

"When it comes to adopting rural mail delivery, that is an impossible policy, for it would involve us in financial disaster from a post office point of view.

"The United States statistics have staggered me and made me feel that we must not plunge lightly even into a discussion of the question."

A MATTER OF EXPENSE.

The discussions on free rural mail delivery that have taken place in the House of Commons indicate that the only serious objection of our Government to the introduction of rural free delivery is its great expense. There is reason to believe, however, that it has other objections. In matters of this kind, the Government is generally guided to a considerable extent by the reports and recommendations of its officials.

The officials of the post office department are opposed to rural free delivery. One leading official, when interviewed, spoke freely, but asked that his name should be suppressed.

"I believe," he said, "that the introduction of free rural mail delivery in the United States was a great mistake. If the post office officials only dared, they would do away with the whole system. In fact, the day may come when they will discontinue the service.

POLITICS IN IT.

"It is little more than an immense political machine. It was started by politicians with the idea of gaining votes among the farmers. It was tried on a small scale at first, but once it got started they were unable to discontinue it. The expense is something enormous and it is growing rapidly. Nobody knows where it is going to end.

"They speak about restricting the service to routes of twenty to twenty-five miles in length, upon which there are at least 100 families. That is largely talk. On account of political pressure, they have been forced to give the service to much smaller routes. Can you wonder? Where only 99 families on a route apply for the service, do you think that the department would refuse to give the service? Of course they would not. Other sections where there are only 95 or less families on a route demand the same consideration. And so it goes. A very large proportion of the routes have less than 100 families and less than 80 families. It is that that makes rural delivery so expensive and the Government seems powerless to bring about an improvement.

"They talk, also, of the saving that is effected by doing away with the small post offices in the sections where free rural mail delivery is introduced. In reality, the saving thus made is very small. It has been found to be practically impossible to lay out the routes in such a manner that all the families in a section are given the service. The result is that most of the post offices have to be continued so that the people, who do not have their mail delivered to them, will be able to get their mail in the usual way.

BUILDS UP THE CITIES.

"Then, also, free rural mail delivery has the effect of building up the cities at the expense of the small country towns. Farmers who have their mail delivered every day get out of the habit of driving into the village to buy their goods. Many of them buy by mail from the mail order houses in the cities. Many of the small country merchants are thus driven out of business.

CONDITIONS IN CANADA

"In Canada our post office department endeavours to locate post offices about every three miles apart in the more thickly settled farming sections. There is a daily service to these offices. Thus, our farmers do not have to drive more than a mile and a half to obtain their mail. In a number of sections the couriers who deliver

the mail to the post offices each day arrange with the farmers along their routes to leave their mail for them at their doors. Thus we already have free rural delivery to a limited extent.

COST WOULD BE DOUBLED.

"Were we to introduce free rural delivery, the cost of our postal service would be doubled. In England, they have not given free rural delivery to the same extent that they have in the United States. It is because they have a different class of people to deal with. The heads of the post office department in Great Britain can take positions that our Government, or the United States Government is not at the mercy of the public, and is practically its slave. What the people of the United States call "liberty," is largely "license."

"We are not much better. There has never been a business principle introduced in the post office department that was not accomplished without opposition from the House of Commons, regardless of party. I have heard members of Parliament shout for certain principles in the House of Commons one day and the very next day, when they found that such a principle was likely to cost them a few votes in their constituency, they were ready to swallow themselves whole. The post office department would never have had a surplus had it not been for the fact that Sir William Mulock, when he was Postmaster General, had enough backbone to enable him to prevent the department being run by the politicians. Even as it is, we have post offices in Canada that are costing the Government hundreds of dollars a year, and which are not yielding a revenue of five dollars a year each in return. It is not possible to discontinue these post offices because the people being served by them would rebel. Were they to be stopped, members of Parliament on both sides of the House would make the life of the Postmaster-General unendurable until he restored the service. In British Columbia, the department has to carry the mail hundreds of miles to suit the convenience of a dozen people. What are we going to do with such a people as that? Were we to introduce free rural mail delivery in Canada, every section would demand it, and our politicians would see that they got it. That is why it would be a dangerous experiment to introduce the system.

A POLITICAL MACHINE

"In the United States the free rural delivery service is an immense political machine.

The rural mail carriers and inspectors are political appointees. The routes are laid out to suit the politicians. The United States Government, of course, will deny this. They won't confess that the introduction of the system has been a mistake. To do so would make them look foolish. But they feel that it has been, and they would be glad to be relieved from it.

OUR ADVERSE CONDITIONS

Then, also, we must remember that conditions in Canada are not so favorable for the introduction of free rural mail delivery as they are in the United States. The territory in which our Government has to deliver mail is almost as large as the United States, and our population is only 6,000,000 as against their 80,000,000.

NOT MUCH OF AN IMPROVEMENT

"Rural delivery is giving the farmers in the United States but little better service than our farmers are getting by a regular daily mail service at their local post offices. The comparative expense of the two systems is altogether out of proportion. The farmers of the United States have a right to have rural free delivery if they want it and are willing to pay for it, but as a business proposition, they are fools, for they are paying for more than they obtain in return."

The foregoing are the objections that have been advanced against the introduction of free rural delivery in Canada. These objections were laid before the officials of the post office department at Washington, and before many farmers and other residents of the United States. Their opinions furnish the best answer to the objections herein set forth. What their answers are will be related in the articles that are to follow.—H.B.C.

The Live Stock Industry of Canada

Summary of an Address by Mr. Duncan Anderson before the recent National Live Stock Convention in Ottawa.

IN 1905, the value of the exports of fish, of the mines, and of the forests, of Canada was \$76,000,000, and the total value of the exports of the farm for the same year was \$76,000,000. Of this latter amount, \$30,000,000 was from agricultural products and \$46,000,000 from animals and their products. "With this statement, Mr. Anderson prefaced his address on the above subject, an address, considered by those who heard it, to be the best ever delivered upon live stock conditions in Canada.

THE MARITIME PROVINCES

Prince Edward Island, he stated, needs the introduction of good stallions to improve horse breeding. The beef cattle were somewhat mixed because of the expansion in dairying in recent years. At the exhibitions on the Island, they put up as good a show of grade sheep and bacon hogs as are to be found anywhere in Canada. There is, however, too much grain growing and not enough stock raising.

A wonderful change has come over the Province of Nova Scotia in live stock raising in recent years. The introduction of stallions and breeding mares by the local Government, will enable Nova Scotia at no very recent date to raise all the horses the Province needs. The beef cattle interests, excepting near the marsh lands in Cumberland County, were not good. A great improvement is being made in the sheep industry. There were 106,000 more sheep in the Province in 1907 than in 1901.

There are too many light horses in New Brunswick. Inferior standard-bred horses have been used too freely and the result is shown in the poor quality of many of the light horses to be found in that Province. Efforts are being made by the Government to improve conditions in this respect, and splendid results are likely to follow.

New Brunswick is doing well in dairying, and some splendid work is being done in grading up dairy cows, especially in the neighbourhood of Sussex. There were more cows, more sheep and more hogs in New Brunswick in 1907 than in 1901.

The Maritime farmers, generally speaking, were not stable enough in their breeding methods. The agricultural societies that have been buying breeding stock for the use of their members, have not stuck to the one line long enough. The salvation of the country lay in the development of the live stock industry, and to do this, more turnips should be grown. There is too dry not enough succulent food grown. The provinces down by the sea can grow roots better than any part of Canada. There must be steadier breeding and more liberal feeding when the animals are young.

QUEBEC

In Quebec, Mr. Anderson stated, outside of the counties of Huntingdon and Chateauguay, the horses of the Province have not shown as much improvement as they should. In these two counties, the horses and dairy cattle were better than in any other part of Canada. The Quebec farmer