

PART VIII.—THE POST OFFICE.*

Historical.—A brief account of the pre-Confederation development of postal services in Canada was given on pp. 789-790 of the 1934-35 Year Book.

At Confederation the provincial systems were transferred to the Dominion. The Post Office Act of 1867 established a service throughout Canada. The domestic rate on letters was reduced from 5 to 3 cents per half-ounce, and in 1870 the rates to the United States and the United Kingdom were reduced from 10 to 6 cents and from 12½ to 6 cents, respectively, per half-ounce. In 1875 a convention between Canada and the United States reduced postal rates between the countries to the domestic level. In 1878, on the admission of Canada to the Postal Union, letter postage to the countries of the Postal Union was reduced to 5 cents per half-ounce. After a conference in 1897 Imperial penny postage (2 cents per half-ounce) was established on Dec. 25, 1898, while the domestic rate was reduced from 3 to 2 cents per ounce. These rates were maintained until 1915, when, with the rising costs of the war period, rates were increased. Penny postage again became effective for Canada, to the United States, Newfoundland and other countries of North America on July 1, 1926, and to the United Kingdom and all other places within the British Empire on Dec. 25, 1928, with later extensions to France and South America. On July 1, 1931, a special revenue tax, imposed by the Government for the purpose of obtaining additional revenue, came into effect on letters addressed to places in Canada, throughout the Empire, to France, to Spain and to North and South America generally, making the rate in these cases 3 cents for the first ounce and 2 cents for each additional ounce.

The Post Office Department is administered by the Postmaster General. Besides the several administrative branches at Ottawa, the Dominion is divided into 15 districts, each in charge of a District Director or Superintendent of Postal Service. The Canadian system embraces a territory more extensive than that served by any other system, excepting those of United States and Russia, and the relatively small population compared with the great distance to be covered makes inevitable a peculiarly difficult and relatively expensive service.

Rural Mail Delivery.—A system of rural mail delivery was inaugurated in Canada on Oct. 10, 1908, limited at that time to existing stage routes. The service was greatly extended by new regulations taking effect on April 1, 1912. The result has been an increase in the number of rural routes from approximately 900 in 1912 to 4,379 in 1935, having 242,150 mail boxes as against approximately 25,000 in 1912.

Mail Transportation.—The conveyance of mail by land, water, and air entailed a total expenditure of \$13,208,332 during the fiscal year ended 1936. Railway carriage cost \$6,721,222, land transportation (largely that by rural delivery) cost \$5,944,756, conveyance by steamship cost \$266,383, while that by air cost \$275,971. These amounts were paid solely for services rendered as carriers. For details regarding air-mail services, see pp. 726-727. Special subsidies are granted to assure the maintenance of certain steamship services. Since these subsidized services provide transportation for passengers and freight as well as mail, the subsidies are included with other expenditures on water transportation on p. 688.

*Revised by H. Beaulieu, Director, Administrative Services, Post Office Department.