

any time necessary to invoke the interference of the Governor-general to obtain any additional information from public officers, whether in this or the neighbouring provinces, his Excellency will be ready to attend to any representation which you may make to him.

You will probably find it expedient to apply to some of those engaged most extensively in commerce for particulars relating to your inquiry; in that case his Excellency feels confident that you will receive from them all the attention which the importance of the subject demands.

When you shall have completed your inquiry, you will proceed to report the result to his Excellency, for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, accompanying your Report with a scheme of the measures necessary for carrying out the alterations which you may suggest.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

(signed) *T. W. C. Murdoch,*

Chief Secretary.

E. Dowling, Esq.

T. A. Stayner, Esq.

J. Davidson, Esq.

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May it please Your Excellency,

WE who have hereunto subscribed our names and affixed our seals, having been appointed Commissioners to inquire into the administration of the Post-office within the provinces of British North America, have the honour to certify that we have entered upon the performance of our duties with a deep sense of the importance of the trust reposed in us, and an earnest desire to be instrumental in furthering the wishes of Her Majesty's Government for the improvement of the Post-office establishment in this part of Her Majesty's dominions.

For collecting information and making ourselves acquainted with the opinions of the people as to the present, and their wishes as to the future administration of the department, almost the only course open to us was that of taking evidence by means of written correspondence. To have procured the attendance of witnesses from all parts of a country which, in a straight line drawn from one extremity to the other, extends over more than 1,600 miles, was obviously impossible. We therefore prepared circular letters and a series of written questions, which we addressed, without distinction of classes, to all persons from whom they were likely to draw forth useful information. We addressed a second series of questions to the proprietors, editors and publishers of newspapers; a third to the heads of the civil and military departments; a fourth to the postmasters touching their emoluments; and a fifth was subsequently despatched to the postmasters for information as to the value of their franking privilege. We also requested from Mr. Stayner, the Deputy Postmaster-general for Canada; from Mr. Howe, the Deputy Postmaster-general for the Lower Provinces, and from some of the postmasters, a variety of returns, showing the general state of the department under their charge.

These circulars and queries, together with the principal returns and copious extracts from the correspondence, will be found in the Appendix to this Report.

The number of written communications (exclusive of returns) received by us is upwards of 1,500, a fact which not only shows that the inhabitants of these colonies take much interest in the subject, but also enables us to report with some degree of confidence on the state of public opinion in regard to most of the points within the scope of our inquiry.

We shall presently have to submit a detailed statement of the actual condition of the department, to which a short account of the rise and progress of the Post-office establishment in these provinces may, we hope, be advantageously prefixed. That account must necessarily be a short one, for we have to regret the absence of such documents as would enable us to furnish a more detailed history of the department; and it will be seen that the absence of more authentic records has compelled us to copy from the Quebec Almanac of remote years, lists of the post-offices then in existence, and that we have derived