

The Halifax Philatelist.

VOL. III.

HALIFAX, N. S., FEBRUARY,, 1889.

No. 2.

SOME OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF NOVA SCOTIA STAMPS.

D. A. KING.

THE postal service of the British-American Provinces, until the year 1851, were directly under the control of the English P. O. Department.

This, with the high rate of postage, the insufficient mail accommodation, and the stringent laws against a private person carrying or delivering a letter on the post road, was the cause of innumerable complaints on the part of the colonies, and gave the English P. O. officials the trouble of sending out long despatches.

The Colonies complained that the English P. O. took a large amount of revenue, derived from the postal service, which the Colonies were not able to lose out of the country. The English officials said that there was an annual deficit in Nova Scotia alone of £2,000 per annum. This state of things existed for years, and every annual report of the P. O. Commissioners, which was laid on the table of the Local Legislature, was full of complaints under this head. To give a specimen from one of the reports of these P. O. Commissions, the following is extracted from their annual report for the year for 1844 in Nova Scotia. After speaking in favour of a large reduction in postal rates, they say: "This, with the use of post stamps from dies authorized by the proper authorities, would render the transit of letters and papers less complicated and give the relief required by the people."

To this no answer was returned till some time in 1845, when a long despatch was received from the Postmaster-General of Great Britain, Lord Lonsdale, who thus gives his department's views of the issue of postage stamps for Nova Scotia as follows:—"The suggestion that postage stamps for letters should be introduced into Nova Scotia, is one which I cannot recommend your Lordship (Viscount Falkland, then Governor of Nova Scotia,) to entertain, as I cannot but consider that considerable objections exist to such a measure, and particularly from the facility which it would afford to the circulation of forged stamps, with but little chance of detection, while it is believed that the offence, if committed in the United Kingdom, could not be punished in the Colony, while on the other hand if committed in the Colony, it could be visited with no penalty on parties in the United Kingdom." This will give some idea of the narrow-mindedness of the English postal administration of that time.

As a specimen of the postal accommodation of the Province, see this—from Halifax to Truro, by the coach road, was a distance of 83 miles, and