

CHAPTER XVII.

Postal System before Confederation.—Dominion System.—The Postal Union and Conferences.—Post Offices in the Dominion.—Postal Revenue and Expenditure.—Growth of Postal Operations.—Government Telegraph Lines.—Telegraph Mileage.—Submarine Cables.—Telephones.

1312. By an Act of the Imperial Parliament, 12-13 Vic. (1851), Chap. 66, the management of the postal systems in the colonies of British North America was transferred to the various provincial authorities, and up to the time of Confederation each province controlled its own system, under its own laws and regulations.

1313. After Confederation these various laws were allowed to remain in force until the 1st April, 1868, when the Post Office Act, 31 Vic. (1868), Chap. 10, came into effect, establishing uniform rates and regulations for the Dominion.

1314. These latter, which since that date have been changed from time to time, are now as follow :—General letter rate, 3 cents per ounce or under ; letters for local delivery, where there is a free delivery, 2 cents per ounce or under ; letters for local delivery, where not delivered free, 1 cent per ounce or under. Registration fee, 5 cents. Letter cards, 3 cents. Post cards, 1 cent. Newspapers, books, &c., generally, 1 cent per 4 ounces. Parcels 6 cents per 4 ounces. Fifth class matter (parcels open to inspection), 1 cent per ounce.

1315. In 1875 an agreement was made with the United States by which a common rate of postage between the two countries was adopted, each country retaining all money collected, and no accounts being kept between the two post offices in regard to international correspondence.

An agreement which came into effect on 1st March, 1888, and specially provided for the establishment of an exchange of general articles of merchandise, open to inspection, between the two countries, subject to certain regulations, for the protection of customs, with respect to articles liable to duty, superseded the agreement of 1875, but all the principal provisions were retained. The internal postage rates of each country generally govern, and official correspondence entitled to pass free in one country is delivered free in the other.

1316. The Universal Postal Union was formed at a conference held at Berne in 1874, and the first treaty was signed on 9th October, in that year ; the countries represented being the several countries of Europe, the United States and Egypt. This treaty came into force on 1st July, 1875. The object of the union was to form all the countries of the world into one single postal territory, and to establish, as far as possible, uniform reduced rates of postage, and also to further the interchange of correspondence, by