

LORD ELGIN

separated from each other in many districts by long distances. One of the grievances of the Canadians before the union had been the high postage imposed on letters throughout British North America. The poor settlers were not able to pay the three or four shillings, and even more, demanded for letters mailed from their old homes across the sea, and it was not unusual to find in country post-offices a large accumulation of dead letters, refused on account of the expense. The management of the postal service by imperial officers was in every way most unsatisfactory; it was chiefly carried on for the benefit of a few persons, and not for the convenience or consolation of the many who were always anxious for news of their kin in the "old country." After the union there was a little improvement in the system, but it was not really administered in the interests of the Canadian people until it was finally transferred to the colonial authorities. When this desirable change took place, an impulse was soon given to the dissemination of letters and newspapers. The government organized a post-office department, of which the head was a postmaster-general with a seat in the cabinet.

Other important measures made provision for the introduction of the decimal system into the provincial currency, the taking of a census every ten years, the more satisfactory conduct of parliamentary elections and the prevention of corruption, better facilities for the administration of justice in