

the country post offices, you will find that we have to-day a most impoverished system. The postmaster of the little country post office is paid \$25 or \$50 per annum for looking after the mails, and a small pittance is paid to the man who carries the mails to and fro. The rural districts are not treated fairly under our present postal system. The hon. Postmaster General stated to-day that this would be vicious legislation to force upon the people of this country. I want to tell the hon. minister that the day is not far distant when he will be forced to take up this matter and investigate it. The people of this country will demand that he make a thorough investigation of the rural free delivery systems in different countries.

Sir WILLIAM MULLOCK. I did not say it would be a vicious system to introduce into Canada. I did not use that term. I said it would be a mistake from the financial standpoint.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I must have misunderstood the hon. minister. I will retract the statement, but I understood him to make the statement that it would be a vicious system of legislation to force on the people of this country.

Sir WILLIAM MULLOCK. Unwise.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I do not wish to take up more of the time of the House at present, but I would sincerely urge my hon. friend the Postmaster General to have this matter thoroughly investigated and submit a report to the House at an early date.

Mr. LENNOX. I wish to say a word or two in reply to the hon. the Postmaster General. I am sorry that having begun so well and kept on until dinner time in a fairly rapid strain, he declined afterwards to pursue what he evidently intended before we adjourned. The matter is one which, presented in the manner I saw fit to present it, in a non-partisan manner, I thought might have been approached by the hon. gentleman in a somewhat different attitude from that which he saw fit to assume; and I certainly expected that after I had called his attention to certain misstatements, accidental or otherwise, which he made a year ago, he would have been careful to give the House accurate information on all the questions he dealt with this evening. I regret that he has not done so, and that on the important questions of deficits he gave to the House an entirely misleading impression of the facts concerning the United States. The receipts and expenditures in the United States, have resulted in deficits almost invariably for a long series of years. Turning to volume 17 of the House documents of 1902, at pages 12 and 13, the hon. gentleman will find a confirmation of what I say. There we have a table giving the receipts and expenditures in the United

States every tenth year from 1792, and I shall put this volume at the disposal of my hon. friend if he wishes to use it. But in order to be brief, I shall begin with the year 1860. I find that in the year 1860 the receipts in the United States were \$8,518,067 and the expenditure \$19,170,610, leaving a deficit of \$10,652,543. Yet the hon. minister saw fit to tell the House that before they adopted the rural mail delivery system in the United States, they had no deficit.

Sir WILLIAM MULLOCK. I made no such statement.

Mr. LENNOX. The hon. gentleman will find in 'Hansard' what he said.

Sir WILLIAM MULLOCK. I never made any such statement.

Mr. LENNOX. He began with a certain year—I forget what year it was—and said that in that year there was a deficit of \$2,000,000 or thereabouts.

Sir WILLIAM MULLOCK. My hon. friend has not quite understood what I said. I said that for many years, speaking from memory, the deficits in the United States post office had been very considerable, but that of late years, prior to the adoption of the rural mail delivery, the annual deficit had been gradually becoming smaller, and I thought had fallen to \$2,000,000 or \$3,000,000. But I had the deficit for the decennial period ending December 1902. And for that year the deficit was \$2,000,000 or \$3,000,000; and at that time they had scarcely expended anything on rural delivery. But since four years, during which they had been making large expenditures on rural mail delivery, the deficit had increased from \$2,000,000 to over \$14,000,000.

Mr. LENNOX. That statement bears out the proposition I started to make. My hon. friend saw fit to attribute the deficits to the establishment of rural mail delivery, and referring to the year 1902 he said the deficit was between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000.

Sir WILLIAM MULLOCK. I gave the exact figures for 1902.

Mr. LENNOX. What is the fact? The fact is that they began in 1860 with a deficit of more than 120 per cent on the revenues of the post office. Then in 1863, in the face of that condition of things, the United States government took upon themselves to pursue a policy of expansion. They established free deliveries in the cities, and the result has been that since then, taking the gross volume of business, the deficit, instead of showing an increased percentage, has been showing a decreasing percentage. At pages 12 and 13, I find this report:

With the phenomenal growth of population and other favouring conditions, the mail matter poured into the post office has rapidly helped