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## RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

We have had the privilege once again of sitting in Convention, with a further opportunity of taking stock of our organization. The year that has just passed has seen the development of the Association beyond the point almost of the fondest hopes of previous gatherings of this kind. In itself, that is a source of much gratification and pride to every live member. It is much more than that to the hard-working officers and past officers, who have ever kept before them the ideal of a true Dominion-wide society, and have kept pressing steadily forward towards its realization. At last the chasm that divided east and west—which, by the way, was always felt to be more imaginary than real—has been bridged and the structure will become more closely knit as the years roll on.

An old adage says that "failures are but stepping stones to success," and experience would seem to establish its truth. We, too, may have made our mistakes, but we have been singularly free from serious ones. In spite of our youth as an association, our strictly limited opportunities, and the thousand-and-one drawbacks we had to overcome, still, at the same time, the purpose in view was so clearly understood that little room, indeed, existed for the doubts that might have led to a false step. No one would be foolish enough to insist that even the best intentioned and most zealous workers in any cause could not possibly have done better, but in our case it may without presumption be questioned whether they could have guided the ship of association in a more true and happy course. Where the view-point is such that the picture can be seen in true perspective there can be no misconception as to the proper relationship of any particular part to the whole, and criticism should be withheld until that "detached" view has been taken which will preclude the possibility of the part immediately under the eye from bulking too largely in our survey.

So much for what has been—for the present and future, what? If the events

of world-wide significance that have transpired during the past three years have brought unlooked for problems into the lives of men, the postal clerks are no exception. We, like all others, are face to face with conditions that will take our best thought and effort to overcome. With so many of our men overseas, so many, till now, held back because the service could not be run on less than the minimum of experienced help, with the prospect at no distant date of universal military service, welcome to many who have unjustly been made in public and private the innocent victims of the unwarranted sneer and jibe, all the more despicable because those concerned do not possess the ready means of defence of the average private citizen—we need to be constantly on the alert. Steps have already been taken with good results to ensure the interests of the boys abroad, now we must endeavour to safeguard the interests of those still to go. Finally, having done all in our power to co-operate as loyal servants and citizens towards the realization of the great aims for which world-wide democracy is to-day striving, our closest vigilance may be necessary to guard the rights of those left behind.

We have before us in the future many problems of a domestic kind. We are now properly passing, in the sense of experience, from the age of youth to that of manhood, and we must face the problems of the more advanced stage. Our Constitution has been proved to be inadequate to meet our present needs, and, while we have succeeded very well so far in our undertakings, it must be apparent to every member, as it certainly was to every delegate at Convention, that if the most of good is to be hoped for we must revise our plans, and follow a somewhat different policy in the future. At the same time, if the voice of a truly representative convention of postal clerks is to be looked for in the future the question of supplying such help from Dominion funds as will make that "consummation so devoutly to be wished" possible, must be tackled and overcome. If we fail in this we fail in everything, but no one