

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENTS OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

INTRODUCTION.

It is needless to offer any comment on the growth of the Post Office in British America, the statistics, which will be found with the brief synopsis of the Rules and Regulations, speak so plainly for its progress. The Postal accommodation of these Colonies, especially Canada, compares favourably with that of England or the United States, and is in advance of that of most of the continental countries of the old world. Besides our internal communications by means of railways, steamboats, stages, horse-sleighs, dog-sleighs, waggons, men on horse-back, and on snow-shoes, we have Atlantic Mail Steamers from Quebec and Portland to Liverpool, the passages of which are as rapid as those of any other line afloat; and we have just begun a line to Cuba and the West Indies;—the pioneer steamship "Victoria" having sailed from Quebec 3 Sept., 1866.

Perhaps it may not be uninteresting to notice here the time gained by difference of speed between steamers and railways and the older methods of mail conveyance which were adopted in by-gone days of Colonial infancy.

About the oldest record that we have of mails being despatched to England from Canada, may be found in a newspaper called the *Herald*, published in Quebec, under date of 24th November, 1788, now 78 years ago.

"QUEBEC, 13th November, 1788.

"General Post Office for His Majesty's Provinces of North America.

"A mail for England will be closed at this office on Monday, the 8th December, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon; it will be forwarded to Montreal on Thursday, the 11th of that month, to be put on board His Majesty's Packet-boat, which will sail from New York for Falmouth on Wednesday the 7th January next.

"The Packet Postage cannot be received in America, but the postage from hence to New York is to be paid at the office where the letter is put in.

"* * * Letters for any part of the continent of Europe must be sent under cover to a correspondent in London, otherwise they cannot be forwarded from hence.

"HUGH FINDLAY,
"Postmaster General."

It would appear from this notice that the mail was closed at Quebec three days before it left that city, and that it took thirty days to reach New York. How long a time elapsed before its arrival in England we do not know, but may form some opinion by turning up the same paper under date of the 8th December same year, when we find that His Britannic Majesty's Packet "Tankerville," Captain Bell, arrived at New York on Saturday, after a passage of 54 days. At this rate of travel it would take 84 days for a mail to reach England.

In 1853 before railways were in general operation in Canada, it took the mails 10½ days to pass from Quebec to Windsor; now the mails occupy only 24 hours in transit between these points.

Steamboats began regularly to cross the Atlantic in 1841. In 1851 the Post Office was transferred from the Imperial to the Colonial Government. The same year witnessed the reduction of letters to a uniform rate of 5 cents, and the introduction of postage stamps. In 1855 the Money Order System was established. In 1856 the first voyage was made to the St. Lawrence by the Canadian Line of Steamers. In 1857 the Canadian Line began a weekly service.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, CANADA.

General Post Office.

Postmaster-General, Hon. W. P. Howland; Deputy, W. H. Griffin; Accountant, H. A. Wicksteed; Secretary, W. White; Cashier, J. Ashworth; Superintendent Money Order Branch, P. Le Sueur.

Letter Rates.

Local letters if pre-paid. 5 cents per ½ oz. | Local letters if unpaid. 7 cents per ½ oz.
Letters mailed for delivery at the office where posted, 1 cent each. Letters are re-directed from one place to another without any further charge. On letters re-mailed from the Dead Letter Office, an additional 3 cents is charged; 2 cents extra is charged for letters delivered by letter carriers.

Letters to Non-commissioned Officers and Privates, whether in Her Majesty's Service or Canadian Volunteers, whilst on active service, pass if pre-paid for two cents each, when not over the ½ oz.; of over ½ oz., ordinary letter rates.

On letters for Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Island of Prince Edward, the charge is 5 cents per ½ oz., pre-payment optional; to Newfoundland, 12½ cents.

Letters may be sent fortnightly by "Royal Mail Steamer" from Boston for Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, but must be pre-paid 12½ per ½ oz.

Letters sent to the United States, British Columbia, California, Oregon, Red River, and Sandwich Island, when forwarded *via* United States, and not through England, are charged 10 cents per ½ oz. The postage to British Columbia, however, can only be pre-paid as far as San Francisco. Letters for British Columbia, California, and Red River, must be pre-paid.

Letter postage to Cuba *via* United States is 20 cents per ½ oz.; to Bermuda, Porto Rico, British and Foreign West Indies, 23 cents per ½ oz., which must be pre-paid.

Letter Rates to the United Kingdom, if by Canadian Packet, not exceeding ½ oz. 12½ cents,
exceeding ½ oz. and not exceeding 1 oz. 25 "
" 1 oz. " " 1½ oz. 37½ "

and so on increasing one rate of postage for each additional ½ oz. If letters for the United Kingdom are posted unpaid, they will be charged a fine of 6d. sterling on delivery.

The postage on letters by the Cunard Line is 17 cents per ½ oz., and an additional 17 cents for every ½ oz., with a fine of 6d. sterling if posted unpaid.

Letters for Canada are forwarded twice per week from Great Britain, on Thursdays, by the Canadian Packet. These steamers call at Londonderry to receive the latest mail telegrams and passengers, arriving at Quebec in Summer and during the Winter months at Portland, United States.