

PART VIII.—THE POST OFFICE

The Post Office Department, in addition to the several administrative branches at Ottawa, is divided into fifteen districts each in charge of a District Director or Superintendent of Postal Service. The territory it serves is more extensive in area than that of any other country excepting the U.S.S.R. or the United States, and has a relatively small population compared with the vast area served. Its railway mail service is one of the largest in the world—the rural mail delivery service operates over 4,000 rural mail routes—and its air-mail system supplies a widely scattered population with speedy and efficient postal service.

A brief account of the development of postal services in Canada is given at pp. 789-790 of the 1934-35 Year Book.

Section 1.—The Wartime Growth and Accomplishments of the Post Office*

The impact of war made sweeping changes in the daily life of Canadians. The upheaval in the manufacturing and business life of Canada was unprecedented. As an institution serving both individuals and commercial enterprises of the country, the Canada Post Office experienced its full share of these disturbances. The increased use of the mails by Dominion and Provincial Governments and by business generally, coupled with a corollary increase in private mail, plus the vast volume of military mail to and from the Armed Forces within Canada and overseas, presented problems requiring the application of utmost ingenuity and energy.

Some idea of the expansion of Post Office activities may be found in a consideration of the figures showing the increase in gross postal revenues during the past few years. These revenues increased from \$42,896,179 in the year ended Mar. 31, 1939, to \$55,477,159 in 1942 and approximately \$79,533,903 in 1945. During the six-year period, gross postal revenues showed an increase of more than 85 p.c. While gross revenues measure the relative volume of business paid for by the public, they give no clue to the vast expansion the War of 1939-45 brought about, in franked government and in military mail.

The increase in operations was handled in spite of serious loss of experienced personnel, for, like all other services and businesses, the Post Office suffered from depletion of staff due to enlistments, necessitating the training of inexperienced help.

In addition to the normal postal services of peacetime, the services imposed by the War or introduced between 1939 and 1945 may be included under two main headings: (1) Services in co-operation with the Government; and (2) Military mail. The first group included such services as national registration and many types of war service and civilian registration; sale of unemployment insurance stamps and distribution of income-tax forms; distribution of ration books and gasoline ration forms; war savings stamps and war savings certificates; collection of magazines and books for the Services, rubber salvage, etc. The second group included the vast quantities of military mail that passed through the Post Office—free letters to Canada from the Armed Forces; special low rates on parcels to the Services overseas; free mail to prisoners of war; Canadian mail to the Armed Forces overseas and the Armed Forces in Canada; the airmail and the Canada Air Letter, etc.

* Prepared under the direction of the Postmaster General by B. J. Farrell, Acting Director, Public Relations Board.