

letter rate to all Postal Union countries, with the exception of United States and Canada, is five cents per half ounce, there is a near possibility of a reduction to the rate of three cents, a change which would have been accomplished this year had it not been for certain Imperial restrictions. By an unexpected way we are to have a reduction in the domestic letter rate, for on April 1st of this year, the Postmaster-General introduced a bill which provides for the reduction of the letter rate from three to two cents and a partial restoration of postage on newspapers which at present receive free transmission through the mails. However, this free delivery will not be totally abolished, but will be confined within a district of ten miles radius from the office of publication. Though the press of the country may strongly protest against this latter change, it may be said that the Government, after mature consideration, has taken the only and decisive step to wipe out the big annual deficit which has been customary since Confederation. It is argued that the revenue from newspaper postage will more than balance the loss in the reduction of the letter rate, and thus the Post-office will soon become a self-sustaining Department. The enormous tonnage of newspapers (16,557,490 pounds in 1897) carried under free transmission rules has come to weigh heavily upon the revenues of the country, and now there are frequent demands for increased railway subsidies, principally on account of the enormous volume of mail matter of

this nature. Then the Department must furnish to newspaper offices a very large supply of mail bags, and employ sorters and carriers to dispose of such matter—all at the expense of the Canadian ratepayer. Again, such a measure will wipe out, if not entirely at least to a very great extent, many questionable publications which at present receive the same consideration as the legitimate newspaper. Another proposed change is the decentralization of the dead letter branch. At present all misdirected or insufficiently-prepaid letters are sent by the different post-offices to the Department at Ottawa, and it is complained that loss and delay frequently result, but now the work will be performed at other convenient points throughout the Dominion.

It is hardly necessary to add that all these extensive operations can not be accomplished without the co-operation and assistance of a large staff of officials. Considering the operations of the service, the enormous quantity of its work and the important and arduous duties devolving upon them, it is extremely disappointing to consider that the present government can make no better provision for its postal employees than by the existing method throughout the whole Civil Service of withholding all statutory increases. Without such servants, the present postal service could scarcely be what it is—one of the most perfect organizations in the world.

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