

### THE POSTOFFICE AS IT IS TODAY.

#### That Important Institution Assumes Metropolitan Proportions.

#### Postmaster Hartman Brings Order Out of Chaos—Prompt, Punctual and Civil Himself He Demands the Same of His Clerks.

Readers of the Nugget who know how ready this paper has always been to uncover or denounce wrong-doing on the part of any public servant wherever discovered, need not be informed that it is ever as alert for opportunities to exploit and praise the worthy effort from the same sources. It is a pleasure, therefore, to refer at this time to the conduct of the Dawson postoffice under the management of Postmaster Hartman. No one needs be reminded of the conditions which existed in that institution prior to his arrival; the staff in charge did the best they could under the circumstances, but the absence of a masterhand showed its effects in the undisguised murmurs of the public.

It was Postmaster Hartman's fortune to make his debut on the scene at a most exacting time, being just three days after the fire, on October 14th, with a new office just secured, upward of 200,000 letters piled up promiscuously about the building and the public necessarily shut off from service. With an energy which has continued to characterize his administration, however, he at once grappled with the situation and within a few days, with the harmonious cooperation of his assistants, had brought order out of chaos and public satisfaction followed where had been discontent.

First, the present system of wickets was hurried to completion, then the huge mass of mail was sorted over and all received from the first of June down was placed therein for distribution; it being considered the most important to the awaiting public. There were 60,000 of these letters, and they, doubtless, carried cheer to countless hearts, in bringing intelligence of remittances received by loved ones at home or containing drafts from the outside, on which depended the purchase of mining property or the prosecution of important business transactions. Next the nearly 70,000 letters dated from June 1st, back to November, 1897, were listed alphabetically and the typewritten names posted on the walls of the office. The almost 80,000 letters remaining were then placed on the dead-letter list.

The piles of accumulated newspapers, which little or no effort had before been made to distribute, were tackled. A huge list of names of people for whom papers awaited was prepared and posted, as it was impossible to put the papers in the boxes for want of room, so many were there. Many of the papers without wrappers and others which had been left un-called-for were then placed on a table within reach of the visiting public with a card inviting them to "take one." Bundles of six to eight pounds each were then sent into the galleries for gratuitous distribution and many more were sent to the hospitals, for the education of the sick or convalescent. In this way, the tons of otherwise useless matter were disposed of until now it is possible to serve all the papers received with the same care as are the letters.

The registered mail branch of the service also required attention and was given it. Miss Edith Robinson had formerly both received and distributed this mail, besides carrying for several duties, such as selling stamps and receiving moneys for box-rent. She has now been relieved of the labor of distributing the registered letters by Mr. Baker. What this means will be apparent when it is known that the office now sends out from 400 to 700 registered letters with every mail and receives from 600 to 1,200 with each incoming one. The mails are now going out regularly every two weeks and incoming mails should leave Bennett on the 1st and 15th of each month.

It will surprise many to learn that the Dawson office is now provided with 208 letter boxes, with six delivery windows and a separate clerk for each. This makes all the letters easy of access and enables a rapid and accurate service. The building is not at all suited for the needs of the business, and the government is now considering the advisability of erecting a new one next summer. The fact that the present quarters cost the government \$200 per month for rental should prove no small factor in determining the officials upon the proper course to take. The income of the office is as a matter of necessity out of proportion with the expenses; the monthly salary list, aside from that of the postmaster being \$1200, to which are added rental, fuel, illuminating oil, etc. The stamp sales from December to the end of January amounted to \$1200 and there is some income from the boxes, though not what it should be in a place the size of Dawson. The rather poor patronage of the boxes heretofore was doubtless attributable to the irregularity and infrequency in the receipt of mails; but that does not maintain now, besides which Postmaster Hartman extends to box renters the privilege of entering the building by the rear entrance and having access to their boxes while mails are being distributed, which is a considerable convenience.

Postmaster Hartman's staff of assistants now consists of eight clerks. Of these Messrs. A. Bourassa, H. Greenbaum, D. Marks, N. J. Caron, Benjamin Craig and T. G. Owen are delivery clerks; Miss Edith Robinson receives the registered letters, issues the stamps and collects the box-rents; Mrs. A. Hill looks after the forwarding of all letters and Mr. R. H. Baker distributes the registered letters. They all have the confidence of their chief, as the Nugget fully knows, and are working in entire harmony

with him. Their careful attention to duty is manifest to patrons of the office.

But by all odds the hardest worked person in the office is the postmaster himself. Promptly at his post at 8:30 each morning, he can be found constantly at work there until 11 nearly every evening; indeed it is said of him that so closely does he confine himself to his arduous duties he has not been half a mile from the office but once since his assumption of its duties. His painstaking efforts to accommodate the public to the utmost will be evident to any. In conversation with a representative of this paper he admitted that mistakes occur at his office, but that he endeavors to make the number as few as possible, and invites the public to co-operate with him in correcting improper condition which may attach to the service by lodging complaints. He says he is especially stringent in compelling his staff to treat all who go to the office alike, according to the poorest man the same treatment that he would the most fortunate.

Mr. Hartman is by no means a novice in his present business, having been similarly engaged for years at Gunnison, Colorado, where he left an enviable record. That he has also brought the Dawson office to its present state of efficiency is a matter of pride to our citizens no less than, doubtless, it is to himself.

#### OUTSIDE BREVITIES.

PRETORIA, Dec. 27.—It is reported here today that the Bubonic plague has broken out at Delagoa Bay.

TACOMA, Dec. 27.—The Tacoma police made their first arrest under the Curfew ordinance on Christmas day, when 11-year-old Willie Howard was caught on the streets at 4:30 p. m., and had to spend the night in the lock-up.

HAMILTON, Dec. 26.—A rumor was started on the streets Saturday that ex-Mayor A. D. Stewart, now on the way to Klondike, is dead, but nothing definite can be learned as to its origin or truth and it is generally discredited.

PEKIN, Dec. 27.—No settlement has been reached regarding the demanded concession at Shanghai. The protest against the granting of the concessions made by Sir Claude, the British minister, has brought Great Britain and France face to face in China. The action of the Chinese authorities is sure to depend on how Great Britain supports them.

TORONTO, Dec. 27.—The first letter to be sent from Toronto bearing the new Imperial penny stamp was that mailed at midnight of Saturday by Mr. John Ross Robertson, M. P., the representative in Ontario of the United Grand Lodge of Freemasons of England, and addressed to Mr. Edward Letchworth, grand secretary of Freemasons' Hall, London. The letter was of a fraternal character.

MADRID, Dec. 26.—The condition of Prime Minister Sagasta, who is suffering from bronchial pneumonia, is announced this morning to be more serious.

LATER.—Although the latest bulletin regarding Sonor Sagasta's condition which was issued this evening, says that he has passed a quiet day, a rumor is in circulation tonight that his respiration is much more dilapidated and it is feared that he will not recover.

PITTSBURG, Pa., Dec. 22.—The Miller Electric Construction Co., of Pittsburg, has invented a new plant to utilize the power of Niagara Falls, and it is expected that work will begin by the first of the year, necessitating the expenditure of \$500,000. It is proposed to erect a large building close to the falls, it being kept in place by anchors and heavy iron cables, with a series of contrivances expected to utilize all the force of the falling water.

The deepest shaft in Colorado is that of the Geyser mine, at Silver Cliff, which penetrates the rock to a depth of 2400 feet. But even that is a shallow puncture beside the one which goes down into the depths of the Comstock lode, again active and productive. In that wonderful treasure house, from which more than \$50,000,000 in value have been taken out, the new explorations are expected to reach a depth of 6000 feet.

NEW YORK, Dec. 27.—A dispatch to the Herald from Paris says: The duel with swords between Max Regis, mayor of Algiers, and M. Lepic, one of the editors of the *Les Droits Del Homme*, took place at 5 o'clock this morning at Hueaux. Max Regis attacked his opponent with fury and M. Lepic defended himself with energy. Six rounds were fought and then the two combatants were so played out that the duel had to be brought to an end.

OTTAWA, Dec. 27.—Mr. W. F. King and Mr. W. W. Stumbles, of the marine and fisheries department, and Mr. Doyan, of the inland revenue department, visited on Sir Wilfred Laurier and Hon. Mr. Fielding today and asked that statutory increases of salary be granted to members of the civil service. Sir Wilfred Laurier gave no indication that this would be done but promised that Mr. Fielding would consider the

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