

some had to be so put on as to overlap each other. The chief agent for the dispensing of stamps in Halifax is a stationer whose business is at some distance from the post-office, and if a purchaser desires more than one dollar's worth of stamps of any denomination he is generally invited to go to Mr. —'s place, because the central office has them not in stock. A more thoroughly unbusiness-like way of accommodating the public can scarcely be imagined.

Again, Canada enjoys the unenviable distinction of being the only country, so far as we are aware, that charges more than the face value for stamped envelopes. The post-office notices announce that 25c. per hundred over the face value will be charged for envelopes. In reality the agent charges 30 cents per hundred if one takes that number or multiples thereof; and if a portion of one-hundred (more than ten) are purchased the charge is at the rate of 40 cents per hundred. If less than ten a premium of half-a-cent each. It will be readily recognized that the agent makes a good thing by this arrangement, but the public are imposed upon in the coolest manner. Other countries only make a charge more than the face value for registration envelopes, which are cloth-lined.

The cost to the government of post-cards is fully as great as that of stamped envelopes, and no one can point out any reason, good or bad, why a premium should be charged on the one more than on the other. The practical result is that stamped envelopes are very little used in Canada. We are within the mark in affirming that in proportion to business and population one thousand stamped envelopes are used in the United States to every one that is used in Canada. In fact the stamped envelope rarely appears except in elections, when it is chiefly employed to cover the cards of the government candidate. We abstain from comment on this "coincidence."

Another grievance that is much felt is the rate of domestic postage. The neighboring republic to our south only charges two cents for a single letter rate, and promises soon to increase the limit of a single rate from one-half to one ounce. The Empire of Japan charges for letters to any part of its domain only about three-tenths of one cent, and this despite the fact that in many parts the roads are simply foot-paths over precipitous mountains where the mails have to be carried on the backs of carriers. In Canada the authorities adhere to the antiquated three-cent rate for each half-ounce or less. A deputation recently waited on the Postmaster-General to urge a reduction, and showed that it was the practice of many Canadian houses who send out letters by the thousands to customers and others within the Dominion to express them to some convenient place in the United States and thence to mail them back to Canada, thus saving one cent postage (less the small express charges) on each. Hon. Mr. Carling—speaking on behalf of the government of which he is a member—replied that the petition of the delegation could not be entertained, because it would not pay the department to carry the mails at lower rates than at present. No one can understand how it pays to carry such letters for nothing (the United States receiving the postage in the cases above mentioned) better than to reduce the rate

and receive something for doing the work. Most people will imagine that two-thirds of a loaf is better than no bread. But governments can be singularly obtuse when they like. Our government, it seems, cannot comprehend that the idea of having national post-offices, rail-ways, etc. is not to make money but to serve the public and to facilitate its trade.

We alluded in a previous issue to the necessity of providing a new set of dies for our postage stamps, as the one that we now have has been in use over sixteen years, and is not creditable to the country as compared with those of others which we are accustomed to regard as far behind us in civilization and refinement, such as China, Japan, Siam, Hawaii, etc.

It is not necessary here to dwell on the want of security afforded by the mails, and to the robberies that are being continually perpetrated, and generally with impunity, which might and should be obviated by the department insuring the contents of valuable packages, as is done in Germany, Russia, Belgium, France, and elsewhere.

We have sufficiently proved that the postal department in Canada is wretchedly and disgracefully administered, and that it requires a thorough renovation to bring it up to the necessities of the public and to the example set by other nations. Any other people than Canadians would not submit for a week to such miserable mismanagement of so important a department of the public service, but Canadians appear to enjoy being maltreated by their servants.

ECCENTRICITIES OF TRANSVAAL PROVISIONALS.

For the convenience in reference of our readers we have collated the facts concerning the several variations in the stamps of the Land of the Boers, and now submit them.

In the spring of 1879, the country being then under the British Crown, the stock of the "one penny" stamps was exhausted and, pending the receipt of a fresh supply, recourse was had to the expedient of surcharging the "six-pence" stamp, black, "one-penny." The sheets comprised six lines of ten stamps each—in all sixty. It would appear that the postal authorities did not then command enough type of one font to print the surcharge on each stamp of the sheet alike at the same impression, and so three different sorts of type were employed. Commencing from the top of the sheet, the first three lines were surcharged in small upright letters with a capital letter "P" in the word "Penny." In the first half (5) of the fourth row, beginning from the right small-sized, thick, italic figure and letters were employed with a capital "P" as in the first variety. The rest of the sheet, two lines-and-a-half, or 25 stamps were surcharged in upright black letters—all capitals—and figure. These were the three leading varieties, but five varieties occurred in the figures of the first four rows. In the first four stamps from the upper right-hand corner the figure has a short top-stroke sloping slightly downwards, and has no bottom-stroke. The rest of this line and the first seven of the next row bear a figure with a thin bottom-stroke, and a longer top-stroke than their

Foreign Correspondence solicited.