

Consignments sent us will be promptly and carefully attended to.

TWO-CENT POSTAGE.—The introduction of the two-cent postal rate in the United States has set alive the desire in Canada that a corresponding reduction should at once be made here. It is getting on for half a century since the penny system was adopted throughout the United Kingdom, and each succeeding year has more and more justified the soundness of the policy. It is argued, however, that the geographical conditions are wholly different as between the mother-country and the Dominion. But the same objection was raised on the other side of the line when the rate was reduced there by degrees till it reached three cents. Yet the results even at the latter rate fully justified the arguments of the postal reformers. So, undoubtedly, will the still further diminution to two cents, and the principle that is found good in one country will apply to all. But whether the change will "pay"—whether or not it will result in a surplus of revenue over expenditure or the reverse—is not at all the main question. In proposing additional postal facilities revenue considerations should hold quite a secondary place. If a reduced rate will make both ends meet *quoad* the Departmental treasury, so much the better. If it will not, the Government must be content to make up the deficiency in that portion of the public accounts from the general revenue. It does so in other branches. The expenditure on public works, for example, is largely in advance, and ever will be, of any revenue derived from them, and the same be said of other Departments. But none the less successive Governments continue to go on with new works as the necessities of the country require. The national treasury has in all such cases to be fallen back upon to restore the financial equilibrium. The same policy should be pursued in postal matters. No idea could be more vicious or mistaken, in these days, than to look to the Post-Office Department as a feeder of the public purse. The Post-Office is, or ought to be, primarily maintained, and even solely, for the purpose of developing the interests of trade and commerce, and the greater the reduction in rates the more thoroughly will that end be properly achieved. To propose a one-cent rate would no doubt make the hair—where there is any left—of the Departmental veterans to stand on end. But we venture to think that if any Minister were bold enough to introduce so daring an innovation, he would at the end of one short year find tens required to show the outcoming statistics where units suffice now.

This matter is of far more importance to business than may at the first blush be apparent. The day is not distant when the necessity for reducing postage—not only internal to each country, but international—will press imperiously upon the statesmen of every nation. The principle of transporting mail matter for 1 or 2 cents has been adopted in the matter of postal cards. One cent will carry a card from the Atlantic to the Pacific or from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf of Mexico on this continent, and two cents are sufficient to take a card from California to the furthestmost parts of Europe or to many places in Asia or Africa.

In the cases of postal cards, as the government furnishes the stationery, it is evident that it carries the correspondence at a less net than the nominal rate. It is a necessary conclusion that any government can afford

to transport sealed packages at the same rate for the same weight that it can open cards.

If our premise that the Post Office department is really subsidiary to the business of any country, is correct it naturally follows that it should not in any case be looked to as a source of revenue—far less as a profitable investment of government funds—and that while the utmost economy is to be commended in that department, the general revenue of the country will be benefitted by reducing the postal charges to the lowest possible minimum. That the Post Office should bear its own expense is the utmost that should be expected of it. Most of the other departments do not pretend to pay their own way, and it is unjust to require the only vehicle of popular inter-communication to return a surplus to the government.

We earnestly commend a careful consideration of this important matter to the attention of the Post-master General.

Postmaster Pierson of New York has prepared tables from which it appears that 9 tons of postage stamps, 25 tons of envelopes, 113 tons of postal cards, and 17 tons of newspaper wrappers were sold in the year ending December 31, 1882. The value of newspaper and periodical stamps sold was \$438,802.99, and the total receipts of the office were \$4,228,575.29.

REPLY POSTAL CARDS.—The English Postmaster-General appears to be giving the Department he administers the fullest development of which it is capable. It is unquestionable, too, that all the recent innovations are greatly to the benefit of the entire people, from the highest to the lowest. The latest novelty is the new postal reply cards, which will commence to circulate at the beginning of October next. The cards are to have an impressed stamp of one halfpenny (one cent) on each half. The address only is to be "written, printed, or otherwise impressed" on that side of either half which bears the stamp, and no part of the address must cross the stamp. The "return half" will be affixed to the other half in such a way as to be easily severed from it. A reply post-card or "return half" will be forwarded through the post which contains any "words, marks or designs of an indecent, obscene, libellous or grossly offensive character," and any card or "half" so posted which shall *prima facie* fall within this prohibition, shall be stopped and submitted to the inspection of an officer duly authorised in that behalf by the Postmaster-General. We understand that the Washington authorities are about immediately to adopt this excellent arrangement.

A neatly-dressed and thirsty individual entered a saloon in Virginia, City Nev., approached the bar-tender and said: "I have no money. Will you accept stamps in payment for a gin cocktail?" The bar-tender smiled answered in the affirmative, and prepared the drink which soon went sizzling down the parched throat of the customer. He smacked his lips, complimented the bar-tender on his ability, walked to the lunch table, regaled himself, and then, giving three resounding "stamps" with his foot upon the floor, smiled sweetly at the proprietor and vanished.

We always welcome exchange correspondence