

Report of the Postmaster General.

affairs does not exist. As the criticism has generally been confined to bare statements of revenue and expenditure, it might perhaps be fairly dismissed with an allusion to the vast difference between the circumstances of the postal service of this country, and those of the service of any other country, but advantage will be taken of the opportunity thus afforded to go into the matter somewhat more fully, as it is believed that the existing state of affairs is susceptible of a perfectly satisfactory explanation.

The countries with which comparisons are instituted differ so fundamentally from this country in almost every circumstance affecting the postal finances, that these comparisons are quite out of the question. In Great Britain and among the progressive nations of the Continent of Europe, populations are comparatively dense; the roads excellent, and the proportion engaged in industrial occupations, and therefore having a large correspondence, comparatively great. These are the conditions favourable to a relatively large revenue and relatively small outlay. In Canada we have a small population widely distributed; roads, in all but the oldest settled districts, poor, and a population engaged largely in farming and therefore having comparatively limited correspondence. These are the conditions from which may be expected, relatively speaking, a large outlay and a small revenue.

In the case of a private enterprise, this condition of things would be dealt with in the only way possible; that is, by reducing the accommodation afforded the public to an extent sufficient to bring the expenditure within the limits of the revenue. But this course is out of the question, because the correspondence of an agricultural community being mainly of a private character, is not extensive, it is not to be concluded that this portion of the community should be satisfied with a low and inexpensive order of postal service.

The United States is the only country offering conditions at all similar to those in this country, as the extent of the territory to be covered is much the same, but the density of the population in the different parts of the country is so much greater than in the corresponding parts of Canada, that the comparison should be made with great allowance in favour of this country. But in the account of the relations of the Post office expenditure to the revenue in the United States, given by Mr. Marshall Cushing, who was private secretary to the Honourable John Wanamaker, Postmaster General during the late administration, Mr. Cushing says:—

“Almost everywhere the earnings of the service—this, too, must already have been imagined—are used again for the extension and improvement of the service, for the general improvement of it, that is to say, as fast as the acts of Congress permit. Only ten states and one territory produce more postal revenue than is spent within their borders. New York leads, Massachusetts is next, Illinois is third and Pennsylvania is fourth. Oklahoma is the one territory. Grouping the States in regions, the New England States produce \$1,636,091.29 more than is spent for them; the Middle States produce \$3,857,181.23 more. No state on the Pacific slope produces as much as is required for the maintenance of its postal service. The same is true of the Southern States. Two of the Western States and one territory supply more than they use. The Southern States use \$3,888,973.23 more than is collected; the Western States use \$6,143,677.18 more; the Pacific States \$1,871,806.04 more.”