

Section 2.—Postal Service

The basic tasks of the Canadian Postal Service are to receive, convey and deliver postal matter with speed and security. To carry out these duties, it maintains thousands of post offices and utilizes air, railway, land and water transportation facilities. In addition, associated functions include the sale of stamps and other articles of postage, the registration of letters and other mail for dispatch, the insuring of parcels, the accounting of COD articles, and the transaction of money order and Post Office Savings Bank business. Because of its transcontinental facilities, the Post Office also assists other government departments with such tasks as selling unemployment insurance stamps, hunting permits, collecting government annuity payments, distributing income tax forms and Public Service employment application forms, and displaying government posters.

Post offices are established wherever the population warrants. Those in rural areas and small urban centres transact all the functions of a city office. In larger urban areas, postal stations and sub offices have full functions similar to the main post office, including general delivery service, lock-box delivery and letter-carrier delivery.

Much sophisticated automatic equipment has been installed in Canada's larger post offices, which could be described as complex semi-automated plants. Such devices include conveyors and chutes, parcel and bag sorting machines, photo-electric counters, intercom systems, observation gallery telephone systems, and industrial music. Outside the post office building are found such innovations as mailmobiles, automatic stamp vending machines, and curbside plastic mail boxes.

The operating service of the Post Office Department is organized into 14 districts, each under a district director. These district directors and the postmasters, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Ottawa, report directly to the Assistant Deputy Postmaster General Operations, who has the responsibility of conducting the normal field operations of the Postal Service. The operating and support functions required in the provision of postal service to the public are the responsibility of the local postmasters who receive technical and administrative assistance from district offices at strategic points.

Postal service is provided in Canada from Newfoundland to the west coast of Vancouver Island and from Pelee Island, Ont. (the most southerly inhabited point of Canada), to settlements and missions far into the Arctic. Canada's airmail system provides several transcontinental flights daily, intersected by branch and connecting lines radiating to every quarter and linking up with the United States airmail system. All first-class domestic mail up to and including eight ounces in weight is carried by air between one Canadian point and another, whenever delivery can thus be expedited. Air stage service provides the only means of communication for many areas in the hinterland. There are approximately 46,000 miles of airmail and air stage routes. However, the railways are still the principal means of distant mail transport.

At Mar. 31, 1966 there were 11,274 post offices in operation, distributed provincially as follows: Newfoundland 687, Prince Edward Island 106, Nova Scotia 774, New Brunswick 508, Quebec 2,469, Ontario 2,722, Manitoba 805, Saskatchewan 1,170, Alberta 1,049, British Columbia 920, Yukon Territory 20, and Northwest Territories 44. Letter-carrier delivery, performed in 201 urban centres, employed over 8,473 uniformed carriers. Rural mail routes are generally circular in pattern and average about 26 miles in length. Some 939 side services transport mail between post offices, railway stations, steamer wharves and airports, and 1,787 stage services convey mail to and from post offices not located on railway lines. Transportation of mail by motor vehicle on highways is expanding and more than 485 such services were in operation in 1966, many of them replacing or reducing conveyance by rail. In 1966 there were 915 city mail services transporting mail to and from post offices, postal stations and sub post offices, collecting mail from street letter boxes and delivering parcel post. Over 50,000,000 miles are travelled annually on about 9,800 mail services; both land mail and coastal mail services are performed under contract.