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AND STAMP-COLLECTOR'S JOURNAL.

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—AND—

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HENRY HECHLER, PUBLISHER AND PROPRIETOR,
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POSTAL TELEGRAPHY IN THE U. S.

Two bills are before the U. S. Congress looking to the establishment of a Government telegraph system in connection with the Post Office Department of that country. One authorizes the P. M. General to negotiate for the purchase of all existing lines at a fair valuation, as was done in Great Britain, while the other provides for the building by the Government of new and independent lines to all principal points to which the mails are now carried and for their gradual extension as the demands of the business of the country may require. There are acknowledged difficulties in the way of carrying out either plan, but that something of the kind must ere long be done becomes more evident each day.

THE U. S. Post-Master General has recommended to Congress that the single weight of letters be made one ounce instead of one-half an ounce as at present. The suggestion will probably be adopted. The tendency of the age is decidedly in favor of reducing postal rates and there is a strong probability that this will eventually do away with post cards. It is self-evident that if a government can furnish the stationery and carry a missive for 1 cent it can better afford to do the latter,

only when the writer supplies his own material. The Canadian Post Master-General has informed the House of Commons that the Government has under consideration the proposition to reduce the postage rate in the Dominion to two cents. If, as appears probable, this is done it will necessitate the preparation and issue of new 2 and 4 cent stamps and envelopes.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN POST OFFICES.

In most European countries a rule has been adopted that the chief registration clerks, at least of all large or general post-offices must be acquainted with modern languages sufficiently to be able to write letters of enquiry or to reply to such correctly. We think that this rule should be applied also in America.

Suppose a registered letter addressed, say to a French or Spanish Colony, should go astray, a letter of enquiry written in the language of the country of its destination would be far more likely to receive prompt attention than if in English. If in the latter tongue the post-master or his clerks are quite likely not to be able to read it, and therefore have to lay it aside till they get an interpreter to translate it for them. Thus they are apt to forget it, and perhaps it is never answered. In this way the main object of registration is defeated as the effort to trace missing letters fails.

We have ourselves had sufficient instances where repeated letters of enquiry have been unanswered, and we believe that the reason, of this apparent neglect is that noted above.

Our postal clerks, like civil servants in other departments, are required to pass examinations as to their qualifications, and we certainly think that modern languages should be considered as important a subject in which they should pass as history, geography, or mathematics.

THE FIRST COLLECTORS.

It will never be known who was the first philatelic collector or where he lived but it appears to be pretty well established that the first known collections were made in Germany. Gossip among philatelists of older standards report collections as early as 1854, and these must have been begun at some anterior period, possibly ten years earlier. As long ago as 1861-2 the literature of philately began to appear in the shape of catalogues, hand-books and journals, showing that even then the science had achieved a firm footing and a recognized position among intelligent people.

Les personnes qui ont reçu plus d'un exemplaire de ce numéro sont priées de les transmettre aux philatelistes de leur connaissance.