

be delayed, the hay crop would be injured, a great deal of the grain crop would be wasted and in many ways farming operations would be hampered.

OUR FREE RURAL DELIVERY DEBATING SOCIETY

Open Letter

To the Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux,
Postmaster General.

Dear Sir,—

The Hon. Geo. P. Graham in a speech in Centre York during the recent by-election campaign, is reported to have said: "Other parts of the country, where the population warrants, should have Rural Mail Delivery as well as Centre York." The York County council about that time also had been asked, so Toronto papers reported, to supply maps and other information to the Postoffice authorities in view of starting R. M. D. in that County. After this indication of the Government's intention to make a move in the matter it is not at all surprising that the friends of the idea were greatly disappointed at your attitude in the discussion on the subject in Parliament, April 27. I have the hands here of that date, and to me the arguments you put up seem not to have been well considered. You say "the United States adopted R. M. D. when? When they had six million people? Not at all. They did not adopt R. M. D. with 15 million nor 20 million people, nor with 60 million people. They never dreamed of it in those days not even when the population reached 70 million, but only when their postal revenue had increased from a few million, to 178 million, and when the population reached the high water mark of 80 millions." If you had made a close study of this question you would have known that the U. S. Government adopted and began the supervision of R. M. D. in 1897, and this fact of the fact that in 1897 their postal office revenue was but \$2 million dollars, and a deficit of eight and one half million, and not, as you say, when the revenue was 178 million dollars. This fact that the postal revenue of the U. S. has increased during ten years R. M. D. has been in operation, from \$2 millions, with a deficit of eight and one half millions, to 178 million dollars, with a deficit of about 6 millions, should forever settle this much discussed question of cost.

WHEN THE SYSTEM STARTED IN U.S.

In the year 1806 the United States had six million population. Their post office revenue was then \$150 thousand dollars. Their revenue from all sources was fifteen million dollars. Canada's six million people had last year a revenue of 9 million dollars, and a surplus of at least one million and a half dollars, a revenue from all sources of ninety-six million dollars. In 1835 the U. S. had 15 million people. Her postal revenue was 3½ million dollars, revenue from all sources 17 million. In 1846 the U. S. had 20 million people, a postal revenue of 4 million dollars; revenue from all sources of 27 million. In 1890 they had a population of about 60 million but R. D. was dreamed of then, sixteen years previous to their postal revenue being 178 million dollars. A U. S. farm journal before me dated 1891, says—"Postmaster General, John Wanamaker, writes us that he proposes to give R. M. D. a trial immediately." When the U. S. had a population of 70 million R. M. D. had for many years passed the dream

stage and was relieving thousands of country people of this intolerable tramp to the post office.

"The U. S. has a population 14 times ours with a postal revenue of twenty times as great (you say). This was not the relative position of the population and revenue by any means in 1897, when R. M. D. was first adopted as I have already shown. Although last year the U. S. spent, as you say, "26 million dollars on R. M. D. if the cost there is anything for us to go by, and you seem to think it is, our bill for the service would have been last year, other conditions being relatively the same, under two million dollars, and the postal deficit, the insignificant sum of half a million dollars. In your eagerness to show up our comparative poverty and thereby delay R. D. you seem to lose sight of this fact, that our revenue of 96 million dollars, collected yearly at Ottawa from all sources, is fifteen dollars per capita, while that of the U. S. is but ten dollars.

It does not seem to me to be a wise proceeding, however, in order to frighten Canada out of R. M. D. to bring into conspiracy against American history to prove what wisdom and caution our neighbors to the south of us exercised in delaying the instituting of R. D. until a recent date. The fact as we find them today are the evidences that are worthy of consideration, or of any value. In those early times in the life of the Republic no country on earth, as far as I have been able to discover, had R. D. nor city delivery before the sixties.

WHERE IT PINCHES

You say again: "Will be (Mr. Armstrong), say before the representatives of the western provinces, 'you shall not have Free Rural Delivery, but we give it to Ontario and Quebec, where the country is more thickly settled.' Why, my hon. friend could not live twenty-four hours in the Post Office Department if he were to propound such a policy." So it seems it has come to pass that western Canada, this child of ours, for whose welfare we in eastern Canada have expended millions of treasure, have fought and died on the battle field, in short have set them up in business in such liberal fashion that they have within a few short years been able to acquire wealth and comforts beyond all comparison, have so far forgotten the debt of gratitude they owe us, that they would become so enraged at this proposition that the Postmaster General would get into the biggest sort of a racket with them and like as not be shot down in his track or kicked to death, or out of office. Haunted by visions of such a catastrophe it is likely to be considered of so to convince you that Rural Mail Delivery would be a good thing for Canada.

A RICHICULOUS VIEW

You also tell us, that "we have an area as vast as the U. S." Most everybody knows this, except that in considering R. D., Hudson Bay should be excluded, surely, but it will be news to a lot of people, especially to Uncle Sam, that if the narrow strip of Canada (on an average a hundred miles wide, probably) which is supposed by many well informed persons to contain about all of its citizens who could reasonably claim "the luxury of R. D." on the grounds of density of settlement should succeed in getting Rural Delivery, the population of that vast expanse between this narrow strip and the Arctic Ocean and North Pole are so numerous that in dealing with this R. D. question their case too would have to be considered. This

is of course a most ridiculous view of the situation as respects this comparatively uninhabitable and uninhabited wilderness, but why in discussing R. D. do you persist in taking into account this "vast region," whose climatic conditions and others will forever bar all necessity for R. M. D.

I know a farmer who has unloaded his hay for thirty years with a hand pitchfork, although surrounded by neighbors who were using, for that purpose, horse fork outfits. A year or two ago, however, he purchased this great labor saver, and was telling me of what a fool he had been all these years when a few paltry dollars outlay would have landed all this hay, he had pitched, into the hay mow without hardly an effort on his part.

We may not give R. M. D. now, but "all things come to him who waits," and makes a racket, and then Miss Canada will joyously behold the spectacle of the Free Rural Mail Delivery Man driving up to her mail box at her garage, and she will say to herself what a fool I have been to have tramped millions and millions of miles to and from the country post office when the outlay of a few paltry dollars would have instituted this great convenience years ago.—Geo. Wilcox, Springfield, Ont.

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