

impose postage on the newspapers or not, but I should like to meet one statement which the hon. Postmaster General has made. He mentioned, in support of his Bill, the cost of the bags furnished the newspapers. Well, that is an arrangement of the Post Office Department itself for the convenience of the post office clerks, because the newspaper publishers might otherwise send their papers in carts or any other form of conveyance and have them dumped right down on the post office floor. It was the Post Office Department itself which proposed, as a matter of convenience, that the newspapers should be put up in bags, which the department furnished, and furthermore, should be put up in bags ready for distribution. Those newspapers that were intended for Toronto were put up in bags labelled Toronto, and those intended for St. John, N.B., were put up in bags labelled N.B., and so on. The system was the result of an arrangement between the Post Office Department and the publishers, and, therefore, the publishers are not in any way at all responsible for the cost of the bags.

Mr. FOSTER. Is that distribution done by the publishers?

Mr. ELLIS. I understand it so. The papers are put up in bags addressed to the different places.

Mr. FOSTER. Then you are helping the post office?

Mr. CLARKE. I would ask the hon. Minister if it is his intention to provide in the Bill now before the House, and which reimposes the rate on newspapers—that such papers shall be distributed by the letter-carriers in the municipality in which they are published? Or is it intended to continue to charge $\frac{1}{2}$ cent rate?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. It is not proposed to distribute by letter-carriers newspapers in the municipality where they are published. We propose to leave the law as it is in that respect.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. I do not wish to discuss the Bill at its present stage, but I think it would be very much more convenient, when it is brought down, if the hon. gentleman would also bring down a statement of the difference in revenue which he considers the change from three cents to a two-cent rate will cause. The hon. gentleman knows that that has been the stumbling block. More than once a proposition was brought before the House, in one shape or another, to reduce postage on home letters from three to two cents, but the difficulty has always been that the reduction would inflict too great a loss on the revenue. When the United States reduced their postage, they did so on the supposition that the increase in the number of letters would make up for the deficiency in the revenue,

Mr. ELLIS.

and I think the hon. gentleman will find in his own department statements which indicate that that expectation was not carried out, and I think that in discussing this Bill the hon. gentleman should bring down the statement of what he supposes will be the loss or gain. I have no doubt the hon. gentleman believes that the re-imposition of stamps on the newspapers will make up for a great part of the deficiency which will occur from the reduction, but I think that before the Bill can be gone into and discussed intelligently, we should know exactly what the hon. gentleman expects will be the loss or gain by the proposed change.

Mr. FOSTER. Perhaps the hon. gentleman can tell us that now.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I will give you my views at a later date.

Mr. FOSTER. It is not the hon. gentleman's views that are wanted. He certainly cannot have taken the first step in the consideration of this Bill without making the calculation as to what he would lose by a one-third reduction of the letter postage. He must have that information before him, and it must be information that he could give.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I would prefer to discuss that point on second reading of the Bill.

Mr. FOSTER. Then, the hon. gentleman does not wish to give full information. No information he has given, especially that wrong information with regard to the bags, can compare in importance with the information I have asked for, which is the foundation of the whole movement, that is, what the loss will be that will accrue to the country by reducing the letter postage from 3 cents to 2 cents. It is a little more difficult to find out what the gain would be upon the newspapers under the change proposed, though we could make a calculation based upon last year's circulation and tonnage of newspapers. These are not things that require investigation; the Postmaster General must have them before him, he must have them at his finger-ends, for he could not take the first step towards the framing of this Bill without investigating these points. If we are to cogitate over this Bill for a week or so, the information upon such points as these, which is a determining factor in the case, should be given to us also. I would also ask the hon. gentleman if he will have the papers and correspondence asked for with reference to the attempt to lower the foreign newspaper postage, which was granted, I think, some time ago, laid upon the Table. I should like very much to discuss these both at the same time, as they are co-related one with the other. If the hon. gentleman will lay that information on the Table of the House before he moves