

feet straight ahead. When he moves, he sets his feet down firmly and applies all his force, if necessary, without waste, and without excessive exertion of muscles in other parts of his body, to "balance" himself. The horse with a long, well muscled, hind quarter has in his powerful thigh and "stifle" muscles the ability to lift his foot cleanly and cleverly from the ground and to set it down firmly in place in striking comparison to the way in which the horse with a short quarter often "slings" his feet forward. Thus we arrive at the true meaning of "good action."

The best action, generally speaking is that which appears to the greatest degree effortless, easy, and smooth. Each class of horse has its own peculiarity. The gait of the roadster must be smart, smooth and trim; that of the fancy harness horse, the Hackney, must be high, close and straight. The drafter must turn his shoes well up, carry his hocks well together, must go

straight all around and close, while the thoroughbred is required imperatively to travel with each pair of limbs on each side in accurate alignment. The saddler has to go through a careful schooling before he possesses the flexibility desired by the fancier. Each has its specialties which it must meet but in the framework, to quote the great Scottish poet, is

"Molded in such just degrees
"Makes giant strength seem lightsome ease."
Good true action gives economy of effort with maximum of result, and makes the horse more valuable and adaptable in whatever capacity his services may be required. Even horses possessed of little evidence of stamina or vigor, with narrow chests, and short or flat ribs, if possessed of the right kind of action will keep their end up with more vigorous mates, merely because of the comparative ease with which they perform their work.—J. W. S.

FREE RURAL DELIVERY—THE SERVICE DESCRIBED

The Fourth of a Series of Articles Written for The Canadian Dairyman and Farming World, by an Editorial Representative of this Paper, who Recently Visited the United States, with the Object of Studying the Free Rural Mail Delivery System.

It is claimed that the cost of free rural delivery is out of proportion to the benefits derived therefrom. In order that this contention may be considered intelligently, the nature of the service and the conditions upon which it is established are here described. The cost of the service will be dealt with in later issues.

In the early days of free rural delivery in the United States, many routes were established

mistakes that had been made at first were not repeated. Regulations for the establishment of new routes were prepared. These have been enforced. From time to time they have been amended and improved. Today the rural delivery service in the United States is as much a regular feature of the work of the Post Office Department, and is run upon as hard and fast lines, as is the free delivery of letters in cities.



A COLLECTION OF RURAL MAIL BOXES AT A CROSS ROADS.

In country sections in the United States where the rural delivery carriers do not pass all the farm houses, such as in sections where the side roads are not kept in good enough condition to warrant a rural delivery route being established, the farmers living on the side roads have their boxes placed at the cross roads where the carrier passes. The illustration shows a collection of these boxes. This saves going to the post office which may be two or three miles farther away.

where the conditions did not justify their existence. The demand for new routes was tremendous. It was not uncommon for the Post Office Department to receive 500 to 600 petitions a month praying for the establishment of routes. During 1902 the petitions received averaged over 1,000 a month. The pressure upon the Department was so great it was impossible to have each of the proposed routes thoroughly inspected in advance. This led to many routes being established that have been discontinued since, or merged with others. The early service, therefore, was very expensive.

MORE CAREFUL NOW

During the past six years conditions have changed. After the initial difficulties had been overcome, the Post Office Department was able to make great improvements in the service. The

CONDITIONS FOR ESTABLISHMENT

The purpose of the rural free delivery service, as described by the Post Office Department, is to carry the mails daily—on a fixed line of travel—to people who would otherwise have to go a mile or more to the post office. It is required that the roads traversed by a rural route shall be in good condition. They must not be obstructed by gates. There must be no unbridged creeks or streams not fordable at all ordinary seasons of the year. Each route, 24 or more miles in length, as a rule has to serve not less than 100 families. Routes less than 27 miles long are established only where they can not be made the standard length, and a proportionate number of families is required on such routes. On short routes the carriers are paid less. As far as possible the routes are so arranged that the carriers do not have to retrace

or travel over the same road twice the same day.

DISTRIBUTING POST OFFICE

Wherever practicable the service is started from post offices located on or near a railroad and having good railway-mail service. A petition for the service has to be made on forms furnished by the Dept., which are supplied on application to the Fourth Assistant Postmaster-General. Each petition for a route of 24 or more miles in length should be signed by at least 100 persons who are heads of families. For routes less than 24 miles in length, a proportionate number of such persons are expected to sign the petition. The postmaster at the post-office from which it is proposed to start a route has to certify that the signers are heads of families, or are maintaining homes and actually reside on the proposed route or contiguous thereto. Before service will be established not less than three-fourths of the number of heads of families to be supplied must agree to patronize the service and to provide suitable boxes for the reception of their mail. Experience has shown that once the service is established the number of people who use it increases rapidly.

HOW IT IS ESTABLISHED

When a petition for rural mail service is filed with and accepted by the Post Office Department it is referred to a rural agent of the Department, for investigation. Petitions are investigated, as far as practicable, in their order of filing. The agent visits the locality indicated for the purpose of knowing what the conditions are and whether they are such as are required by the Department. It is his duty to report the facts as he finds them. He has to draw a map of the route showing the location of all the houses on it, the existing post offices, cross roads, bridges and the nature of the roads. If his report is favorable to the establishment of the service and is approved by the Department, action looking to the establishment of the route is taken within a reasonable time.

WHAT THE PATRONS MUST DO

Persons desiring the benefits of service on a rural delivery route are required to furnish at their own cost boxes for the reception of the mail delivered or collected by the carrier. More than one family may use the same box, provided written notice of such agreement is filed with the postmaster at the distributing post office.

Each box must be erected by the roadside so that the carrier can easily have access to it without dismounting from his vehicle. All boxes must comply with certain specifications fixed by the Postmaster General as to size, shape, and workmanship, and be made of galvanized sheet iron or sheet steel and be approved by the Department.

Each box must be equipped with some kind of signal by which the carrier may know, as he drives up the road, that there is mail in the box for collection. Rural carriers are not required to open and examine patron's boxes, except those to which they have mail to deliver and those on which signals are displayed to indicate that there is mail for them to collect. After serving such boxes the carriers lower the signals. They raise the signals only when depositing mail in boxes where signals have not been displayed by patrons.

A list of approved boxes, with information as to where they may be obtained, is furnished on application to the Post Office Department. Postmasters and carriers are prohibited from assisting in the sale of any particular box, or acting directly or indirectly as agents for any box manufacturer or agent.

DANGEROUS TO TAMPER WITH BOXES

The boxes are afforded by law the same protection from injury and depredation as any other regulation mail box. They are regarded as Uni-