

## Need of a Parcels Post System

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into the town to the express office, finding out who the people are that deal at Simpson's and Eaton's, and thereby bringing certain pressure to bear upon those ladies and gentlemen that would lead them to leave part of their trade at least in the town where they live, because it is a very bad thing that does not cut two ways; and this committee gave in their report and they said that there was not nearly as much competition today as formerly; that the shopping that had been done at these departmental stores was gradually on the decrease. And they were honest enough to confess that competition from the departmental stores in the city had done them good in that it had caused them to rouse up and sit up and take notice and replenish their stocks and be more up-to-date in the way they do business. Therefore I do hope that we will place ourselves on record with no uncertain sound that we are in favor of getting the very best possible parcels post rates that we can obtain from the government."

### Discussion at Ottawa

The question of the extension of the parcels post was discussed in the House of Commons at Ottawa shortly before the dissolution of the last Parliament. The matter was raised by Mr. W. F. Maclean, a supporter of the present government, who protested against the

high express rates and advocated the parcels post as the only way to bring the express companies to time. Hon. H. Lemieux, then postmaster-general, agreed with Mr. Maclean that great benefits would follow the extension of the system, and said that he had for several days been working on a plan to establish the system. Mr. Lemieux also intimated that he had made an exhaustive study of the question, and that at that time an expert was engaged in preparing information on which he proposed to take action. What system Mr. Lemieux might have proposed, and what action the government and Parliament would have taken in the matter, we do not know because the government of which Mr. Lemieux was a member, was defeated a few weeks afterwards. The information which he had secured, however, is still in the hands of the post office authorities, and it is for the new government to decide what action shall be taken.

### European Experience

There is ample experience of other countries to guide them in this matter. Nearly all European governments have parcels post systems with a limit of not less than eleven pounds, and frequently more, and at rates that seem ridiculously low when compared with the rate in force in Canada.

For instance, in the United Kingdom the parcels post rate for a one-pound package is six cents, and the rate decreases in proportion until a package of the maximum weight—eleven pounds—is carried for twenty-two cents, or two cents a pound.

In Germany the maximum weight limit is one hundred and ten pounds, and the rates vary with both weight and distance. Any parcel up to eleven pounds will be carried ten miles or less for six cents. This would be a sort of local parcels post with a rate averaging probably about a cent a pound, assuming the average weight to be about six pounds. A parcel will be delivered at any post office in the German Empire at a postage charge of twelve cents and a weight limit of eleven pounds, making on an average a charge of about two cents a pound or less. It is neither practicable nor necessary to set forth all the rates under the German zone system, but their character is indicated by the charge for carrying a twenty-two pound package: ten miles, seventeen cents; twenty miles, twenty-two cents; fifty miles thirty-seven cents; one hundred miles, forty-seven cents; one hundred and fifty miles, fifty-nine cents; any greater distance, seventy-two cents. Parcels post rates in Austria are practically the same as in Germany.

In the republic of Mexico the rate varies from six cents for a one-pound package to sixty cents for an eleven-pound package, or a little more than a third of the charge in Canada.

### Where the Shoe Pinches

In Australia the interstate rate, corresponding with our own, starts with a charge of sixteen cents for the first pound, but the charge for larger packages diminishes somewhat, for eleven pounds require postage to the amount of one dollar and thirty-six cents. In this country postage on eleven pounds would be one dollar and seventy-six cents.

In using these figures for the purpose of comparison, one must not overlook the fact that the United Kingdom, Germany and Austria are smaller in area than Canada and have a denser population. Neither need it be anticipated that the parcels post rate in Canada will be as low as in those countries, because of the circumstances mentioned. These rates in other countries merely support the argument, otherwise fully sustained, that a lower postage rate on merchandise is justified here.

The parcels post is of value in four particulars: First, it enables a citizen to secure with little trouble articles his local dealer does not carry. Second, it provides the producer with a means of delivering to his city customers produce in smaller quantities than he is now able to, because of the expense involved in making a trip to town for the purpose of delivering them or in paying the minimum freight or express rate. Third, a reduction in the rate of

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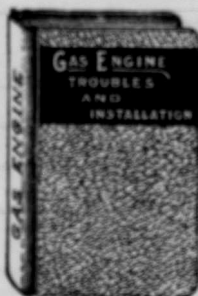
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postage will necessarily cause a reduction in some of the express rates, so that while patrons of the post office will be saving money as a result of the reduction in postage, the same benefit will be enjoyed by the patrons of express companies and possibly to a much larger extent. Fourth, the establish-

ment of a parcels post will prevent any unreasonable maintenance of prices by retailers, for the purchaser will always be afforded a competitive market. Combinations among retailers to maintain unreasonable prices will be impossible after the establishment of a parcels post at low rates.