

preceding fiscal year. Large as this expenditure has been, the beneficent results attained in extending the free distribution of mails to the residents of rural districts have justified the wisdom of the outlay. Statistics brought down to the 1st of October, 1904, show that on that date there were 27,138 rural routes established, serving approximately 12,000,000 people in rural districts, remote from post offices, and that there were pending at that time 3,859 petitions for the establishment of new rural routes. Unquestionably some part of the general increase in receipts is due to the increased postal facilities which the rural service has afforded.

Lest the Postmaster General or any member of this House should be misled as to the deficits of the mail service in the United States, I point to the enormous figures I have just read, and the fact that for many years, going back ten or fifteen years, there has been a deficit every year.

I have no desire to rob the Postmaster General of any credit he is entitled to in Canada for a different condition of things prevailing here, as long as it does not result in robbing the people who do the work. But I have stated the fact that in the United States the deficits have not been occasioned by the adoption of rural delivery; but that on the other hand the Postmaster General there points out that the increased receipts of the post office are to some extent due to the adoption of rural mail delivery; and I also point out that they have been able to discontinue the expenditure on the Star service route, effecting a saving of \$579,324; and of rural post offices, to the amount of \$171,000, making a saving of \$750,445.32, during the last year in consequence of the establishment of rural mail delivery, an important point in considering this question. I point out the fact that the Postmaster General's Report, and all these reports that I have taken occasion to peruse, contain many features well worthy of consideration in this country, a country where rural life contrasts unfavourably in respect of conveniences and advantages with town life and city life, and where all the people of the country should be willing at a reasonable expense to extend these advantages to every section of the country. We will have, if we establish it, as pointed out by the United States Postmaster General, a great general increase in conveniences. He says also it has resulted in increasing the value of the farms, it has resulted in improving the highways, it has increased the values of markets to the farmer, and enabled him to transact his business more satisfactorily by giving him direct access from time to time with the carrier, to transmit money and to carry on many business transactions. Moreover what is as important as anything, it will bring increased comforts to the home, and make contrast between city and rural life less marked than it is to-day. It will tend to encourage the farmers' sons to stay upon

the farm, and thus add to the general prosperity of Canada, and by giving them facilities now denied. I propose to read an article from the 'Weekly Sun.' I have great respect for the opinion of the agricultural journals of this country in a matter of this kind, because they come in close touch with the farmers, and the farmers after all are the people who have to bear the chief burden, if this matter is carried out. The article is headed 'The Country Can afford it.'

Just before parliament prorogued, Sir Wm. Mulock, in answer to Mr. Lennox, said a study of the question of rural mail delivery had convinced him of the impossibility and unwisdom of the inauguration of such a service for Canada, and that it would be many years before any government would recommend its adoption.

The expenditure necessary to extend the service to every farm house in the whole of the United States, including the most sparsely settled sections will not exceed one dollar per family, or less than half the value of the service to those enjoying it. A year or two ago the total expenditure on rural mail delivery in the United States was twelve million dollars.

A little above the mark there as to time as I have shown.

It would not cost anything like that sum to introduce such a service here, and even if it did, what then? The Laurier government has increased the expenditure on the general services of the country by fourteen million dollars in eight years. The amount that is wasted on little public works—

This is a matter that should strike my hon. friend the Postmaster General, in connection with a discussion we had recently.

—in the form of docks, &c., for doubtful constituencies, and in bounties to iron manufacturers and subsidies to steamboat owners and railway promoters, would easily meet the cost of providing the farmers of Canada with this great boon.

I regret having trespassed upon the attention of the House at such length, but I think the importance of the subject justifies me in doing so. In moving the motion that I have placed on the Order Paper for a return of the papers and documents in connection with this matter, my object was to introduce a discussion upon this question, and at the same time to urge upon the Postmaster General to consider the propriety of testing this matter for ourselves. It is not necessary to make an extensive experiment. As I have said, the system was begun in the United States with a sum of \$40,000. Let us appropriate \$5,000 or \$10,000 for an experiment in Canada, and if it is not found satisfactory, it will have served the purpose in the meantime, and will have satisfied the people that we are all united in a desire to promote the best interests of our farmers throughout the country.