

Appendix
(I.)

13th December

posed may be obviated, and that it may be found practicable to frame such a Bill as will meet with the assent of the respective Legislatures.

I am, &c.,

(Signed,) G. J. PENNINGTON,
*Pro. Secretary.*J. STEPHEN, Esquire,
&c. &c. &c.

(COPY.)

No. 85.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
Montreal, 16th April, 1840.

MY LORD,

The subject of the Post Office arrangements of these Provinces has engaged my attention, and I shall have to address your Lordship hereafter with respect to the inland Provincial Postage, which I believe to be susceptible of very great improvement; but there is a branch of this subject to which I must advert without any delay, in the hope that it may receive the earliest attention from Her Majesty's Government.

I refer to the postage of letters from the United Kingdom to the British North American Provinces. Under the arrangements concluded by the Government with Mr. Cunnard, a communication by steam is provided at all times of the year, once every fortnight, between the United Kingdom and Halifax, and a very heavy expense, £60,000 per annum, has been undertaken by Great Britain to secure the speedy and punctual transport of the Mail between the Mother Country and these Colonies, by British Packets, and through Her Majesty's dominions, independent of the United States, intending thereby to afford the benefit of a cheap and secure transmission of their correspondence to the people of these Colonies.

But unless steps are taken to alter the system which at present prevails under the regulations of the Post Office, with regard to the rates of postage to be charged on letters by this conveyance, the measure must entirely fail in producing the results anticipated, and, in a financial point of view even, will prove a ruinous loss of revenue, without any corresponding benefit.

I cannot, perhaps, do better than refer to the Report of the Deputy Post Master General, for which I have called, and to the documents appended to it, as explanatory of this. It will appear from that Report, that the interpretation given by the Deputy Post Master General to the Post Office order, fixing the rates of postage across the Atlantic at 1s. per single and in proportion for other letters, was an erroneous one, and that it was not intended, as he supposed, that these charges should cover the whole charge upon the letter to the place of its destination, wherever it might be in British North America, but that the inland postage as heretofore settled should be added. If such an arrangement be persisted in, the establishment of the steam conveyance to Halifax will effect neither of the objects contemplated, so far as relates to the Canadas and some part of New Brunswick, and the expense must become a dead loss to the Post Office. This will be at once obvious on a consideration of the facts of the case. The voyage from Liverpool to Halifax may, on an average, be calculated at two days less than the voyage to New York. From the latter port, however, to Montreal, the journey will, in summer, be accomplished in three days, and in winter in about five; while from Halifax to Montreal will require, in summer, at the least, five days, and in the spring, autumn, and winter, from nine to ten. In point of time, therefore, the communications by way of Halifax will hold out no advantage except to places east of Montreal; but to places west of this city, the whole of Upper Canada, where the great body of British settlers are, the advantage will be decidedly with the New York Packets, and it is not to be expected that, unless considerable pecuniary advantage is to be found in

adopting the route by Halifax, the loss in time will be submitted to. With respect to the whole of that Province, however, and even to Montreal itself, under the present system, the United States Post holds out a considerable advantage in a pecuniary point of view also. The postage of a single letter is now—

From London to Quebec, via Halifax, 2s. 6d.; via New York, 2s. 10d.

From London to Montreal, via Halifax, 2s. 10d.; via New York, 2s. 4d.

From London to Toronto, via Halifax, 3s. 6d.; via New York, 2s. 9d.

From London to Amherstburg, via Halifax, 3s. 11d.; via New York, 2s. 7½d.

and even the recent change in England has had a disadvantageous effect here, because persons writing from England, where the principle of payment by weight is established, forget or are ignorant that the same principle does not extend to the Colonies. The Deputy Post Master General informs me that since the introduction of the penny postage in England, he has received numerous and very urgent remonstrances against the excessive internal postage of letters, which in England and in the passage to Halifax are counted merely as single letters, but which immediately they are transferred to the Provincial Post Office, become liable to double or treble postage.

In a financial point of view, therefore, I consider the present system calculated utterly to defeat the object of obtaining the monopoly of the conveyance of letters from North America by a steam communication to Halifax. But there is another light, and that still more important, in which it is necessary to look at it; I mean the moral influence which it exercises over the British inhabitants of these Provinces. The emigrant, when first he settles in these Provinces, comes here full of English associations and sentiments, and with the feeling that though he is on the other side of the Atlantic, he is still a member of the same country and within reach of his former friends and connexions. To him the receipt of news from England is of the greatest moment, and so long as a correspondence with his home is kept up, his old attachment to the Mother Country may be safely relied on. By his representations, also, others are induced to emigrate and to select the British possessions as the place of their settlement, and thus a healthy and most beneficial stream of emigration is directed to these Provinces. This has been the case heretofore, in spite of the expense and delay of correspondence; that it would be much more so under an improved Post Office system, cannot be doubted.

But if an emigrant is compelled to pay an excessive price for the transport of his letters, his correspondence must in a short time cease, and with it, in a great measure, his interest in his former home. In fact, the payment of such a sum in *money* as four or five shillings, (and in many cases the postage amounts to treble and quadruple that sum, owing to the ignorance of the writer respecting the additional charge for different sheets,) appears an insuperable bar to any correspondence. In the woods, although the settlers live in comparative comfort and plenty, the possession of *money* is extremely difficult, the transactions being to a great extent carried on by barter, and the difficulty of meeting such a payment is far beyond what can be conceived in England.

On every ground, therefore, both of finance and policy, I must express my decided opinion that the existing system should be at once abandoned, and that, following out the principle established in England, an uniform postage of 1s. should be charged on every letter not weighing more than half an ounce, sent from Great Britain to any part of the British possessions in North America, and *vice versa*.

This arrangement would at once take out of the hands of the United States Post Office, the English correspondence which now passes through it, and joined to such improvements as can be made in the internal conveyance of letters, would be hailed by the British population of Canada as a very great boon. The matter, however, admits of no delay, for the Government of the United States are fully aware of the advantages to them of the existing system, and should

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