

Mr. LANDERKIN. I would like to call the attention of the Postmaster General to an office in the south riding of Grey, called Glen Eden. Last year a petition was sent to the Department, asking for a daily mail service; I am not aware that it has been granted. I think this office is of sufficient importance to deserve a daily service, and that the receipts would be sufficient to pay for that service.

Mr. HESSON. There is no service, probably, more valuable to the people than the post office, and I think I do no injustice to any other Department when I say that the Post Office Department is very ably administered. But I believe it would be a mistake to comply with all the requests that the Postmaster General receives from the various constituencies. I have myself a great many favors I would like to ask of him, but I know the Department are doing the best they can, and I do not like to ask too much of them, and embarrass the working of the Department. There is no doubt that the people in cities have greater postal facilities than do the people in the country, many of whom have mail communication only twice a week; therefore, I think that the Minister should not neglect the country in favor of the city. I also think that a reduction in the letter postage ought to be made as early as possible to 2 cents, and if I am spared till next year, I shall endeavor to induce the Minister to make that reduction. It may decrease the receipts, but we do not expect the Post Office Department to be self-sustaining in a country so extensive and so sparsely settled as Canada, and I do not think the people will object to drawing upon the general revenue of the country in order to give them increased postal facilities.

Mr. VAIL. In the United States they have increased the weight of the letter to one ounce. I do not know that the receipts of the Department in Canada would warrant the Postmaster General in reducing the rate from 3 cents to 2 cents, but if he could give us that increase in the weight, it would be a great boon to the public.

Mr. CARLING. The questions of the reduction of postage and the increase of weight have been considered by the Department; but I think the hon. gentleman will agree that in view of the greatly increased expenditure which we have made to extend postal facilities, we could hardly reduce the postage at the present time. Last year the American Government reduced their postage from 3 to 2 cents, and though they had a surplus at the time, of \$2,000,000, at the end of the year I think they had a deficiency of something like \$5,000,000. We have lately been doubling the postal facilities in many cases, and we have opened a great many new offices in British Columbia and the North-West, and the great distances between the offices in those regions have necessitated a greatly increased expenditure.

Mr. VAIL. In the matter of post office accommodation, I do not think the balancing of the accounts ought to be considered. There is nothing the people value so highly, and there is no purpose for which they contribute so willingly, as the postal service. I, therefore, hope that the Postmaster General will consider this from the point of view of the public benefit, rather than from the point of view of making the accounts balance.

Mr. CAMERON (Middlesex). I desire to draw the attention of the Postmaster General to a defect in the mail facilities through recent changes in the time tables of some of the railways running from Toronto west. I am not aware of the relationship existing between the Department and the railways, sufficiently to know whether the Department can control the running of trains; but the hon. Minister is doubtless aware that a close relationship must exist between the two in this regard. The train leaving Ottawa in the morning reaches Toronto just late enough to miss the

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early mail trains from that city westwards. The result is, that mails leaving here are delayed in Toronto, and reach London three or four hours later than they would reach it if the train left here so as to reach Toronto in time to catch the western mail. It not only affects the city of Toronto, but all the districts lying west along the main line of the Great Western, and also the Sarnia branch. The main line of the Great Western has, perhaps, to some extent, the advantage, from the fact that the same train that reaches London carrying the mails goes right through, while the mails on the Sarnia branch are delayed in London until the next day. A very slight change in the time tables of the trains carrying the mails would allow the distribution of mail matter along the post offices on the Sarnia branch at three or four o'clock, or at least in the afternoon of the day preceding. Of course, I know the Postmaster General cannot absolutely control the matter, but perhaps representations to the railway authorities would facilitate the earlier distribution of mail matter.

Mr. CARLING. The mail that leaves here at 11 p.m. by the Pacific does not reach Toronto in time to connect with the Great Western going west. The mails, however, are sent forward by the earliest train leaving after they arrive, either by the Canadian Pacific Railway or Grand Trunk. Every effort is made at Toronto to push forward the mails going west.

Mr. CAMERON (Middlesex). A gentleman leaving here for the west and going by the Canadian Pacific Railway to Ingersoll can catch the train going west from that point and reach London at noon, whereas, if he were to go to Toronto he would not reach London until 6 p.m. If it were possible to arrange to have mail matter for London and district sent to Ingersoll, there would be an earlier distribution.

Mr. FARROW. The mail that leaves here by the Canadian Pacific Railway arrives in Toronto shortly after 8 o'clock, and the Grand Trunk does not leave till 9:25. If clerks were on the train, the mail matter might be forwarded by that Grand Trunk train.

Mr. CARLING. I am quite sure letters are sent on by the train leaving Toronto immediately after the arrival of the mail. There has recently been a change in the time table, which has prevented connection being made. We have, of course, no power to regulate the time of the trains; but we do everything we can to secure connection at Toronto.

Mr. MILLS. The hon. member for Digby (Mr. Vail) has referred to a matter of very considerable public interest, and that is with respect to a reduction of postage and increased weight of letters. These are two entirely distinct propositions. I can understand how the Postmaster General might object to a reduction of postage at the present time, when there is a falling revenue. If we were enjoying a period of prosperity, the loss would be more than restored by the increased number of letters. The question in regard to increased weight of letters is a somewhat different one. It would not seriously affect the revenue. The mails are not over-weighted, and it might be possible to increase the weight from half an ounce to one ounce. This change might make a difference to some persons carrying on correspondence, and might enable people to write longer letters or write them on better paper.

Mr. CARLING. No change of that kind can be made without changing the Post Office Act. The Americans adopted the change on the 1st July. We shall have an opportunity of seeing what the result will be, and what the loss of revenue will be, and then we will be better able to judge of the matter.