the president of the enterprise, the Postmaster-General is the general manager, the officers of the Department

are the staff-lieutenants, the Department is the head office, the post offices are the local branches and the great army of clerks and carriers is the labor force of the postal organization. The raw material of this public utility is the mailed letter and parcel; the finished product is the letter and parcel delivered. The business of this organization is the communication of intelligence and the transportation of commodities.

The postal service resembles a profit-sharing corporation, for its employees are all stockholders and so are its patrons. A deeper study, however, of the analogy which is here drawn will show conclusively that the apparent similarity of the postal service to private corporations is superficial. There is a fundamental difference running throughout the comparison. It is a difference of origin, ideals, policy, and purpose; and this difference colors every function and activity, changes the relationship of every patron, and alters the status of every employee of the postal service as compared with the private corporation.

Corporations, it is said, have no souls. The genius of the American Government is the soul of the postal service, which is a common cooperative endeavor of the people. It has its origin not in an Act of Congress nor in the private bill of a State legislature, but in the Constitution of the United States; its ideal is not dividends, but the preservation of the Union and the advance-

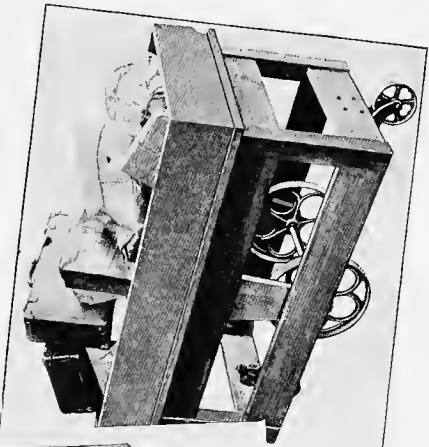
ment of civilization by the establishment and maintenance of means of communication; its policy is to operate its service not for profit, but for the convenience of the public. Its purpose is not in any sense selfish, but purely and entirely unselfish.

In principle there is all the difference in the world between working for some of the people and in working for all of the people. Any plan of action affecting the postal service that does not take this principle into account is erroneous, and if not doomed to failure, will be pernicious in its effects.

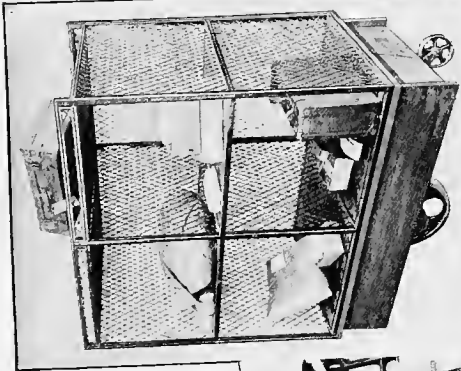
Just as the postal service is similar in form to a private corporation and its officers similar, apparently, to the representatives of amalgamated private capital, so are the associations of postal employees similar in form to the unions of organized labor. And just as the postal service is fundamentally different, in spite of all the superficial similarity, from the private corporation, so the association of postal employees is different from the labor union. The difference, again, is one of origin, ideals, policy, and purpose.

The association of postal employees does not exist for the purpose of collective bargaining in the same way as a private labor union is organized. The postal employee stands in a position of trust to the rest of the people. He is sworn

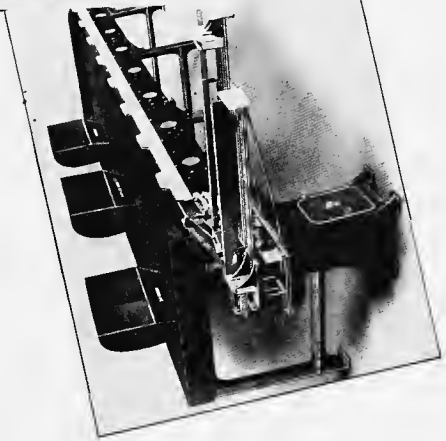
PARCEL-POST TRUCK

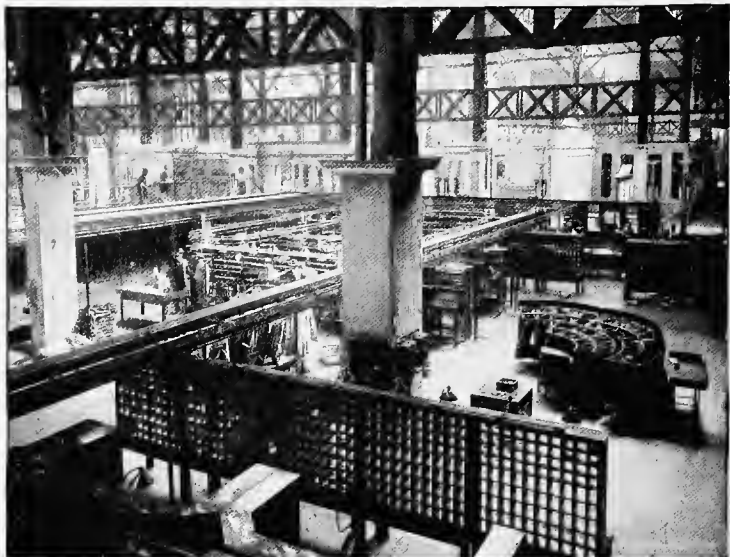


PORTABLE OFFICE
UNIT FOR
DISTRIBUTING
PARCELS



MECHANICAL FACING TABLE





THE MODEL POST OFFICE

Exhibit of the Post Office Department at the Panama-Pacific Exposition, San Francisco, 1915, Showing Modern Equipment of Conveyor Systems and other Labor-saving Devices.

to be loyal to the Government, and it is against the law to conspire in any way to obstruct the mail service. The association, however, has a useful and necessary function; it provides the means by which the men may meet and exchange their views, and formulate for the Department and for Congress their opinions for the improvement of the postal-service and their desires and aspirations with respect to working conditions and wages. This should be done from their viewpoint as employees in a spirit of reasonableness and loyalty.

It is of the greatest importance that the proper disposition should prevail on the part of the employees, the postmasters, the Department, and Congress. A satisfactory adjustment requires harmony and the recognition of the rights of all concerned. The association, the postmaster, and the Department must harmonize their view-points and coordinate their endeavors. It must be recognized that Congress is the final arbiter of all the conditions under which United States citizens shall be employed in the service of the post office.

There is no room for anything but loyalty to the service on the part of the employees and officers. There can not be, in honor, any strike, any "laying down" on superior officers, any obstructionist methods of any kind. On the other hand, no individual must be permitted to arrogate to himself dictatorial authority in a post office or

in any part of the postal service. There must be no favoritism and no arbitrary or unjust actions on the part of postal supervisors. If there may be no "strike," there must be no "black-list" and "no lock-out."

The right of appeal must be direct and easy, and always open to the employee. The employees should present their requests, petitions, and suggestions for the endorsement or approval first of the postmaster or other field officer, and second to the Department.

With a proper understanding and accord in the postal service and in the Post Office Department, there is no reason to expect that practically all matters may not be so adjusted, that every recommendation to Congress will go through the Department with the consent and desire of the employees. It must be admitted that no country has yet succeeded in bringing about this desirable condition. France and England have had national postal strikes, an eventuality which, happily, has never occurred in the United States.

Much has been done in recent years by the Congress and the Department to make the working conditions of the postal employees satisfactory. In all new post office buildings owned or leased by the Government, great care and attention is given now to the provisions for heat, light, ventilation and sanitary conditions. In all branches of the service, efforts have been inaugu-

rated to standardize the work so that it may be equalized among all employees and so that every employee may receive credit for his degree of efficiency and performance. An eight-hour day and annual promotions for efficient service have been established by Congress. Many postmasters, with the approval and support of the Department, have done a great deal of welfare work in the interest of the employees. The modern "swing" rooms of many large post offices, through the efforts of the postmasters, have been made ideal club-rooms, for the clerks and carriers, with library equipments in some instances.

Postmasters have to wrestle at first hand with the real problems of the service. Altho many of these problems have a local coloring and bearing, they all are naturally related to the entire postal network. These officials, therefore, should maintain close relationships among themselves in order that, in the solution of their problems, the knowledge and experience of all postmasters may be made useful in maintaining a common view-point with regard to the service. Thus, service problems will be solved in the most effective manner as related both to the locality and to the Country. It seems desirable that meetings and conferences of postmasters be held, especially at Washington, where the problems easily take on a national aspect, and where Departmental participation is easy and effective.

The question of superannuation and retirement of postal employees remains unsolved. The Civil Service Law does not provide for permanency of tenure. On the contrary, it specifically provides for the removal of incompetent employees. The way is clear under the law to remove summarily all employees who on account of advanced years or other causes are not rendering an adequate "quid pro quo" for their salaries. The law does not provide that length of service shall establish any claim on the part of the employee or any obligation on the part of the Government that is not effaced by the payment of the concurrent salary. Any substantial recognition of such claim or obligation in addition to the payment of salary would seem to be a pure gratuity.

It is clear that the People, through Congress, are responsible for the scale of salaries paid to civil service employees. In these matters administrative officers have no discretion. These officers may, however, bring the whole matter to the attention of Congress by obeying and enforcing the laws affecting superannuated employees. It is very desirable that the question of civil service retirement be settled as soon as possible, and settled to the best interest of the employees and of the Government.

The institution of the classified civil service under which tenure of office depends not on political complexion but on merits is not of long stand-

ing, and as a consequence the problem arising from the superannuation of employees has only in recent years become acute. This problem has lately received much attention at the hands of Congress and of officers in the executive departments, but no legislation has resulted. A retirement plan may, however, eventually be worked out for all Government employees, and it is probable that such a plan would combine contributory and insurance features.

XXVI

THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

THE Post Office Department originated in a central or general post office at the seat of Government. The legislation of 1782, passed under the articles of confederation, provided for a Postmaster-General and a small administrative office separate and distinct from the post office. The Postmaster-General was at first an officer of the Treasury Department and Samuel Osgood, the first to hold the office under the constitution, made his reports to Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury. Including Albert S. Burleson, appointed March 4, 1913, this position has been held by 45 different men.

By 1800, the affairs of the Postmaster-General had grown to considerable proportions and his office is referred to in public papers as a department. It was not, however, recognized as a coordinate branch of the Government with the departments presided over by members of the Cabinet.

John McLean, who became Postmaster-General

in 1823 commenced in that year the annual reports of the Department which have continued to the present time. Before he retired from office his salary was increased from \$4,000 to \$6,000 per annum, the amount received at that time by members of the Cabinet. This step was taken in recognition of the growing importance of the postal service and with the idea that the Postmaster-General should be coordinate with the other heads of departments. John McLean, altho a supporter of Andrew Jackson, was not retained in the position of Postmaster-General, but was placed on the bench of the Supreme Court by his chief, apparently for the reason that Mr. McLean was averse to the unrestricted application of the spoils system to the postal service. William T. Barry, accordingly, became Postmaster-General in 1829, and was called by President Jackson to be a member of the Cabinet. From that time the administrative offices of the postal service in Washington were regarded as constituting a coordinate Executive Department of the Federal Government, altho legislation recognizing that fact was not passed until 1872.

Samuel Osgood, the first Postmaster-General, had an assistant, Jonathan Burrall, who was the first of 29 men, including John C. Koons, appointed September 2, 1916, to hold the position of First Assistant Postmaster-General.

The position of Second Assistant Postmaster-

General was created by the Act of April 30, 1810. The position has been held by 26 men from Seth Pease, the first incumbent, to Otto Praeger, appointed September 1, 1915.

The position of Third Assistant Postmaster-General was created by the Act of July 2, 1836. The first incumbent was Daniel Coleman, and the position has been held by 16 men, including A. M. Dockery, appointed March 13, 1913. Legislation creating the position of Third Assistant Postmaster-General embodied also a constructive reorganization of the Post Office Department. The most important feature of this reorganization was connected with the creation of the position of Auditor for the Post Office Department. This officer was to be detailed to the Post Office Department by the Treasury Department and it was to be his business to settle all the postal accounts. The new plan required that all the revenues of the Department and all debts due it should be paid into the United States Treasury and that the Postmaster-General should submit to Congress, annually, his estimates of the amounts necessary for the operation of the postal service during the ensuing fiscal year. These estimates were to be itemized in detail and segregated according to each classification of expenditure, such as *Compensation to Postmasters*, and *Compensation to Contractors for Carrying Mails*. The remainder of the plan elaborated a fiscal system

resembling very much the one under which the Postal Service is now operated.

The office of Fourth Assistant Postmaster-General was created by the Act of March 3, 1891. E. G. Rathbone was the first incumbent, and there have been four subsequent appointments to this position, the last being James I. Blakslee, appointed March 13, 1913.

The lack of a definite plan of organization in the Post Office Department makes it difficult to state in a general way the functions of the four Assistant Postmasters-General, without enumerating all of the divisions and subdivisions of their work. The First Assistant Postmaster-General has charge of the establishment of post offices and the appointment of postmasters, and the conduct of the service at post offices. The Second Assistant Postmaster-General controls the transportation of the mails between post offices, the railway mail service, and the mail service with foreign countries. The Third Assistant Postmaster-General controls the classification of mail, the finances of the service, the banking facilities maintained at post offices, and the registry service. The Fourth Assistant Postmaster-General controls the supplies and equipment for post offices and the service performed by rural carriers. The officers reporting directly to the Postmaster General are the Solicitor (who is carried on the rolls of the Department of Justice and detailed to the Post

Office Department), the Chief Inspector, the Purchasing Agent, the Chief Clerk of the Department, the Appointment Clerk, and the Disbursing Clerk. The Chief Clerk of the Department exercises some vicarious control over these officers and is also charged by the Postmaster-General with supervision over the personnel and quarters of the Post Office Department.

The largest bureau in the Post Office Department is not controlled in any way by the Postmaster-General, or any of his subordinates. It is the office of the Auditor for the Post Office Department, who is an officer of the Treasury Department. The office of the Auditor is the largest accounting-house in the world. Postmasters' accounts aggregating a million in number, and representing transactions in excess of two and one-quarter billion dollars, are received and audited each year. The revenues of the postal service for the fiscal year 1916 were upwards of \$312,000,000, of which amount approximately one-half was collected at the fifty largest offices. The revenues collected from the sale of postage-stamps, stamped envelopes, and postal cards were \$277,600,000—nearly 89% of the total; the amount derived from second-class (newspaper and magazine) mailings paid at the pound rate was \$11,383,000—about 3.65% of the total; the net fees from money-order business were \$6,820,000, or 2.19% of the total; box rents pro-

duced \$5,100,000 of revenues; from all other sources approximately \$11,140,000 was derived.

Under the law the postal revenues from all sources are made available for defraying the obligations of the service. Postmasters are authorized by the Department to pay all the expenditures of their offices, which include salaries of clerks, carriers, and other employees, rent, and certain miscellaneous items, from their current receipts, and after these payments have been made they are required to remit the cash balances on hand at regular intervals to designated postmasters, one in each State, who deposit these funds to the credit of the Treasurer of the United States for the use of the Post Office Department in approved depository banks or in a subtreasury of the United States. The deposits thus placed to the credit of the postal service during the fiscal year 1916 were \$162,000,000. The expenditures for maintaining the service during the year 1916 were upwards of \$306,200,000, of which amount approximately \$87,000,000 was paid by 356,000 warrants or checks issued by the Department and drawn on the Treasurer of the United States.

In round figures it costs a million dollars each business day to operate the postal service. The growth of the post-office business is more than four times as rapid as the increase in population. In order to keep pace with the constantly increasing demands made on the Auditor for the Post

Office Department, that officer has installed the most modern and complete equipment of automatic electric machinery to be found anywhere. An electric accounting system has made it possible to attain speed, thoroughness, and absolute accuracy in the settlement of accounts, and at the same time to reduce the cost fully one-half. Postmasters' accounts are first compared with the accompanying vouchers and then sent to the electrical accounting machines. These machines journalize the various items of debit and credit, calculate the balance due to or from the United States on each account, and summarize the various items of receipt and disbursement, entered on each of the sheets used by the machine. Thus there is accomplished at one writing the results which formerly required six separate operations by bookkeepers.

The accuracy of the work of the machines is proved almost automatically, whereas bookkeepers' calculations and postings, which formerly had to be relied upon, contained a relatively high percentage of errors. Ten of the machines employed accomplish as much work as sixty bookkeepers. Each post office is assigned an office number and the use of this numerical code designation makes it possible to eliminate all typewriters and pen-work in connection with the accounting records. This adaptation of modern methods and machinery to the vast work of the

Post Office Department indicates very well the kinds of improvements that are constantly necessary to keep the rapidly increasing work of the Department within the bounds of practical and effective administration from the central point.

Labor-saving devices are used to a great extent in every branch of the Post Office Department. In the mail-rooms electric letter-openers, folding-machines and sealing-machines are used. Multiple-signature machines sign a whole sheet of drafts or warrants at one writing. The photostat process is used for making copies of reports or documents. Addressing-machines with classified stencils of the names of post offices minimize the work of sending out circulars of information and other necessary papers to postmasters. Many specialized types of adding-machines are used in the different offices of the Department.

The Dead-Letter Office, which is attached to the Bureau of the First Assistant Postmaster-General, is partly an administrative office for controlling the postmasters throughout the country and partly it is a special post office where the dead letters from post offices throughout the country are assembled, opened, and read and, if possible, returned to the writers or forwarded to the addressees. This division is the custodian of the Government's important guarantee of the inviolability and secrecy of first-class sealed mail. Here under every possible safeguard, trained and

trusted employees of the Department handle the millions of letters which have been found to be undeliverable. This institution in almost every country has at some time been used for the purpose of espionage, and as its administration is inherently susceptible of danger to the integrity of the postal service and welfare of the people, it has been properly guarded and protected in a most jealous and thorough manner by practically all administrations of the Post Office Department.

The Post Office Department controls the postal service, by correspondence with postmasters and other field-officers; through its official publications; and by its inspectors and other special agents. Of these three, correspondence is the most important. Each post office is represented by a separate file in each of the divisions of the Department. With this record of past correspondence, and a specialized knowledge of one phase of the postal service and the laws and regulations relating to it, the correspondence-clerk in the Department is enabled to prepare suitable letters of instruction and definition to postmasters. The principal work of the officers of the Department is the supervision of this work by correspondence.

The publications of the Post Office Department are: (1) The Postal Laws and Regulations, which was last published in 1913; (2) the Postal Guide, published annually; (3) the Monthly Sup-

plement to the Postal Guide, and (4) the Daily Bulletin of Postal Information. In addition to these four publications the Bureaus and Divisions get out from time to time special circulars and pamphlets.

Amendments to the Postal Laws and Regulations are promulgated by order of the Postmaster-General and appear in the Daily Bulletin and in the Monthly Supplement. Every officer and employé of the postal service is expected to keep his copy of the Postal Laws and Regulations strictly up to date by inserting the changes which are announced daily and monthly. The Postal Guide, with Monthly Supplements thereto, is intended for the use of the public, and is of especial value to those who use the mails to any considerable extent. An important innovation has been effected in the distribution of this book, which contains in convenient form all necessary information regarding postage rates and the use of postal facilities, together with a list of all post offices classified according to States and arranged alphabetically. The complete guide in cloth binding may now be purchased for seventy-five cents, including subscription for one year to the Monthly Supplement. An abridged guide, without the supplements, and in paper binding, is sold for fifteen cents. In distributing the guides at this nominal price the object has been to place within reach of every citizen of the country a complete ex-

position of the facilities offered by the Post Office. The largely increased sale of the books has enabled the Post Office Department to carry out this plan without loss.

XXVII

THE RELATION OF THE DEPARTMENT TO CONGRESS AND THE PEOPLE

THE Post Office Department is an important arm of the Executive branch of the Government, but to all intents and purposes it is the creature of Congress. The Department can do nothing and can change nothing without the consent of Congress as exprest or implied in legislation. The fact that the Postmaster-General is a member of the President's Cabinet is not germane to the relationship existing between the Department and Congress. The Postmaster-General is a member of the Cabinet ex-officio, as a matter of custom, and at the will of the President, not by legislation. As the Postmaster-General is the head of the postal service and of the Post Office Department he is, in this capacity, subject in all things to Congress. He must transmit every year to Congress, through the President, a report of his administration of the service for the year, and his itemized estimate of the money necessary to

conduct the service during the year next ensuing. He must also submit such recommendations for permissive or mandatory legislation as he may deem necessary or desirable for the betterment of the service.

The estimates for appropriations and the legislation proposed by the Postmaster-General may be granted or may be refused by Congress. In the exercise of this power over the postal service Congress operates largely through six committees, three of the House and three of the Senate. Three of these are the Committees on the Post Office and Post Roads, the Committee on Expenditures in the Post Office Department, and the Appropriations Committee, of the House of Representatives. The corresponding three Committees of the Senate have practically the same designations, except that one is known as the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, which is an interesting variation of the term "post offices" in the name of the House Committee. The title of the Senate Committee refers to all the separate post offices in the country and paraphrases the language of the Constitution without referring to any single Federal institution. The title of the House Committee employs the term "the Post Office" to express the National postal establishment and service. This use of the term is found in the title of this book.

Of these Committees the most important, from

the view-point of postal affairs, are the House Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads and the Senate Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads. These Committees frame and present to their respective branches of Congress the annual postal service appropriation bill. This bill provides for all the expenses of the postal service except those required for the operation of the administrative offices at Washington. The cost of administering the Post Office Department itself is carried in the legislative, executive and judicial bill which is framed by the Appropriation Committees of the House and the Senate.

The Post Office Committees of the Congress have power to call before them all officers of the Post Office Department and it is their privilege to examine minutely into the manner in which the service is administered. Postal service is entirely dependent on this annual appropriation bill, and every officer of the Department must be prepared to satisfy the Committees of Congress that every proposal and request made by the Department is in the best interest of the service and in accord with the policies of the Congress.

These two major Post Office Committees very much resemble the board of directors of a large corporation, except that the administrative officers of a corporation do not have to report to and receive their authority from two separate and coordinate boards of directors. The Postmaster-

General and his assistants are placed in this position. What they propose to do must ordinarily be approved by both Committees of Congress and must also pass through the vicissitudes of full debate, item by item, on the floor of both the House and the Senate.

It has happened that the Postal Appropriation Bill has failed of passage. In such event Congress passes a joint resolution authorizing the operation of the service by the month or for the year and appropriating proportionately the same amount or amounts as authorized by law for the previous year. It was under authority of this kind that the postal service was operated during the entire fiscal year of 1916. This outcome of the annual postal legislation is always unfortunate, for the reason that the service is expanding so rapidly that the appropriations for a previous year are usually not adequate to maintain the service during the following year. In normal times necessary postal expenditures increase from six to eight per cent each year. A like increase in appropriations is required to obviate the necessity of curtailing or impairing the service.

The work of the Committees of the House and the Senate on Expenditures in the Post Office Department is intended as a check against unauthorized expenditures, but is not of great importance in the postal machinery of Congress. The Appropriations Committees of the two

Houses are concerned with the Post Office Department proper, which since 1797 has been administered separately from the field-service. It was originally expected that the revenues of the postal service should defray the expenses of administration at Washington as well as all the expense of operation in the field, but since the date mentioned the expenses of central administration have not appeared in the postal accounts and are appropriated for together with the expenses of the other Executive Departments.

The relation of the Post Office Department to Congress is not generally understood. The Postmaster-General is constantly importuned and petitioned to make changes, to grant privileges, and to set about improving the service in various ways, altho he is wholly without authority to do many of the things asked. The Postmaster-General is limited in authority in two ways. He can perform no act, as Postmaster-General, which he has not been specifically authorized to perform by Congress; and, within the sphere of his acknowledged powers, he can not exceed the amounts of money specifically appropriated by Congress each year for the various purposes of the postal service. The Postmaster-General may be reversed by Congress and denied the power to do those things which he believes to be in the interest of the best service. In some administrations the Post Office Department has been the plaything of politicians.

Even when both Houses of Congress are supporting the national policies of the President it has happened that the individual political interests of Members of Congress, and especially of members of the Postal Committees of Congress, have had to be reckoned with by officers of the Post Office Department in securing legislation and appropriations necessary for the conduct of the postal service.

A thoroughly constructive program of postal administration is impossible under the conditions that prevail in the relationship existing between the Department and Congress. The annual postal legislation invariably partakes of the nature of a many-sided compromise. Not only the officers of the Department, but persons and organizations from any part of the country interested in postal affairs in any way, are heard at length by the postal committees of Congress and consideration is given to all claims and representations made. Any plan of reorganization or improvement that requires more than one year for completion or perfection may be lost in the second year or some ensuing year through failure of the necessary appropriation item.

No such plan of reform as Rowland Hill carried out in the British post office in 1840 would be possible under the relationship existing in the United States between Congress and the Department. Commenting on Mr. Hill's program of postal re-

form the Duke of Wellington said, in the House of Lords, that of all the plans that had been proposed Mr. Hill's was the plan he favored "if it was adopted exactly as was proposed." This wise counsel prevailed in the postal affairs of England at that time with the result that that nation achieved simultaneously the benefits of low uniform postage and of numerous changes in the method of operating the service which both gave greater effect to the benefit of a penny postage and also enabled the financial affairs of the nation to be adjusted to the new condition without severe shock or strain. In the United States under the relation existing between the Department and Congress such a program of reform would be subject to countless items of alteration and amendment according to the various view-points of the Department, the two Committees of Congress and the individual members of the House of Representatives and of the Senate.

Thus indirectly, but none the less absolutely, the Post Office Department and the Postal Service is operated by Congress, and hence by the People themselves. Improvement in postal affairs depends always on the understanding of the People. If the People demand that the Department be given the power to establish a parcel post, or a postal-savings system, or if the People demand that all the affairs of the Postal Service shall be removed from the field of selfish and corrupt

politics and administered in a large and constructive way by permanent officers acting under the authority of permanent legislation, these things come to pass. But in postal matters in which the People are not interested the action of Congress will continue to reflect the influence of selfish interests, which in the absence of the vigilant attention of the People are able to make a showing of apparent popular support and of claims which the Committees of Congress are unable to withstand.

With every year, the volume of business transacted by the Postal Service increases much more rapidly than the population of the country, and the service performed by the post offices also becomes more and more important to society and to business. Every year it becomes more apparent that if the efficiency of the postal service, as compared with that of private institutions, is to be maintained, the barnacles of the dead past must be stripped from the institution so that it may be conducted as an institutional unit in accordance with the modern principles of efficient control. If the United States Post Office is drifting into a condition in which it is unable to take on modern improvements of management, business short cuts, labor-saving machinery, under a constructive and continuous program, merely because the American people are not sufficiently informed and interested to demand of their representatives

a National, and not a local, view-point of the postal service, then it is time the people inform themselves of the nature and potentialities of this gigantic public business.

XXVIII

POSTAL PERSPECTIVE

THE United States Post Office stands to-day with all American institutions at the threshold of a new era. It presents problems of organization and management that can not be solved by the rules and experience of the past. Its size has become so great, its transactions so numerous and varied, and its relation to the entire social and economic fabric so important, that it is quite doubtful whether it can continue to meet the demands of the people with the central authority so far removed from the actual operations and the details of operation left to the discretion of semi-autonomous field officers. Mere manifestoes from Washington can not bring about a uniform postal technique throughout a vast establishment that is serving practically every citizen in the country every day. Continuous control immediate to every town and every worker needs to be diffused throughout the service.

It is not the Postal Service alone that has reached, or is fast reaching, the point where a higher and more nearly perfect type of organiza-

tion is necessary. In every land the activities of men are coalescing so that they require more genius of direction at the head and more understanding and cooperation in the rank and file. Some idea of the correct principles of organization and management have been given by the successful consolidations of private capital in the great public utilities, in production and manufacturing, and, lately, in retail merchandising. Some of these private establishments, however, have been found not to contain the elements of perpetuity in their organization but to have depended on the personality of some one man. The establishment of this great amalgamation of private capital, enterprise, and labor on a permanent and secure basis is a part of the great national problem which confronts the American citizen to-day.

Americans who have seen revolutions successful over night in China and in Russia, and who have seen Japan rise in a generation to an acknowledged place among the great nations of the earth, must be impressed by the spontaneity and decisiveness of modern political and economic phenomena. It is time for all Americans to think nationally, to lay aside all sectionalism and municipal and State adherence, so far as these are inimical to the larger loyalty to the Nation. The great problems of the Nation, including the problem of postal reform, depend for solution on the will of the People. The Federal

Government can not anticipate the popular decision, but it can and will respond promptly to the views of the People, when once those views are exprest clearly and unmistakably. The solution of the political and economic problems confronting the American people must come from a keener, clearer and quicker national consciousness.

Quick and cheap means of communication, supplementing and supporting quick and cheap means of transportation, have started the circulation of ideas and goods among larger groups of men until the whole world is to some extent now interdependent. Literature of all kinds has increased with the means of disseminating it. Social and business relations have become more complex with the simplified means of correspondence. By these postal means, masses of mankind are now bound together by mutual unseen ties of obligation and necessity, and these masses are becoming constantly fewer in number and greater in size. In the confusion and contention of these complexed relationships there is a vital element of solidarity which must be encouraged.

We must first solve our own national problems, and in solving them look beyond to the improvement of our relations with the rest of the world. In the distraction of many problems pressing for solution, first one panacea and then another is offered to compose the social, economic, and political condition of the country, but the truth

is that the only remedies for the congestion caused by our accelerated civilization must be found in the regeneration of American patriotism and the resumption by the individual American citizen of his proper share in the duties and responsibilities of political affairs. It is a revival of the spirit of '76 that is needed, and not Government ownership or Government regulation or any other doctrine.

The Postal Service has been the greatest experiment of the American people in the field of Government ownership, and it has been a successful experiment. Self-sustaining through all its 125 years, the United States Post Office has extended mail service in advance of other development to a vast and sparsely settled continent. In its revenues and expenditures it has multiplied more rapidly than any other thing by which the growth of the country is commonly measured, and in the number of its transactions the increase baffles comprehension. From one cent per capita when the postage rate was ten times what it is to-day, the annual per capita expenditure for postal service in the United States has increased to considerably more than \$3.00. In its career the United States Post Office has taken on practically every means of transportation and has utilized practically every labor-saving device, so that, in the light of the conditions and circumstances surrounding its operation, the Postal Service has to

the present time been maintained in a relatively efficient manner.

The American people have permitted several important branches of the Postal Service to be developed and operated by private citizens. Except for substantial Government aid in land and money and some Government intervention in the method of development, the railroad system of the United States has been developed by private capital and under private direction so that it has been the most important and significant institution in our national life. The network of railways in the United States has been a tremendous success and of immense value to the people. It stands to-day as a colossal monument to American enterprise and fortitude. In the new conditions of these times, however, the railroads present problems to the Government, to those charged with their direction, to the organized forces of labor employed in their operation, and to every citizen in the land, which must have the best thought not only of the leaders of the country but of all patriotic citizens. The railroads are a postal facility only in the broadest use of that term. Other great enterprises which are purely postal have also been permitted to be retained by private ownership. The telegraph and the telephone networks of the country now constitute wonderfully efficient institutions receiving and disbursing more money than the en-

ture Postal Service, and affording, for ordinary uses of modern business and society, important means of communication. These electrical mail services have realized the highest ideal of postal service, which is the elimination of distance as a barrier to intercourse among men.

The obvious advantages of articulating telegraph- with telephone-service have been realized under the joint control of these facilities, but the equally obvious advantages of articulating telephone- and telegraph-service with the mail service have not been realized to anything like the same extent. It is no doubt true that under proper conditions the consolidation of management and the merging of post offices with telegraph- and telephone-offices present the opportunity for substantial economies and increased efficiency.

Expediency, however, is the proper policy in exercising the postal power of Congress. The Government should own and operate every postal utility that can not be owned and operated as well or better by private enterprise. The National Post Office is the instrument of all the people to be used for the protection and service of every citizen.

In the new day of political awakening in America and clearer economic understanding by all Americans, the problems of the postal service, like other national and international problems, will be solved by cooperation and forbearance, by

patience and persistence, and by the larger loyalty expressed in national and constructive legislation.

The postal-service needs to be administered as a national unit. It can develop no uniformity nor any high degree of technique until the people of this country recognize that a post office is a Federal and not a municipal institution. The organization of the service in the most effective manner by decentralizing all matters of routine administration, and the establishment of proper conditions of employment wait for the time when it will be possible to have continuous and permanent management, and when the reforms of one year are not liable to die with the next year's appropriation. It is not necessary that there should be any change in the Constitution with respect to the Postal Service, and it may not be necessary to make any change in the organization of the Government, but it is necessary that all Americans shall come to believe in and so to vote for a *national* administration of postal affairs.

With nationalism injected into the Postal Service the tendency of the institution will be, as it has been in the past, to expand continually, to take on new functions, and to elaborate those already acquired. With the increased complexity of modern life and the undoubted growth of Federal power, the post office is coming more and more to be used as the convenient instrument of the National Government. When, at the outbreak

of the European war in 1914, the Department of State desired to give every American an opportunity to read the President's message on neutrality, the postal establishment was the vehicle used for securing this Federal publicity. The President's message in five languages was placarded in every one of the 56,000 post offices and postal branches. Again, the sale of the great Liberty Bond issue of 1917 was advertised through the post offices. The other Departments of the Government are reaching out to the people with information, advice, assistance, and requests for cooperation. These progressive activities are conducted in many instances through the cooperation of the Post Office Department, which authorizes or directs postmasters and postal employees to carry out the plans originated by other departments. The establishment of the postal-savings system is the most remarkable use of the post offices by the Federal government for the performance of a function not inherently postal.

Looking to the future and judging by the past, the annual postal revenue, within the lives of some persons now living, will be measured in billions and not in millions, and the post office may control all communication. The post office will ever be, as it has always been, the barometer of social and economic development.

The most important problems confronting the postal service are those connected with its organ-

ization and its relations with its employees. The type of the present organization is that of extreme centralization of authority and control. The centralization of authority should remain but it seems clear that the immediate control should be delegated to subordinate agencies of the department. The best interests of the service call for solicitation on the part of all administrative officers of the views and a proper recognition of the just claims of the employees; for legislation by Congress providing conditions under which employment in the postal service will bring a full measure of compensation and reward; and prompt in the employees a loyalty to the Government and for the Postal Service that can not be overcome by any consideration of personal or class aggrandizement. The idea to be imprest upon the entire personnel and administrative officials is the opportunity and privilege which this great service affords those having to do with it to serve their country. It is the patriotism of service and not selfish aggrandizement that inspires and builds men to meet their responsibilities and in turn gives security and progress to their country and their homes.

XXIX

COMPARATIVE POSTAL SERVICE

MANY valuable lessons may be learned from the postal services of other lands by those who administer the service in the United States. Unfortunately, there is as yet but scant literature on this subject. It may be expected, however, that the growing importance and interest of the United States Post Office will prompt intelligent and thorough investigation of the domestic postal service in the principal countries of the world. An orderly presentation of their facilities and technique should be available for the use of postal experts and students in this country.

Even the best-informed men in the United States Postal Service have had little except fragmentary knowledge of the condition of foreign postal establishments. It would be of the greatest value in developing a scientific understanding of postal affairs if more information were conveniently available regarding the postal service, as well as the other great public utilities, of the countries of Europe and America.

In comparing the Postal Service of the United

States with that of other countries consideration must be given to the differences in form of Government, in the desires and needs of the people, in extent of territory, and in all economic and engineering details. Postal service in a country where the postmaster wears a sword and a special postal title conferred on him by royalty may be very different from postal service in the United States. The element of paternalism is prominent in many of the European systems and accounts for an elaboration of service which is not known in this country. It must be borne in mind, however, that if the post offices of Europe are more highly developed for the performance of all sorts of banking and messenger services, some of the European countries in which these establishments exist have no private express companies and no national system of private commercial banks. In the United States the first-class mail service of the Government is a monopoly, but the post office shares with private enterprise every other field in which it is engaged. In European countries generally, and, in fact, in nearly all the countries of the world, every function of the post office is a Government monopoly. The money-order systems of Europe are cheap and convenient for the people, but it must be remembered that there is no other money-order or remittance systems in those countries and that money-orders must also be used in the way that American citizens use

their private checking accounts in State and National banks. The parcel post in many European countries has a number of facilities that are lacking in America. It is important, however, that those government express systems be satisfactory to the people, for they are the only such systems that the people have.

Before rashly concluding that the postal policy and program of other countries is superior or preferable to that of our Government, the essential differences should be clearly defined. In the United States the mail monopoly has been extended only to include the transportation of written communications and parcels sealed against inspection. In the conduct of this service the policy has been adhered to of using the entire revenue to extend the service as rapidly and as effectively as possible to all the people. At the same time postage has been reduced and made uniform. With the cooperation of private enterprise in the building and perfecting of railways, the post office of the American Government has unquestionably outstript all others in making written communication among the people easy, quick and secure. The remainder of the postal facilities in the United States are incidental to this principal function. The parcel post, and the postal money-order and savings systems, following the intention of the People and the Government, supplemented but did not supersede the

private institutions which are performing the same character of service. Thus far, the People of the United States have enlarged the function of the post office only as the private institutions fail to fully satisfy the needs of the country.

The banks did not provide a quick uniform remittance system, and the remittance systems of the express companies were not sufficiently extensive; as a consequence the money-order system was established. The express service on steam transportation lines did not reach the rural population; was divided among several independent companies and imposed excessive rates on the people; as a consequence the parcel post was established and gave an alternative service to every person to whom the express facilities were available and gave the first parcel express service ever available to the 20,000,000 patrons of the rural mail service. American banks were unable to draw from hoarding millions of dollars saved by foreigners and others who were timid about entrusting their earnings to any institution but the Government, and the banks were unable to extend savings facilities to many small communities. As a consequence, the postal-savings system was established to supplement and aid the banks.

The postal policy of nearly all of the other great nations of the world differs essentially from that of the United States. In other countries, as a rule, the post office is entrusted with the monopoly

not only of the letter post but also all other branches of the postal service including the telegraph and telephone. The policy of the foreign governments with respect to the post office is paternalistic. Postal service is imposed on the people as a good thing for the people and for the State. Private enterprise in this field is eliminated and individual invention and ingenuity in affairs postal must find expression through the official channels. The foreign post offices, as a rule, are made to yield some revenue to the government. There is practically no country that has permitted the post office to be a drain on the treasury at any time, and no country has pursued so diligently as the United States has the policy of returning the postal revenue to the people in the form of extended postal service.

Many foreign postal administrations are more highly developed than that of the United States. This is due partly to the fact that those countries are older, their populations more dense and their territory more compact. It is also due in part to paternalistic policies which have developed the post office at the expense of private enterprise. Austria has eight distinct types of postal service: the letter-post, the registration of valuable letters, money-order system, postal drafts by which sight and time commercial paper may be negotiated, parcel post, passenger transportation on mail-wagon lines, postal savings, and a check-

ing and clearing-house branch, which provides for members the facilities of our national system of commercial banks.

Altho the European type presents many refinements not found in the United States Post Office, the attitude of the European post office to the people is very different from that of the United States Post Office. The rules and regulations of the foreign service are designed to cover every facility needed and to provide for every emergency, but the postal officials are not entrusted with as much discretion as American postmasters are in extending special or additional service as may be necessary. The European governments enforce compliance with the postal regulations on penalty of serious loss and embarrassment to those who do not use the post office in the correct manner. A letter addrest to a German city must have not only the street and number of the house inhabited by the person for whom the letter is intended, but also the name of the district in which it is situated, corresponding to the post office station or branch in an American city. Letters which are not properly addrest in this way are returned to the sender, no effort being made to perform directory service. The British Post Office Guide contains the emphatic statement "that the post office can not undertake to correct or complete wrong or insufficient addresses."

The liberality of the United States Post Office

is shown in the fact that patrons, at a city-delivery post office, may receive their mail by carrier, through a rented box or through the general delivery, while in European countries the privilege of the general delivery is reserved for transients. In England this branch of the service is known as *Poste Restante* and the British postmasters are given full authority to deny the use of the *Poste Restante* to permanent residents of a city. The English instruction reads: "The *Poste Restante* is intended solely for the accommodation of strangers and travelers, and even they may not use the *Poste Restante* for more than three months." The cooperation on the part of the public that is so frequently requested by the United States Post Office Department and by the American postmasters is enforced as a matter of law by the post-office administrators of nearly all foreign countries.

The great elaboration of European post-office establishments has undoubtedly given them an advantage over the United States in the matter of postal organization. The European view-point on the United States Post Office is indicated by the following extract from the treatment accorded the United States service by Otto Sieblist in "Die Post im Auslande" ("The Post in Other Lands"): "The comparatively few inspectors who have their headquarters in the important cities of the country . . . are not enabled to make

a sufficiently frequent inspection of the post offices in their districts, owing to the large territory covered and the large number of offices. The Post Office Department of the United States is thoroughly centralized in contradistinction to most of the large European postal administrations. Notwithstanding the existence of this defect the United States has taken no legislative action to establish an intermediary responsibility."

The Austrian Post Office is under the control of the Department of Commerce. For the purposes of administration the country is subdivided into ten territorial divisions. In each of these divisions there is a head post office to which all other post offices in the division are tributary. The heads of these divisions are court councilors, chief post-directors, or post-directors, according to the importance of the territorial division. Each division is subdivided into districts in charge of chief post-office commissioners and post-office commissioners. Each division has an auditing branch. Post offices and postal stations are operated partly under subordinate officers and partly by private persons under licenses. Even for the sale of stamps a license is required. This decentralized type of organization prevails generally throughout Europe and in many of the new postal administrations of South America and Asia. It results in a closer coordination of all

the branches of the service and the enforcement of uniform rules and regulations.

In many foreign countries, the decentralized type of organization is accompanied by great specialization among the officers and employees. The existence of postal science is recognized and incorporated in the universities in the general treatment of the subject of transportation. Officers in the postal service are in many countries required to be educated men holding university degrees in law and transportation. Among the employees specialization consists of training and developing a distinct class of workers for each branch of the service. The wages paid are much less relatively than in the United States and the conditions of employment would not be satisfactory to Americans.

The specialization of workers in the European postal establishments has resulted in the development of postal technique to a greater extent than in the United States. The subject, moreover, is better understood by the people at large. For example, there is no demand in Europe for the indiscriminate use of pneumatic tubes in transporting mail-matter in cities, but a highly effective pneumatic tube service is maintained in some of the European cities. The tubes are of small size and any letter weighing more than one ounce can not be included in the tube mail. The letter to be carried in the pneumatic tube must bear

additional postage. The service is articulated with the special-delivery systems and constitutes the equivalent of telegraph service within the city. In this way the full benefit of pneumatic tube transmission is gained and the cost is defrayed by the additional postage charge. In the United States pneumatic tubes have been constructed and used with reference to the transportation of all kinds of letter and small package mail, with the result that the expedition of the tubes is lost in the great volume of mail offering, on account of the limited capacity of the tube containers.

XXX

PHILATELY

THE widespread business of stamp-collecting is proof that the work of the post office is capable of making a strong appeal to the imagination and sympathy. The postage stamp is small in size, simple to use, and trivial in intrinsic value. Yet it stands for a great national institution. All the power and authority of the Federal Government is behind it. This little insignia commands human service in all parts of the world. It is a constant proof and effective illustration of human ingenuity and human accomplishment. An illustration designed for an early postage envelop in England represented the central post office at London as a heroic figure from whose outstretched arms winged mercuries in great number were ceaselessly carrying messages to the four corners of the earth where other figures, men and women of all races and degrees of civilization were shown to be reading with undoubted interest letters from the antipodes. Modern stamps do not carry this amount of detail, but nevertheless convey to the keen mind of the collector a wealth of fascinating suggestion.

The postage-stamp originated in England in 1840. In the United States the first stamps were used by private expresses and local deliveries. The first stamp of an official nature was that used by the Postmaster of New York in 1842, which was of the three-cent denomination, and used in conducting the "United States City Dispatch Post," which was in effect a delivery service authorized for New York City. Shortly afterward the law of 1845 established uniform postage at low rates, and postmasters in a number of cities issued stamps on their own responsibility for the reason that it was decided that the Postmaster General had no authority to have a national issue printed.

Such provisional issues of stamps were made in 1845 by the postmasters at Alexandria, Virginia; Annapolis and Baltimore, Maryland; Brattleboro, Vermont; Millbury, Massachusetts; New Haven, Connecticut; New York City; Providence, Rhode Island, and St. Louis, Missouri. These postmasters' stamps were good only for the prepayment of postage at the office of the issue. In 1845 the Postmaster at Washington, D. C., placed his stamp on envelopes and so offered these first "stamped envelopes" for sale. A newspaper at that time stated that the introduction of this plan "will save our fellow-citizens many a long and hitherto indispensable trudge in this metropolis of magnificent distances." The issuing of these

stamps by postmasters was undoubtedly prosecuted vigorously for the reason that the postmasters received a commission on the amount of postage-receipts, and were naturally concerned to have the greatest possible amount of postage prepaid at their offices. Moreover, the sale of stamps brought in the revenue before the service was actually performed.

Considerable loss resulted from counterfeiting these crude issues of stamps. It was frequently pointed out at that time that the postmaster's stamp did not represent an obligation on the part of the Government, but only the personal obligation of the postmaster, and in case of his death that it might not be enforced against his successor. The law authorizing the first official issue of stamps and prohibiting the printing of private stamps by postmasters or others, was passed by Congress in 1847. The five and ten-cent stamps of that year were the first United States postage stamps. A new issue appeared in 1851 after the revision of the postage rates. Another stamp of this issue, the twelve-cent stamp, was of little use as it served only as double postage to California, or quadruple postage for distances of less than 3,000 miles. This difficulty was ingeniously overcome by many patrons of the post office who made this twelve-cent stamp into two six-cent stamps by cutting it in two diagonally from corner to corner. These early stamps were not perforated

but were printed in solid sheets and had to be cut apart at the post office by the purchaser by means of shears.

The general issue of stamps in 1857 was perforated. In 1861 a new issue was designed to prevent the fraudulent use of the old issue in the seceding Southern states. Since that time new issues have appeared frequently in the United States. It has been a growing practise to make special stamp issues on the occasions of expositions marking important historical epochs in the world's history. A stamped envelop of special design was issued to commemorate the Centennial Celebration at Philadelphia in 1876. Important among the commemorative issues of stamps were those for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, the World's Fair at St. Louis in 1904, the Jamestown Fair in 1907, and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915. Postmark dies have been used by the Department for advertising expositions which have been formally recognized by Congress, also for special advertising, such as the sale of Liberty Loan Bonds in 1917.

The collecting and arranging of postmarks and stamps for a fanciful trade is practically co-existent with cancelation and stamp progress. Stamp-collecting proper had its origin in France. An English writer in 1865 says: "In the gardens of the Tuileries and also to some extent in those of Luxembourg, crowds still gather on Sunday

afternoons and may be seen sitting under the trees, sometimes in a great state of excitement as they busily sell or exchange their surplus stock of stamps, for some of which they may have been in search." This pursuit has become so popular and so highly developed throughout the world as to become a substantial business. It employs in some of the cities of this country hundreds of people with millions of capital invested, having the sole purpose of supplying demands for postage stamps of all countries and of all issues.

The market for stamps has come to be well standardized and the prices are controlled by the relative scarcity of the specimens of each issue, and by the cost of securing and assembling them. Individual specimens of some of the early issues command prices of from \$1,000 to \$5,000, and there are individuals in this country who have assembled collections of stamps that would command a market price of more than a million dollars.

Some nations have recognized the stamp-collector to the extent of printing new issues of stamps at frequent intervals in order that the Government might profit by the large number of stamps of each issue purchased by the stamp-collector and never used as postage. The Government of the United States, however, has paid but scant attention to the stamp-collector and adequate official information regarding the early American issues does not exist. There have been not only fre-

quent issues, but also variations in the paper, ink, and die within the specimens of the same issue. Stamp-collectors assert that even at the present time, when much of the former confusion is avoided by the printing of United States stamps by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, much remains which the Government might do in the interest of their fraternity. They desire that a plan be adopted by which the uniformity of each issue shall be absolutely secure and under which the Government would publish a detailed and authentic description of each issue. It is estimated that the Post Office Department of the United States receives annually approximately \$250,000 for stamps purchased by collectors and dealers for which no postal return whatever is required, and for which no postal service is performed.

There are numerous magazines and periodicals published, some weekly but more monthly, in every language devoted entirely to the science of philately. Articles dealing with the history and cause of issue and method of manufacture of the various stamps of the many countries of the world, appear in these magazines and are profusely illustrated with splendid cuts of the various stamps described. When the papers are published in a foreign country the articles are illustrated no matter what country is the subject. Naturally the greatest interest in the stamps of

any one country is displayed by the collector in that country itself, so there is more study of the stamps of the United States in this country than in all the other countries combined, and more is written about them in the numerous philatelic publications of this country than in foreign publications. Foreign post office departments years ago began to permit reputable stamp dealers and publishers to illustrate their catalogs and albums, but this is prohibited in the United States. It is asserted that the detection of counterfeit stamps designed to defraud our Government has been made in nearly every instance by a philatelist whose attention has been attracted by some slight peculiarity non-existent in the original, and who upon minute examination discovered the counterfeit. Or the philatelist has become so puzzled by the differences that he called the attention of the governmental authorities to the stamp and asked for an explanation. Thus, the philatelist has a potentiality in policing this source of revenue to the Government and is actually contributing to this end.

APPENDIX

SOME POSTAL TERMS IN GENERAL USE

(This list does not contain all the technical terms or colloquialisms in use in the service. The effort rather has been to state as accurately as possible the more generally accepted meaning of some terms in common postal use, and thus contribute to uniformity in postal terminology.)

Advertised. Undeliverable first-class matter, not bearing a return card, a list of which is posted in a public place or published in newspapers.

Advice. Notice sent by postmaster who issues money-order to postmaster who will be called upon to pay the order. No longer generally used in domestic money-order service.

Application. Money-order form which may be found on desks in corridors of post offices; to be used in applying for the issuance of a money-order.

Backstamp. Impression placed on back of registered, foreign, and special delivery mail by the receiving post office to show name of office, date, and hour of arrival.

Bag. Sack of heavy cloth with cord through hem at top and metal slide label-holder on cord to keep bag closed when cord is drawn; ordinarily called a tie-sack and used in transporting mail-matter other than that of the first class.

Bag-rack. Framework on which mail-bags and sacks are hung while being filled.

- Basis.** (1) Space: a method of applying the amount of car space used to determine amount of compensation due to railroads for hauling mails. (2) Weight: application of weight of mail hauled to determine compensation.
- Blind letter.** Letter-mail in point print or raised characters used by the blind. Subject to third-class rate of postage if unsealed.
- Blind matter.** Reading matter for the blind which, when sent by or to public institutions or other authorized agencies, is entitled to be carried in the mails under certain prescribed regulations free of charge for postage.
- Blind package.** A package of letters or circulars with the top letter or circular faced down. A blind package must be worked (distributed) by the clerk who opens the pouch or tie-sack in which it is dispatched or by some other member of the crew.
- Blind reader.** Same as **Searcher**.
- Blue tag.** Mail-periodicals shipped by freight to distributing point, and then forwarded by mail-trains. A blue tag is used to label sacks containing such mail.
- Brass-lock service.** Registry service in which bags are locked with special brass locks.
- Bumper.** Cancelling stamp for second-, third-, and fourth-class matter.
- Bums.** Damaged tie-sacks. See **Cripple**.
- Callers.** Patrons who regularly call at the post office for their mail.
- Call notice.** Printed form left by messenger who receives no response at address given on special-delivery mail.
- Cancelling machine.** Machine through which letters are run for purpose of effacing stamps and placing post-mark on letters.
- Case.** (1) Piece of furniture specially constructed with numerous subdivisions or pigeonholes into which

mail is separated. (2) Act of separating mail into a case. (3) Subject of investigation and report by an inspector.

Case examination. Test given to employees to ascertain their knowledge of, and ability to learn, schemes of distribution.

Catcher-arm. Triangular device placed across door of mail-car to catch pouch of mail hung on crane at station where train does not stop.

Catcher post office. Office where mail is exchanged without stopping train. The practise is sometimes followed at "exchange stations."

Catcher-pouch. Canvas pouch provided specially for use in catcher exchanges.

Censor. (1) Government representative who, in time of emergency, protects the government from passage of information to persons who might use same with injurious effect. (2) To perform the duties of a censor.

Certificate. Engraved certificate of deposit issued to depositors in the postal savings bank.

Chute. Flat glass-front tube installed in high buildings with slots for the receipt of letters that drop through the chute into a box on the street floor, from which collections are made.

Cinder guard. Metal hood with glass-covered opening protected by wire netting placed in door of mail-car and projecting from the same so that the clerk may look through it while operating the catcher-arm.

Circular. A printed letter sent in identical terms to several persons.

Class mail-matter, First: Written matter and other matter sealed or otherwise closed against inspection. **Second:** Newspapers and periodicals bearing notice of entry as second-class matter. **Third:** Circulars, newspapers, and periodicals not second class nor em-

braced in the term "book," miscellaneous printed matter on paper not having the nature of personal correspondence. **Fourth:** Domestic parcel post, merchandise, farm and factory products, books, printed matter weighing more than four pounds, other matter not first, second, or third class.

Class post office. **First:** Where the salary of the postmaster is \$3,000 or more. **Second:** Where the salary of the postmaster is less than \$3,000 but \$2,000 or more. **Third:** Where the salary of the postmaster is less than \$2,000 but \$1,000 or more. **Fourth:** Where the compensation of the postmaster is less than \$1,000 and the gross receipts fail to aggregate \$1,900.

Clock. "On the clock" means on duty; "off the clock," off duty. Employees subject to the eight-hour law are not permitted to perform official duties when "off the clock."

Club package. Package of newspapers or other periodicals all for delivery at one post office; made up in the office of publication.

C. O. D. Method of sending merchandise through the mails with the understanding that the post office will collect the purchase price at time of delivery and remit to the seller.

Collector. Carrier whose duty is to take mail from boxes and bring it to the office for distribution and dispatch.

Compensatory time. Leave granted equivalent to number of hours service performed Sunday or holiday.

Contract station. Station operated on personal responsibility of clerk-in-charge who has a formal contract with the Post Office Department.

Conveyor. (1) **Belt:** Mechanical device consisting of wide belt which moves over rollers. Mail placed on the belt is conveyed to various parts of the workroom. (2) **Basket:** Mechanical device consisting of baskets which move overhead attached to cables,

with baskets opened at ends so that stationary sweeps empty the baskets at proper points.

Copyright matter. Term used to designate copyright matter that is entitled to transmission in the mails free of postage.

County matter. Publications of the second class mailed to actual subscribers in county where printed, free of postage.

Coupon. That part of a money-order form retained by the paying office and filed as a permanent record.

Crane. A post placed in vertical position alongside the railroad track at the top of a platform, the post being equipped with arms which raise to a horizontal position with catcher-pouch fastened between. The pouch is caught by the catcher-arm of the mail car.

Crew. Force of post office clerks who work during a specified period under supervision of one foreman, or of railway postal clerks who man one train.

Cripple. Tie-sack requiring new string or fastener. Often applied generally to damaged pouch or sack.

Dead letter. Letter not bearing return card of sender, and which cannot be delivered as address nor by the use of all other means at the disposal of the office to which it is address. Such letters are opened by the Dead Letter Office and forwarded to the person intended or returned to the sender, if this can be done. A charge of one cent is made for this service in the case of letters which have previously been advertised in a post office.

Decoy. Matter sent through mails by an inspector or other investigating officer in an effort to locate employees or others guilty of depredations.

Depository office. Post office designated by the Postmaster General to receive remittances of revenues from a group of post offices and in turn remit to the representative of the United States Treasury.

- Direct.** A package made up of several letters or circulars, a pouch containing several packages of letters, or a bag containing several pieces of paper and parcel mail, all for one city, and so labeled.
- Dis.** "For distribution at." If several, or even two post offices receive their mail through Louisville, Ky. (for instance) the mail for such offices may be made up in packages and labeled "Louisville, Ky., Dis."
- D. and D.** "Direct and Dis." A package or sack containing mail for a given post office, as well as for the post offices receiving mail through that office. If the mail is for Louisville, Ky. and "Louisville, Ky. Dis." the label would read, "Louisville, Ky. D. & D."
- D. P. O.** Same as Dis. (Practically obsolete.)
- Dress the rack.** To hang empty tie-sacks on the distributing rack.
- Drop.** A slot or opening into which patrons deposit mail for dispatch.
- Drop-letter.** A letter the destination of which is within the delivery of the office where it is mailed.
- Drop-table.** Table onto which the mail falls when dropt through the "letter drops."
- Dumping-table.** Table onto which sacks or pouches of mail are emptied.
- Eight-hour law.** Statute which restricts service of certain employees to schedules of eight within ten hours.
- Exchange office.** Post office or Railway Post Office authorized to exchange mails with foreign countries.
- Facing-slip.** Label attached to a package of letters or a mail sack bearing the postmark of dispatching office, name of employee making up the dispatch, and address of destination.
- Facing-table.** Table on which letters are gathered and "faced" in the same direction preparatory to running them through the canceling machine. Some facing-tables are fitted with belt conveyors which

carry the faced letters to one end of the table and automatically stack them.

Farm-to-table movement. A movement which has for its end the close relation of producer and consumer through the medium of the parcel post.

Fictitious. Mail the address on which is not the true name or title of the individual intended to receive it.

Financial station. A postal station manned by classified postal employees, for the sale of stamps, issuance of money-orders, conduct of postal savings business, and acceptance of mail of all classes, but not for the distribution or delivery of mail. Sometimes called **classified station**.

Fine distribution. A term applied to define mail which has been separated according to an elaborate and detailed scheme of distribution.

Flats. Large flat circular mail. Sometimes applied to newspapers in club packages.

Forwarding order. Request filed with postmaster to send patrons mail to an office other than that address.

Franking privilege. Privilege of sending matter through the mails free of postage. Such matter must bear the word "free" and in the case of an individual the signature, either written or fac-simile, of the person entitled to the use of the frank, together with his official designation, if any. The privilege of franking has been extended by authority of Congress to cover letters, documents, seeds, etc., mailed by members of Congress and other officers of the Government, and by special acts of Congress, to mail-matter of widows of former Presidents of the United States.

See also **BLIND MATTER, OFFICIAL MATTER, COUNTY MATTER, COPYRIGHT MATTER.**

Fraud order. Instruction by the Postmaster General for postmasters to return to senders all mail address to

an addressee who, upon evidence satisfactory to the Postmaster General, has been using the mails for purposes forbidden by law.

Fraudulent. Mail-matter address to persons who are using the mails for purposes forbidden by law.

Free matter. Matter sent through the mails free of postage.

See: BLIND MATTER; COPYRIGHT MATTER; COUNTY MATTER; FRANKING PRIVILEGE; OFFICIAL MATTER.

Graveyard shift. The tour of duty between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m.

Green goods. Counterfeit or spurious money.

Gross receipts. Entire postal revenue of a post office.

Guide. Postal Guide. Contains the name and class of every post office, postage rates, and other general postal information.

Gurney. Hamper or basket-truck used in the post office for parcel-post packages.

Hang a rack. To hang mail-bags on the bag rack.

Inner sack. Small red-striped sack with rotary lock for registered mail which is dispatched with other mail in the ordinary iron-locked pouch.

Insurance. Parcel-post matter for which the Department pays an indemnity in case of loss or damage in transmission.

Jacket. (1) Folder in which papers in a case are enclosed.

(2) To "jacket a case" is to open an investigation.

(3) Registered, large envelop with instructions for its use printed thereon in red; sometimes used to enclose registered letter or parcel.

Jug. Upright, semicircular case, with large separations into which newspapers and periodicals are distributed. Sometimes called the **roundhouse**.

Key deposit. Small amount deposited by patron with postmaster to protect against possible loss of key to lock box.

Lay-off. Time granted to railway postal clerks on runs of long hours for the purpose of bringing their average number of hours on duty to the standard required by the regulations.

Lay-out. (1) Arrangement of furniture, conveyors, etc., on the workroom floor. (2) To "lay out a run" is to make up a set of facing slips.

Line-stamp. Rubber stamp used by railway postal clerks to indicate name of R.P.O., train number, and date, the same being stamped on the facing slip.

Logs. Very heavy parcel-post packages. Sometimes called **trunks**.

Lookout. A gallery built across the workroom of a post office from which inspectors may view the work of employees without the knowledge of the latter.

Loop-route. A mail route (electric car, automobile, etc.) so laid out as to provide for the supply of two or more post offices, postal stations, or depots, and return to point of start without retracing.

Lumber. Large, flat circulars wider than ordinary long letters, which are distributed into cases having pigeon-holes of extra large dimensions.

Make-up. The act of separating mail, tying it out for dispatch, and dispatching it.

Mark-up. Letter not delivered at original address and which therefore must be endorsed to show next address at which delivery is to be attempted, or other disposition to be made of the letter.

Mass. The act of dispatching to a railway post office, to a post office, or station, for distribution, mail-matter which would, if the quantity warranted a finer distribution, be made up into directs, or into packages and sacks labeled to a distant R.P.O.

Missent. Mail erroneously sent to an office other than that address.

Misthrown. Mail erroneously distributed.

- M. O.** Money-order.
- Mother hubbard.** Large-sized sack used for paper mail.
- Mother-hubbard pouch.** A tie-sack that has been converted into a pouch for the use of letter mail by removing the cord and fastener and substituting a strap with a hasp.
- Mounted.** A "mounted carrier" is one who collects or delivers mail in a vehicle. A "mounted route" is one served by a mounted carrier.
- Nixie.** Mail lacking sufficient address to permit of forwarding.
- Office time.** Time a carrier spends in the office routing mail and performing other office duties.
- Official matter.** Official mail carried free of postage; other than "franked matter," "county matter," "copyright matter," or reading matter for the blind.
- Ordinary.** Mail other than registered, insured, C.O.D., and special delivery.
- Overtime.** Actual hours of service in addition to the eight hours required by law.
- Packet.** Bundle of letters.
- Parcel.** Bundle or package.
- Penalty.** (1) **Envelop:** Special envelop admissible for government business without payment of postage.
(2) **Label:** Address label used for similar matter.
- Pension letter.** Letter from the Federal Pension Bureau in which pension check is enclosed.
- Permit matter.** Second- and third-class matter mailed in a minimum number of three hundred identical pieces, or fourth-class matter mailed in not less than two hundred and fifty identical pieces, which is brought to the post office and mailed without stamps affixt upon meeting the requirements of regulations for payment of postage.
- Philately.** Systematic collection and study of postage stamps.

Pick-up table. Another term for **Facing-table**.

Pigeonhole. Square, horizontal opening on mail-distribution case.

P. L. & R. Postal Laws and Regulations.

Pony-rack. A short rack for tie-sacks or pouches, placed at the end of distributing tables in a mail-car, thus utilizing space that is not available in racks attached to side of car.

Postmark. Impression placed on a letter or other mail-matter to show office of origin, date, and hour of dispatch.

Postage due. Amount due from addressee on account of deficiency of postage at time of mailing.

Pouch. A locked mail-bag used principally in dispatching first-class mail.

Precanceled stamps. Canceled by printing name of post office across face of stamps before being sold to large mailers, avoiding use of canceling machine at time of mailing. Can not be used on first-class matter.

Presidential office. Office of the first, second, or third class. So called because postmasters at such offices are appointed by the President.

Primary. First distribution of mail into a small number of separations preparatory to finer separation on other cases.

Probationary period. First six months' service of person regularly appointed to post-office service.

Pull. To "pull a case" or to "pull a box" is to take mail from it.

Quarterly account. Financial statement of postal account submitted every three months by the postmaster to the Auditor for the Post Office Department.

Railway Post Office. (1) A mail car in which distribution is made by railway postal clerks en route. Usually called an R.P.O. (2) Term used to designate any

particular line over which mail-cars are operated. It usually embraces territory over which any train passes which carries mail in closed pouches. (Example: that portion of the Pennsylvania railroad system between New York and Pittsburg is designated "New York and Pittsburg Railway Post Office.")

Rate up. The act of placing on matter offered for mailing an endorsement of the amount of deficiency in postage.

Rebuts. First-class mail of foreign origin, bearing name of sender, which fails of delivery and is returned to country of origin.

Reds. Slang term for **registered matter**.

Repeaters. Frequent general-delivery callers. Sometimes called **regulars**.

Return card. Notation in upper left-hand corner of letter or parcel to show address to which mail should be returned or to whom notice should be sent in event mail cannot be delivered.

Ring in. To ring the time recorder when coming on duty.

Ring out. To ring the time recorder when going off duty.

B.M.S. Railway mail service.

Bounds. Second- and third-class matter wrapt in rolls individually address.

Bob a box. To collect mail from a street letter- or package-box.

Rotary lock. Special lock for pouches containing registered mail. Such a lock registers the next higher number with each successive turn of the key.

Route. (1) Course laid out for a city or rural carrier or mail contractor. (2) To make the final distribution of mail for delivery to addressees by carrier.

Route book. Complete directory of persons served by a letter-carrier. Often called the **log book**.

Route card. Card filed by carrier with postmaster showing in what order he serves his route.

R.P.O. Railway post office.

Safety rods. Rods fastened to the ceiling of a mail-car and running the entire length of the car for the protection of clerks in case of a wreck. Clerks may grasp the rods and draw themselves up into the upper part of the car away from racks and other furniture which may injure them when there is a collision.

Scheme. A plan of separating mail, usually made up in book form. The **R.M.S. scheme** is a plan of separating according to R.P.O.'s, Directs, and Dises, according to names of post offices to which mail may be address. The **City scheme** is a plan of separating according to the routes of carriers called upon to make delivery, or by postal-station districts.

Screen wagon. Wagons fitted with iron-screened bodies used by contractors for hauling the mails.

Sea post office. Office established and operated on any ocean steamer similarly to a railway post office on mail-trains.

Searcher. Clerk who performs service supplying correct addresses from directories.

Secondary. Case on which "fine" or more detailed separation is made after the primary separation is completed.

Separation. One of the compartments or pigeonholes of a case.

Separating office. Located at the intersection of mail routes. Sometimes called a distributing office.

Shift. Same as **Trick**. See **Graveyard shift**.

Ship letter or package. Letter or package brought into the United States from a foreign country, or carried from one port in the United States to another, in a ship not regularly employed in carrying the mail,

and in the latter case, over a route not ordinarily used.

Short paid. Same as **Postage due mail**.

Skin the rack. To take bags from bag-rack for dispatch.
See **Tie out**.

Sleepers. (1) Mail left in a pouch or sack supposed to be empty. (2) Mail overlooked and left in a case when mail is taken out for dispatch. (3) Uncanceled stamps found loose in the mails.

Sleeper case. Case in which the general delivery clerk keeps letters which have been placed in the general delivery because they could not be delivered as address. Sometimes called the **morgue**.

Stamped paper. Includes postage stamps, post cards, wrappers, and envelopes with stamps engraved thereon.

Star. Emblem worn on the coat sleeve of carrier to show years of service.

Star route. Post route on which mail is carried under a formal contract awarded as the result of competitive bids.

State case. Case on which mail is separated according to states of destination.

Station. See **Contract station**, **Financial station**, **Rural station**.

Stripes. Term applied by railway postal clerks to registered mail in their custody. Originates from the fact that the mail is frequently enclosed in a bag the canvas of which is striped alternately red and white. See **Inner sack**.

Swing. Period of time within the day's tour or "trick" when an employee is temporarily off duty.

Swing room. Room where employees may spend their time while "swinging," made necessary by the regulation that an employee not on duty shall not have access to the workroom.

Sweep. To "sweep a case" is to take all the mail from it.

- Stuck.** A railway postal clerk goes **stuck** when he fails to complete distribution in time to make connection at the junction points, or to complete all distribution by the time he reaches the end of his run. If the mails are unusually heavy a whole crew in a post office or R.P.O. may go **stuck**. The term applies in a post office when distribution is not completed in time for dispatch on a particular train or for delivery by carriers on scheduled time.
- Temporary.** A temporary employee.
- Tie-out.** Act of taking the bags from the bag-rack, tying and preparing them for dispatch, or of tying-out packages of letters and circulars for dispatch.
- Tie-sack.** Bag used in transporting mail other than that of the first class. See **Bag**.
- Throw-backs.** Mail reaching final distributor or carrier through error, and which is thrown back for correct distribution.
- Time-card.** (1) Card on letter box to show hours of collection. (2) Card form on which is entered employee's record of attendance.
- Time-recorder.** Mechanical clock device for recording time of arrival and departure of employees.
- Tracer.** Form used to locate lost or undelivered mail-matter.
- Transfer clerk.** A railway postal clerk assigned to duty at a railroad station to supervise transferring of mail from incoming to outgoing trains, and between the post office and incoming or outgoing trains. He generally supervises the service locally when other officials are absent.
- Traveling library.** Collection of books moving among postal employees from post office to post office or among the patrons of such offices.
- Trick.** Tour of duty of any postal employee, as a **night trick**, a **day trick**. Sometimes called **shift**.

- Trip.** Act of serving a route. To "make a trip" is to serve the patrons on a carrier's route.
- Tubes—Pneumatic.** Conveyor operated for transmission of mail underground between stations and the main office.
- Tying device.** Mechanical contrivance for tying bundles of letters or packages.
- Vise.** The act of examining and endorsing approval in exercise of censorship as in war time.
- Window envelops.** Having an opening or transparent panel in the front through which the address on the enclosure is visible.
- Worked.** Mail that has been separated and is therefore ready for the next step in the process of transmission. "Working" mail is mail which must be distributed before it is dispatched.
- Workroom.** That part of the post office building where the actual handling, separating, etc., of mail occurs.
- Zone.** Definite area to any point within which the same rate of postage is charged for the transmission of fourth-class mail.

PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND

Years.	PRESIDENTS.	Postmasters General.	First Assistant Postmasters General.
1775	Continental Congress. . . .	Benjamin Franklin, July 26, 1775.	.....
1776	.....	Richard Bache, Pa., Nov. 7	.....
1782	.....	Ebenezer Hazard, N. Y., Jan. 28.	James Bryson, Jan. 28. . . .
1789	George Washington, Va., Apr. 30.	Samuel Osgood, Mass., Sept. 26.	Jonathan Burrall.
1791	.....	Timothy Pickering, Pa., Aug. 12.	Charles Burrall.
1793	George Washington, Va., Mar. 4.	.....	.....
1795	.....	Joseph Habersham, Ga., Feb. 25.	.....
1797	John Adams, Mass., Mar. 4.	.....	.....
1800	.....	.....	Abraham Bradley, jr., Conn.
1801	Thomas Jefferson, Va., Mar. 4.	Gideon Granger, Conn., Nov. 28.	.....
1805	Thomas Jefferson, Va., Mar. 4.	.....	.....
1809	James Madison, Va., Mar. 4.	.....	.....
1810	.....	.....	.....
1813	James Madison, Va., Mar. 4.	.....	.....
1814	.....	Return J. Meigs, jr., Ohio, Apr. 11.	.....
1817	James Monroe, Va., Mar. 4	.....	.....
1818	.....	.....	.....
1821	James Monroe, Va., Mar. 5	.....	.....
1823	.....	John McLean, Ohio, July 1	.....
1825	John Q. Adams, Mass., Mar. 4.	.....	.....
1829	Andrew Jackson, Tenn., Mar. 4.	William T. Barry, Ky., Apr. 6.	Seiah R. Hobbie, N. Y. . . .
1833	Andrew Jackson, Tenn., Mar. 4.	.....	.....
1835	.....	Amos Kendall, Ky., May 1	.....
1836	.....	.....	.....
1837	Martin Van Buren, N.Y., Mar. 4.	.....	.....
1840	.....	John M. Niles, Conn., May 26.	.....
1841	{ William Henry Harrison, Ohio, Mar. 4. John Tyler, Va., Apr. 6 }	{ Francis Granger, N. Y. Mar. 8. Charles A. Wickliffe, Ky., Oct. 13. }	.....
1842	.....	.....	.....
1843	.....	.....	.....
1844	.....	.....	.....
1845	James K. Polk, Tenn., Mar. 4.	Cave Johnson, Tenn., Mar. 7.	.....
1846	.....	.....	.....

¹ Office of Second Assistant Postmaster General created by act of April 30, 1810.

OFFICIALS OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT—1775-1917.

Years.	Second Assistant Post- masters General.	Third Assistant Post- masters General.	Fourth Assistant Post- masters General.
1775			
1776			
1782			
1789			
1791			
1793			
1795			
1797			
1800			
1801			
1805			
1809			
1810	Seth Pease, Conn. ¹		
1813			
1814			
1817			
1818	Phineas Bradley, Conn.		
1821			
1823			
1825			
1829	Charles K. Gardner, N. J.		
1833			
1835			
1836	Robt. Johnstone	Daniel Coleman, N. C. ²	
1837			
1840			
1841	Philo C. Fuller, N. Y.		
1842		John S. Skinner, Md.	
1843	J. W. Tyson		
1844	N. M. Miller, Va.		
1845	W. Medill Ohio, and Wm. J. Brown, Ind.	N. M. Miller, Va.	
1846		John Marron, Ga.	

¹ Office of Third Assistant Postmaster General created by act of July 2, 1836.

PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND

Years.	PRESIDENTS.	Postmasters General.	First Assistant Post- masters General.
1849	Zachary Taylor, Va., Mar. 5.	Jacob Collamer, Vt., Mar. 8.	.....
1850	Millard Fillmore, N. Y., July 9.	Nathan K. Hall, N. Y., July 23.	.....
1851	.....	.....	S. D. Jacobs, Tenn.
1852	.....	Samuel D. Hubbard, Conn., Sept. 14.	.....
1853	Franklin Pierce, N. H., Mar. 4.	James Campbell, Pa., Mar. 8.	Selah R. Hobbie.
1854	.....	.....	Horatio King, Me.
1857	James Buchanan, Pa., Mar. 4.	Aaron V. Brown, Tenn., Mar. 7.	.....
1859	.....	Joseph Holt, Ky., Mar. 14	.....
1861	Abraham Lincoln, Ill., Mar. 4.	{ Horatio King, Me., Feb. 12 Montgomery Blair, D. C. Mar. 9. }	John A. Kasson, Iowa.
1863	.....	.....	Alexander W. Randall,
1864	.....	William Dennison, Ohio, Oct. 1.	.....
1865	{ Abraham Lincoln, Ill., Mar. 4. Andrew Johnson, Tenn., Apr. 15. }	.....	.....
1866	.....	Alexander W. Randall, Wis., July 25.	St. John B. L. Skinner, N. Y.
1869	Ulysses S. Grant, Ill., Mar. 4.	John A. J. Creswell, Md., Mar. 6.	Geo. Earle, Md.; Jas. W. Marshall, N. J.
1871	.....	.....	.....
1873	Ulysses S. Grant, Ill., Mar. 4.	.....	.....
1874	.....	{ Jas. W. Marshall, N.J., July 7 Marshall Jewell, Conn. Sept. 1. }	{ Jas. H. Marr, Md. Jas. W. Marshall, N.J. }
1875	.....	.....	.....
1876	.....	James N. Tyner, Ind., July 13.	.....
1877	Rutherford B. Hayes, Ohio, Mar. 5.	David McK. Key, Tenn., Mar. 13.	James N. Tyner, Ind.
1880	.....	Horace Maynard, Tenn., Aug. 25.	.....
1881	{ James A. Garfield, Ohio, Mar. 4. Chester A. Arthur, N. Y., Sept. 20. }	Thomas L. James, N. Y., Mar. 8.	Frank Hatton, Iowa, Oct. 29.
1882	.....	Timothy O. Howe, Wis., Jan. 5.	.....
1883	.....	Walter Q. Gresham, Ind., Apr. 11.	.....
1884	.....	Frank Hatton, Iowa, Oct. 14.	.....
1885	Grover Cleveland, N. Y., Mar. 4.	Wm. F. Vlias, Mar. 7.	{ John Schuyler Crosby, N. Y. Milton Hay, Pa. }
1886	.....	.....	A. E. Stevenson, Ill.

OFFICIALS OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT—1775-1917—Continued

Year.	Second Assistant Post- masters General.	Third Assistant Post- masters General.	Fourth Assistant Post- masters General.
1849	Fitz Henry Warren, Iowa.	.....	.....
1850	.....	.....	.....
1851	.....	.....	.....
1852	W. H. Dundas, Va.	.....	.....
1853	.....	.....	.....
1854	.....	.....	.....
1857	.....	.....	.....
1859	.....	A. N. Zevely, N. C.	.....
1861	Geo. W. McLellan, Mass.	.....	.....
1863	.....	.....	.....
1864	.....	.....	.....
1865	.....	.....	.....
1866	.....	.....	.....
1869	Giles A. Smith, Ill.	W. H. H. Terrell, Ind.	.....
1871	John L. Routt, Ill.	.....	.....
1873	.....	E. W. Barber, Mich.	.....
1874	.....	.....	.....
1875	James N. Tyner, Ind.	.....	.....
1876	Thos. J. Brady, Ind.	.....	.....
1877	.....	Abraham D. Hazen, Pa.	.....
1880	.....	.....	.....
1881	Richard A. Elmer, N. Y.	.....	.....
1882	.....	.....	.....
1883	Henry D. Lyman, N. Y.	.....	.....
1884	W. B. Thompson, Mich.	.....	.....
1885	A. Leo Knott, Md.	.....	.....
1886	.....	.....	.....

PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND

Years.	PRESIDENTS.	Postmasters General.	First Assistant Post- masters General.
1887			
1888		Don M. Dickinson, Mich., Jan. 17.	
1889	Benjamin Harrison, Ind., Mar. 4.	John Wanamaker, Pa., Mar. 6.	J. S. Clarkson, Iowa, Mar. 14.
1890			S. A. Whitfield, Ohio, Sept. 29.
1891			
1893	Grover Cleveland, N. Y. Mar. 4.	Wilson S. Bissell, N. Y., Mar. 7.	{ H. Clay Evans, Tenn., Jan. 7. Frank H. Jones, Ill., May 10. }
1894			
1895		William L. Wilson, W. Va., Apr. 4.	
1897	William McKinley, Ohio, Mar. 5.	James A. Gary, Mar. 6.	Perry S. Heath, Ind., Mar. 17.
1898		Charles Emory Smith, Pa., Apr. 22.	
1899			
1900			William M. Johnson., N.J., Aug. 23.
1901	{ William McKinley, Ohio, Mar. 4. Theodore Roosevelt, N. Y., Sept. 14. }		
1902		Henry C. Payne, Wis., Jan. 15.	Robert J. Wynne, Pa., Apr. 17.
1904		Robert J. Wynne, Pa., Oct. 10	
1905	Theodore Roosevelt, N. Y., Mar. 4.	Geo. B. Cortelyou, N. Y., Mar. 7.	Frank H. Hitchcock, Mass. Mar. 16.
1907		Geo. von L. Meyer, Mass., Mar. 4.	
1908			Chas. P. Grandfield, Mo., Feb. 29.
1909	William H. Taft, Ohio, Mar. 4.	Frank H. Hitchcock, Mass. Mar. 6.	
1910			
1913	Woodrow Wilson, N. J., Mar. 4.	Albert S. Burleson, Tex., Mar. 5.	Daniel C. Roper, S. C., Mar. 14.
1915			
1916			John C. Koons, Md., Sept. 3, 1916
1917	Woodrow Wilson, N. J., Mar. 4.		

OFFICIALS OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT—1775-1917—*Continued*

Years.	Second Assistant Post- masters General.	Third Assistant Post- masters General.	Fourth Assistant Post- masters General.
1887	.....	Henry R. Harris, Ga., Apr. 1	.....
1888	.....	.....	.....
1889	S. A. Whitfield, Ohio, Mar. 18.	A. D. Hazen, Pa., Mar. 18.	.....
1890	J. Lowrie Bell, Pa., Sept. 29.	.....	.....
1891	.....	.....	E. G. Rathbone, Ohio. ¹
1893	.....	Kerr Craige, N. C., May 19,	R. A. Maxwell, N. Y., Mar. 22.
1894	C. Nelson, Md., June 4.	.....	.....
1895	.....	.....	.....
1897	W. S. Shallenberger, Pa., Apr. 5.	John A. Merritt, N. Y., Apr. 29.	J. L. Bristow, Kans., Apr. 1
1898	.....	.....	.....
1899	.....	Edwin C. Madden, Mich., July 1.	.....
1900	.....	.....	.....
1901	.....	.....	.....
1902	.....	.....	.....
1904	.....	.....	.....
1905	.....	.....	P. V. Degraw, Pa., Mar. 20.
1907	Jas. T. McCleary, Minn., Mar. 29.	Abraham L. Lawshe, Ind., Mar. 22.	.....
1908	Jos. Stewart, Mo., Sept. 29.	.....	.....
1909	.....	.....	.....
1910	.....	James J. Britt, N. C., Dec. 1.	.....
1913	.....	Alexander M. Dockery, Mo. Mar. 17.	James I. Blakslee, Pa., Mar. 17.
1915	Otto Praeger, Tex., Sept. 1.	.....	.....
1916	.....	.....	.....
1917	.....	.....	.....

¹ Office of Fourth Assistant Postmaster General created by act of March 3, 1891.

A CHRONOLOGY OF POSTAL EVENTS

NOTE.—This is not intended to be a complete chronology for the postal service, but is confined largely to the events mentioned in this book.

B. C.

599 Mounted post established by Cyrus in Persia.

31 Augustus introduced postal service among the
A.D. Romans.

807 Postal system established by Charlemagne.

1516 Roger, Count of Thurn and Taxis, connects Germany with Italy by a line of posts through the Tyrol.

1517 Sir Brian Tuke made governor of the King's posts under Henry VIII.

1544 Government permission granted for the conduct of private posts in Germany and Spain.

1545 Sir William Paget and John Mason jointly succeed to the office of "Master of the King's Post."

1556 English order-in-council required post-riders to keep a record of every letter.

1581 Sir Thomas Randolph is appointed first Chief Postmaster of England by Queen Elizabeth.

1603 Royal order of King James I gave postmasters monopoly of hiring horses to travelers.

1632 William Frizell and Thomas Witherings appointed foreign postmasters by Charles I. Thomas Witherings effected important postal reforms.

1639 General Court of Massachusetts established first post office in America in the house of Richard Fairbanks.

1657 (1) The General Post Office of England established.
(2) Virginia Assembly passed an act for the immediate transmission of official letters from plantation to plantation on penalty of one hogshead of tobacco for each default.

- 1660 The English Post Office, as at present constituted, founded by the 12th Act of Charles II, December 27.
- 1662 Virginia Assembly established a postal system for the colony.
- 1672 Governor Lovelace established the first route post between New York and Boston.
- 1676 The Colonial Court established a post office in Boston, Mass.
- 1682 Dockwra established the first penny post in London and its suburbs.
- 1683 William Penn appointed Henry Waldy to maintain a post between Philadelphia and Newcastle.
- 1690 The Court of King's Bench awards the revenues of penny post to the Duke of York.
- 1691 (1) The Thomas Neale Patent, granted by William and Mary, the real beginning of postal service in America.
(2) Andrew Hamilton confirmed as Postmaster-General for America.
- 1693 The Inter-colonial Postal Union began operation between Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Virginia.
- 1695 A public post was established from the Potomac, through Annapolis, to Philadelphia.
- 1698 Andrew Hamilton and West jointly acquired the Neale Patent.
- 1703 Andrew Hamilton died and was succeeded by his son John as Postmaster-General for America.
- 1707 The British Government took over the colonial postal system.
- 1708 Charles Povey began "halfpenny" posts within the city of London.

- 1710 General post extended throughout the British colonies.
- 1720 Ralph Allen deputy postmaster of Bath, established cross-country posts in England.
- 1737 Benjamin Franklin appointed postmaster of Philadelphia.
- 1756 Stage-coaches carried the mail between New York and Philadelphia.
- 1773 Hugh Finlay undertook a survey of the post offices and post roads of North America.
- 1774 A penny post established in Dublin.
Franklin dismissed from the position of Postmaster-General.
- 1775 Congress established the "Constitutional" post office with Franklin as Postmaster-General.
- 1776 Bache, son-in-law of Franklin, served as Postmaster-General while Franklin was absent in Europe.
Office of First Assistant Postmaster-General created.
- 1784 John Palmer, theater manager of Bath, England, started the first mail-coaches; they plied between London and Bristol.
- 1789 George Washington appointed Samuel Osgood, of Massachusetts, first Postmaster-General under the Constitution of the United States.
- 1792 (1) A system of posts throughout the United States was authorized by Act of Congress, the Postmaster-General being empowered to appoint postmasters, riders, and messengers, and make contracts for carrying the mail.
- (2) A post-road established between Richmond, Virginia, and Danville, Kentucky.
- (3) Proprietary money-order service operated in England.

- 1794 A twopenny post established in London.
- 1797 Mail for or from George Washington to be transmitted free of charge during his life, March 3rd.
- 1801 John Adams granted the privilege of franking, March 3rd.
- 1802 Mail-coaches superseded mounted courriers by Act of March 3rd.
- 1806 The Cumberland Pike begun.
- 1810 (1) Office of Second Assistant Postmaster-General created.
(2) A general post office established in Washington, D. C., April 30.
- 1813 Steamboat lines made post-routes.
- 1814 The Act of Dec. 23 increased the rates of postage of 1799 fifty per cent as a war revenue measure.
- 1816 The Act of Dec. 23, 1814, repealed, and the rates of 1799 restored, Feb. 1.
- 1825 Congress authorized the Postmaster-General to designate cities for an official carrier delivery-system, the compensation to be two cents for each letter delivered.
- 1827 The salary of the Postmaster-General was increased from \$4,000 to \$6,000 a year, the then salary of members of the cabinet.
- 1828 Registry service first advocated by Postmaster-General MacLean.
- 1828 Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, sole surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, granted the franking privilege by Congress, May 23.
- 1829 The Postmaster-General became a member of the Cabinet.
- 1833 Daily mail established between London and Paris.
- 1834 Mails first forwarded by railroad.

- 1836 (1) The United States Post-Office Department re-organized.
- (2) The offices of Third Assistant Postmaster-General and Auditor for the Post-Office Department created.
- (3) The Post-Office Department building in Washington, D. C., destroyed by fire.
- 1836 The Postmaster-General empowered: (1) to contract for the forwarding of mail by navigable canals, (2) to establish an "express mail" for newspaper slips or letters at a triple rate of postage, July 2.
- 1836 The privilege of franking granted to Dolly P. Madison for life, July 2.
- 1837 Rowland Hill began to advocate post-office reforms.
- 1838 (1) Congress declared all railroads post-routes, July 7.
- (2) A traveling and assorting railway carriage used between London and Birmingham, England.
- (3) Money-order service established in England.
- 1839 (1) Rowland Hill's suggestions for disregarding distance in determining rates, and in requiring prepayment of postage with stamps, adopted by a Committee of the House of Commons.
- (2) The new English postage law of a uniform rate of 4*d.* per letter came into operation Dec. 5.
- (3) Envelops first used for letters.
- 1840 (1) The uniform rate of 1*d.* for letters weighing half an ounce was put into force in Great Britain January 10.
- (2) The government of Great Britain discontinued the packet service with New York and entered into contracts with the Cunard Line.
- (3) Stamped postage wrappers adopted, May 6
- 1841 Adhesive stamps came into use, May 1.

- 1845 President Tyler approved the first legislation of the modern system, limiting the franking privilege, fixing new rates, authorizing "star-route" contracts.
- 1847 (1) Postage-stamps first authorized in the United States, March 3.
(2) The first mail treaty of the United States entered into with Bremen.
(3) First regular mail service established in Oregon Territory by the United States.
(4) Post Office established at Astoria, Oregon.
- 1849 Postal treaty between the United States and Great Britain.
- 1851 (1) Rates reduced to 3 cents for single letters going not more than 3,000 miles.
(2) Service between California and Oregon, via Panama, inaugurated.
- 1852 Congress passed a law providing for stamped envelopes, August 31.
- 1855 (1) Prepayment of postage by postage stamps made compulsory.
(2) The system of registering letters introduced, March 3.
(3) Mail-boxes erected in London streets.
(4) Book Post established in Great Britain June 5.
The British Government authorized the issuance of a treasury warrant providing for the transmission by post of books, pamphlets, etc. within certain limits, 4 oz. for 1*d.*, 8 oz. for 2*d.*, etc.
- 1858 (1) The first street letter-box for collections was erected in New York and in Boston, Aug. 2.
(2) The first overland mail (pony express) from San Francisco for St. Louis arrived October 9.
- 1860 (1) Congress enacts that letters uncalled for shall

be returned to the address of the writer when printed on the envelop, April 6.

- (2) Postmaster-General Holt reformed the method of distributing mail in transit.

1861 (1) Merchandise first admitted to the United States mails, Feb. 27.

- (2) The Postmaster-General was empowered to supply stamped letter-sheet and envelop combined by Act of Congress, Feb. 27.

- (3) Post-office savings banks first authorized in Great Britain by Parliament.

- (4) Mail delivery by carriers within a radius of 9 miles from the City Hall, New York, authorized, Feb. 27.

1862 Postmaster-General Blair recommended to Congress the establishment of Federal city delivery service with salaries for carriers.

1863 (1) Pillar-boxes and other mail-receiving boxes authorized in the United States, March 3.

- (2) The first International Postal Congress is convened at Paris, France, May 11. The International Postal Union came into existence.

- (3) Free-delivery service inaugurated in cities.

1864 (1) Money-order service begun in the United States, November 1.

- (2) The first trip of a railroad post office from Chicago, Illinois, to Clinton, Iowa, is made under the system recommended by George B. Armstrong, Assistant Postmaster of Chicago.

1865 Great Britain reduced the rate of postage from *2d.* to *1d.* for every ounce above the first.

1866 (1) By Act of Congress, Feb. 10, the privilege of franking is granted to Mary Lincoln, widow of Abraham Lincoln, for life.

- 1866 (2) All mail-matter concerning lotteries and gift-concerts is excluded from the mails by law, July 27.
- 1867 The International Money-order System established.
- 1868 (1) A system of receipts and accounts adopted in the United States Post Office registry service for the purpose of fixing responsibility.
- (2) By Act of Congress, July 27, uniforms as prescribed by the Postmaster-General, to be worn by all mail-carriers.
- (3) By Act of Parliament passed July 31, the Postmaster was authorized to purchase the systems of electric telegraph of the British Isles.
- 1869 The electric telegraph systems of the British Isles first operated under the British Post Office regulation, Feb. 5.
- 1870 (1) Balloon-post from Paris established during the siege.
- (2) The British money-order system extended to France by convention dated August 5.
- (3) Post-cards, stamped one "halfpenny," first issued by the British Post Office.
- (4) By Post Office Act of August 9, the newspaper stamp for posting was abolished in Great Britain and the rate for registered newspapers and pamphlets or patterns, under 2 ounces, to be one halfpenny from October 1.
- (5) Pigeon-post between London and Tours established during the siege of Paris: 48 daily and 1186 nightly mails dispatched from Nov. 18, 1870 to Jan. 28, 1871.
- (6) The balloon *Washington*, carrying 120,000 letters, left Paris with a Post Office delegate, an aeronaut and a trainer of carrier pigeons, November.

- 1871 The postal rate for letters in the British Isles reduced: Letters, 1*d.* for 1 ounce, 1½*d.* for 2 ounces, etc., from October 5.
- 1872 Legislation creating basis of the present postal establishment enacted by Congress.
- 1873 (1) On January 31, Congress decreed the abolition of the franking privilege by July 1st, with the following exceptions: (1) Public documents sent by the Secretary of State or Clerk of the House, printed by order of Congress; (2) the Congressional Record; (3) Seeds sent by a Member of Congress through the Department of Agriculture or by the Secretary of Agriculture; (4) letters and packages relating exclusively to government business and forwarded by government officials; (5) matter sent to the Librarian of Congress under the provisions of the Copyright law; (6) matter relating to the Smithsonian Institution.
- (2) One cent post-cards provided by Act of Congress, June 8, 1872, placed on sale in May.
- 1874 (1) An International Postal Convention met at Berne, Switzerland. A General Postal Union concluded and international letter-postage reduced to 5 cents per half-ounce.
- (2) The General Postal Union established by the Treaty of Berne, Oct. 9, 1874, to take effect July 1, 1875.
- 1875 (1) The first exclusive mail train put into service and operated between New York and Chicago.
- (2) The United States and Canada arranged for reciprocal domestic postage rates.
- 1878 (1) The rate for the registration of letters reduced in Great Britain from 4*d.* to 2*d.*, January 1.
- (2) Convention for a Universal Postal Union signed

at Paris, France, by James N. Tyner and Joseph H. Blackfan for the United States, June 1.

- 1879 Modern system of classification of mail enacted by Congress.
- 1880 A system of savings of small sums by postage stamps started throughout the British Isles January 6.
- 1883 (1) By Act of March 3, Congress fixed the rate for letter-mail at 2 cents per half-ounce.
(2) Postal Notes restricted to \$4.99, authorized by Congress, March 3.
(3) English Parcel Post system introduced Aug. 1, 1883.
- 1885 (1) The fourth Postal Congress met at Lisbon and adopted a convention Feb. 4. Postage rates 5 cents per half-ounce (prepaid); postal cards 2 cents. The resolution went into effect April 1, 1886.
(2) Congress increases the weight of letter-mail from half an ounce to one ounce for 2 cents by Act of March 3.
(3) A system of special delivery of letter-mail is authorized by the same Act.
(4) Special postal trains started in Great Britain, July 1.
- 1886 (1) The weight of the contents of parcels to be transmitted by the parcel post was raised to a maximum of 11 pounds by the British Post Office, May 1.
(2) Stamped letter-sheets issued by the United States Post Office in August. (See 1861).
(3) The conveyance of the United States mail transferred from the Cunard and the White Star lines to those of the Inman, and North German Lloyd lines, and others, in December.

- 1887 The system of free delivery was extended to include towns of 10,000 population and upwards by Act of Congress, January 3.
- 1889 A system of telegraphic money-orders was begun September 2.
- 1890 The Census returns indicated a drift of the population from the farm toward the city, emphasizing the need for a better rural-delivery service.
- 1891 (1) An International Postal Congress was held at Vienna, May 20.
- (2) The post-office delivery service begun in London, March 25, extended to Edinburgh and Dublin, etc., March 26, and over the whole United Kingdom, August 1.
- (3) Office of Fourth Assistant Postmaster-General created.
- 1896 (1) Rural Free Delivery service begun in the United States.
- (2) The transfer of trunk telephones to the Post Office in London begun April 4.
- 1899 (1) By Act of Congress the money-order forms were placed under the control of the Postmaster-General.
- (2) The telephone service placed under the control of the British Post Office by Act of Parliament of August 9.
- 1902 Parcel post from the United States to the United Kingdom begun September 1.
- 1905 The United States and the United Kingdom entered into a new agreement for the conducting of parcel-post news service which commenced April 1.
- 1906 Penny postage established between the United States and New Zealand.

- 1907 The rates for the transmission of British periodicals for Canada reduced from 4*d.* to 1*d.* a pound; packets not exceeding 2 ounces $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.*, April 15.
- 1908 (1) A cash on delivery system for the collection of money on the delivery of goods by the Post Office is installed in the United Kingdom and certain British colonies, June 1.
- (2) Two-cent postage between the United States and the United Kingdom put into effect October 1.
- 1910 A system of "delivery by telephone" of mail received in London on Sunday put into effect January 8.
- 1911 The United States Postal Savings Bank system established.
- 1913 (1) The Parcel Post service established in the United States.
- (2) Fourth-class postmasters' blanketed under Civil Service, subjected to Civil Service examinations by Executive Order, May 7.
- 1914 Parcel post rates reduced and limit of weight increased.
- 1917 (1) Civil Service procedure adopted for securing nominees for filling vacancies in presidential postmasterships, Executive Order, March 31.
- (2) Letter postage rate increased from two to three cents an ounce as a war revenue measure.

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