

Bill No. 32, An Act respecting the Toronto Hamilton and Buffalo Railway Company.—
Hon. Mr. Taylor.

The Senate adjourned until three o'clock to-morrow.

THE SENATE.

Wednesday, March 29, 1916.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

DESIGN OF THREE CENT POSTAGE STAMP.

INQUIRY.

Hon. Mr. POWER rose to

Call attention to the puzzling and misleading design of the three-cent postage stamp recently issued, and ask if it is the intention of the Government to so alter the same as to make it easily understood and recognized.

He said: The matter to which I call attention is, perhaps, not on the surface a very important one, but it is really one of some practical consequence. Hon. gentlemen will remember that when the letter rate of postage was raised in the session of 1914 from 2 cents to 3 cents, a somewhat unusual and unexpected course was adopted by the Government. One would have thought it natural, if the rate of postage was to be three cents in future, instead of two cents, that the Government would issue a three cent postage stamp, to take the place of the old two cent stamp. Instead of that the Government, although their attention was called to the inconvenience that would arise from having two different stamps on a letter, decided that the old two cent stamp should be continued, and that an additional one cent stamp should be used. As I say, their attention was called to the inconvenience that this would entail upon correspondents, but the Government, showing a sort of combination of incapacity and want of frankness, which has characterized their action in a good many things, did not seem to see the objection to having the two stamps put on each letter, and took the ground that the revenue from the one cent stamp was really a war tax, and consequently was not to be put into the same treasury with the revenue from the two cent stamp, which was a postage stamp. I think that theory has melted away and disappeared in the clouds

long since, and that at the time when the change was made, the Post Office Department which, under the predecessors of the present Government, had been bringing in a handsome revenue, was beginning to bring in a handsome deficit; so that really the one cent war tax had to go to meet the deficit in the Post Office Department. Within the past two weeks the Government, I presume paying attention to the protests that must have come from people all over the country against this compulsory putting of two stamps on an envelope, have decided that in future one stamp will be sufficient, and that one stamp is to be a three cent stamp. There is no doubt that is a step in the right direction. It is less trouble to put on one stamp than two, and then you are not likely to mix up your stamps, but the thing to which I call attention is the form of the new stamp, if you can call it a new stamp. Postage stamps, as every hon. gentleman is perfectly aware, are used by all classes of people, the educated and uneducated, the poor and the rich, and people with defective eyesight, and therefore, I think every hon. gentleman will agree with me that the postage stamp should tell its story clearly and distinctly on its face, and leave no room for mistake. Now I think that is a fair description of what a postage stamp should be. What is the postage stamp we are using at the present time? It is the old two cent stamp, with the figure 2 in each of the lower corners; it is the same colour as the old two cent stamp; the King's head is the same King's head; it is in every way identical with the old two cent stamp, except there is imposed or surcharged below the King's head a large T and two other letters which I think would require a microscope to make out correctly. The result is that already numbers of people have made mistakes. They have put this three cent stamp on cheques; they have put on the three cent stamp and one cent stamp in addition on letters because the average man, looking at the present three cent stamp would not distinguish it from the two cent stamp; consequently this three cent stamp is not the kind of stamp which should be used for general postal purposes. While I think that the Government are to blame in this matter, I do not wish to attribute any special blame to the Postmaster General. The hon. gentleman who now fills that position is, so far as I know, a man of common sense and of much more than ordinary ability,