

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT

Taft Agrees With Plan to Raise Second Class Mail Rates.

COMMISSION MAKES REPORT.

Inquiry Board Advises Increasing Second Class Rates Affecting Periodicals and Newspapers From 1 Cent to 2 Cents a Pound, but That Present Free in County Privilege Be Maintained.

Washington, Feb. 22.—President Taft has sent to both houses of congress a special message, accompanied by the annual report of the postmaster general, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1911, and the report of the federal commission on second class mail matter. The president's message is as follows:

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

In transmitting the annual report of the postmaster general for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1911, it gives me pleasure to call attention to the fact that the revenues for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1911, amounted to \$237,479,823.60 and that the expenditures amounted to \$237,000,704.48, making a surplus of \$479,119.12. For the year ended June 30, 1909, the postal service was in arrears to the extent of \$17,479,779.47. In the interval this very large deficit has been changed into a surplus, and that without the curtailment of postal facilities. Indeed, in the same time there have been established 2,744 new postoffices, delivery by carrier provided in 186 additional cities and new rural routes established, 2,573 in number and aggregating 60,679 miles in extent.

The force of postal employees has been increased by more than 8,000, and a liberal policy in the matter of salaries has been followed, so that the amount expended for salaries is now \$14,000,000 more than two years ago. The average salary has been increased from \$809 to \$967 for rural carriers, \$979 to \$1,082 for postoffice clerks, \$1,021 to \$1,084 for city letter carriers and \$1,168 to \$1,183 for railway postal clerks.

The Postal Savings System.

The report shows that the postal savings system was begun experimentally in January, 1911, and that it has now been extended so as to include 7,500 presidential postoffices, which includes practically all of the postoffices of that class. Preparations are also being made to establish the system at about 40,000 fourth class offices. The deposits in eleven months have reached a total of \$11,000,000, distributed among 2,710 national and state banks.

The postmaster general recommends, as I have done in previous messages, the adoption of a parcel post and the beginning of this in the organization of such service on rural routes and in the city delivery service first. The placing of assistant postmasters in the classified service has secured greater efficiency. It is hoped that the same thing may be done with all the postmasters.

The report of the postmaster general is full of statements of the important improvements in the organization and methods of the postal service made since the last annual report and of tentative drafts of legislation embodying certain recommendations of the department which need legislation to carry them out.

Opposes Government Control of Telegraph Lines.

There is only one recommendation in which I cannot agree—that is, one which recommends that the telegraph lines in the United States should be made a part of the postal system and operated in conjunction with the mail system. This presents a question of government ownership of public utilities which are now being conducted by private enterprise under franchises from the government. I believe that the true principle is that private enterprise should be permitted to carry on such public utilities under due regulation as to rates by proper authority rather than that the government should itself conduct them. This principle I favor because I do not think it in accordance with the best public policy thus greatly to increase the body of public servants. Of course if it could be shown that telegraph service could be furnished to the public at a less price than it is now furnished to the public by telegraph companies and with equal efficiency the argument might be a strong one in favor of the adoption of the proposition.

But I am not satisfied from any evidence that if these properties were taken over by the government they could be managed any more economically or any more efficiently or that this would enable the government to furnish service at any smaller rate than the public are now required to pay by private companies.

I cannot speak with too great emphasis of the improvement in the postoffice department under the present management. The cutting down of cost, the shortening of methods and the increase in efficiency are shown by the statistics of the annual report.

One of the most important matters referred to by the postmaster general

is the proposed fixing of new rates of postage for second class mail matter. In connection with this subject I have the honor to transmit herewith the report of the commission on second class mail matter, appointed pursuant to a joint resolution of the Sixty-first congress, approved March 4, 1911.

The commission consists of Hon. Charles E. Hughes, associate justice of the supreme court of the United States; President A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard university and Mr. Harry A. Wheeler, president of the Association of Commerce of the city of Chicago, whose character, ability and experience command for their findings and recommendations the respect and confidence of the congress and the country.

The report discloses a most exhaustive and critical inquiry into the subject of second class mail matter after adequate notice to all the parties in interest. Extensive hearings were held by the commission, at which the postmaster general and the second and third assistant postmasters general appeared and submitted formal statements presenting the various contentions of the postoffice department, together with all the relevant official data and evidence relating to the cost of handling and transporting second class mail matter. Certain of the leading magazines were represented by counsel, while various other publications appeared by representatives and were heard in oral argument or permitted to submit written briefs setting forth their respective reasons for opposing a change in the present postage rate on second class mail. The second and third assistant postmasters general, together with minor officers of the department, were critically cross examined by the counsel and representatives of the periodicals, and all the various phases of the second class postage problem were made the subject of a most painstaking investigation.

Says Increase is Justified.

The findings of the commission confirm the view that the cost of handling and transporting second class mail matter is greatly in excess of the postage paid and that an increase in the rate is not only justified by the facts, but is desirable.

The commission reports that the evidence submitted for its consideration is sufficient to warrant a finding of the approximate cost of handling and transporting the several classes of second class mail known as paid at the pound rate, free in county and transient matter in so far as relates to the services of transportation, postoffice cars, railway distribution, rural delivery and certain other items of cost, but that it is without adequate data to determine the cost of the general postoffice service and also what portion of the cost of certain other aggregate services is properly assignable to second class mail matter. It finds that in the fiscal year 1908, the period for which the statistics for the postoffice department were compiled, the cost of handling and transporting second class mail in the items of transportation, postoffice cars, railway distribution, rural delivery and certain miscellaneous charges was approximately 6 cents a pound for paid at the pound rate matter and for free in county and transient matter each approximately 5 cents a pound and that upon this basis, as modified by subsequent reductions in the cost of railroad transportation, the cost of paid at the pound rate matter for the services mentioned is now approximately 5½ cents a pound, while the cost of free in county and transient matter remains as formerly—namely, each at approximately 5 cents a pound.

Since the commission has determined that the cost of handling and transporting second class mail is approximately 5½ cents for matter paid at the pound rate and approximately 5 cents each for free in county and transient matter, without taking into account the cost of the general postoffice service and certain unassignable items of expense, it is apparent that the aggregate cost of all service performed by the postal establishment in connection with this class of mail matter is considerably above that amount.

Postal Service Self Sustaining.

The postal service is now, for the first time in years, operated upon a self sustaining basis, and in my judgment this is a wise policy, but it should not be carried out at the expense of certain classes of mail matter that pay revenue largely in excess of their cost. It is not just that some classes of mail should be exorbitantly taxed to meet a deficiency caused by other classes, the revenue from which is much below their cost of handling and carriage. Where such inequalities exist they should be removed as early as practicable. The business enterprises of the publishers of periodicals, however, have been built up on the basis of the present second class rate, and therefore it would be manifestly unfair to put into immediate effect a large increase in postage.

That newspapers and magazines have been potent agencies for the dissemination of public intelligence and have consequently borne a worthy part in the development of the country all must admit but it is likewise true that the original purpose of congress in providing for them a subvention by way of nominal postal charges in consideration of their value as mediums of public information ought not to prevent an increase, because they are now not only educational, but highly profitable.

There is no warrant for the great disparity between existing postage rates on periodicals and the cost of the service the government performs for them. The aggregate postal revenues for the fiscal year 1911 were \$237,479,823.60, derived mainly from the postage collected on the four classes of mail matter. It is carefully estimated by the postoffice department that the revenue

derived from mail matter of the first class is approximately one and one-half times the cost of handling and carriage, that the returns from third and fourth class matter are slightly in excess of their cost of handling and carriage, and that while second class matter embraces over 15 per cent of the entire weight of all the mail carried it nevertheless yields little more than 5 per cent of the postal revenues.

Reviews Recommendations.

The recommendations of the commission as to the postage rates on second class mail are as follows:

First.—The rate of 2 cents a pound on copies mailed by publishers to subscribers, to news agents and as sample copies and by news agents to their subscribers or to other news agents.

Second.—The rate of 1 cent for each four ounces for copies mailed by other than publishers and news agents—that is, the present transient rate.

Third.—The present free in county privilege retained, but not extended.

The commission also recommended that the cent a copy rate for newspapers other than weeklies and for periodicals not exceeding two ounces in weight and the 2 cent a copy rate for periodicals exceeding two ounces in weight, when mailed at a city letter carrier office for local delivery, be abolished.

As to the effect and adequacy of the proposed increase of 1 cent a pound in postage the commission says:

Such an increase will not, in the opinion of the commission, bring distress upon the publishers of newspapers and periodicals or seriously interfere with the dissemination of useful news or information. A reasonable time should be allowed, after the rate is fixed, before it is put into effect. While the new rate will be far from compensating the government for the carriage and handling of second class matter, it will to some extent relieve the existing burden and result in a more equitable adjustment of rates.

Suggests a Cost System.

The commission suggests that the department "maintain an adequate cost system, so that the effect of the new rates may be closely observed and a proper basis may be secured for the consideration of any future proposals."

In these recommendations the postmaster general and I heartily concur and commend them to the early attention of congress. The proposed increase of 1 cent a pound in the second class postage rate I believe to be most reasonable, and if sufficient time is allowed before the change goes into effect it should work little serious injury to the business of the periodical publishers, while equalizing, at least in a measure, the burdens of postal taxation. WILLIAM H. TAFT.

THE COMMISSION'S REPORT.

Recommendations Made Concerning Second Class Mail Matter.

The report of the commission on second class mail matter is an exhaustive document, containing a hundred pages of printed matter.

The commission, in addition to making the recommendations mentioned in the president's message, also gives many statistics showing the relative amounts of the different classes of mail matter handled by the postoffice department and the cost in detail.

The cost and methods of handling mail on railway cars are also carefully considered.

The report says in part:

The existing rates on second class matter are those established by the act of 1879 as amended in 1884 and 1885.

Increase in Volume.

Our attention has been directed to the fact that the postmasters general in their annual reports have repeatedly commented upon the increase in the volume of second class matter and upon the disparity between the supposed cost of transporting and handling it in the mails and the amount received as postage. Their estimates evidently reflected the opinion of the officers of the department, but they were based upon general experience in the service and not upon a scientific ascertainment of cost.

The first question that arises in regard to the rate is whether any discrimination should be made between different kinds of second class matter. The plan proposed of charging a special rate for the portions of magazines devoted to advertisements seems open to grave practical objections. The amount of space given to advertising is no criterion of the educational value of a magazine, and if the same provision were applied to newspapers the attempt to measure the space occupied by advertisements would involve more labor than is consistent with the rapid dispatch of the daily press.

We conclude that whatever increase be made should apply alike to newspapers and periodicals admitted to the second class and that it is impracticable in the case of newspapers to charge a higher rate for space given to advertisements. It has been suggested that the proportion of this space should be limited for all second class matter, but the true definition of such matter is that which is devoted primarily to the dissemination of news and of current literature and instruction, and we are not convinced that this can be measured by an arbitrary standard of the proportion of space given to advertisement.

A Serious Question.

The question of raising the rate on second class matter mailed by publishers and news agents from 1 cent to 2 cents a pound is a serious one. But we are of opinion that the change is reasonable and should be made. A reasonable time should be allowed, after the rate is fixed, before it is put into effect. While the new rate will be very far from compensating the government for the carriage and handling of second class matter, it will to some extent relieve the existing burden and result in a more equitable adjustment of rates.

BASQUE EFFECTS.

Lace an Important Factor of Summer Frocks.



DELIGHTFUL COSTUME OF TAN NET.

Basque effects are being pushed by designers of costumes this season, but it remains to be seen whether the idea is going to "take" with their patrons. The gown illustrated shows the basque notion in its incipient stage. The material employed in this costume is a pale tan net trimmed with bands of velvet lace. The lace of the bodice is also mounted on the tan net. A very modish touch is to be found in the plaited frill at the foot of the skirt and the slashed trimmed velvet coat, with button trimmed cuttails at the back.

For the Girl Who Sews.

A bright young girl whose pet fad is harmony in the matter of the little details of dress, devising always some original touch which will tell those who see that her costume was designed as a whole, not being merely a chance collection of dress and accessories, evolved a charming and graceful fachu and cut set to which any color touch desired can be added, according to the dress with which it is to be worn.

The fachu itself is of the usual draped surplice shape, curved to fit over the shoulders and trimmed with dainty lace frills. The inner edge is also of lace. Along the middle of the fachu following its longest line is a strip of velvet ribbon or folded satin, of a tint to match the gown, that is held in place by little cross straps of lace about three inches apart, out from which it can be drawn when the fachu is laundered or when it is to be replaced by some other color.

The cuffs to match this were deep ones, turned back, with double rows of lace frills an inch deep at the upper edge. Around the body of each cuff went the strip of satin or velvet to match that used on the fachu, and this again was apparently secured by the tiny straps of lace which crossed it, but which was also, as in the case of the fachu, caught here and there by an invisible stitch to prevent any accident or slipping from place. The narrow girdle was also of the same material as the colored "inset."

Concerning Women.

Miss Louise F. Brown, an instructor at Wellesley college, is the first woman to receive the Herbert Baxter Adams prize of \$200 offered every two years by the American Historical Association for the best essay on European history. Miss Brown's essay was one of a very large number submitted by representatives of many leading colleges throughout the country.

The Countess of Warwick is planning a lecture tour in the United States and Canada, for which she has prepared three subjects. One deals with woman suffrage and the other two are on communism and celebrities she has met.

Miss Harriet Keeler has recently been appointed superintendent of schools in Cleveland, O. A woman is lieutenant inspector in that city, having charge of the sanitary policemen; a woman is assistant librarian, a woman has charge of outdoor relief, two women are on the school board, one having been elected clerk, making six important positions filled by women in a city which two years ago had but one woman in public office, a member of the board of education.

Mrs. Sarah Platt Decker of Denver, ex-president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and a possibility as United States senator, in a recent interview said that a woman's party is under consideration in Colorado, as they have found both of the old political parties permeated with corruption

HUMOR OF THE DAY

Has It Ever Occurred to You?

A pretty hand was placed in mine. As I fondled it and grasped it tightly for fear it would get away a new world seemed to open before me. Oh, how my heart was beating! My blood seemed leaping through my veins, and I know that the color came and went in my face. All was quiet for a moment, words for the time seeming unnecessary.

Again I looked at that little hand, that pretty hand. It did not move and seemed to be resting quietly and lovingly in my own. I tried to speak, but couldn't. The room seemed to be whirling around, and, although I was extremely happy, my lips were dry and no word was uttered.

At last I tenderly laid it down, confident that I had won. But, alas, it was not to be! That pretty hand really meant my downfall.

"Four kings here," said a voice from across the table, and instantly I realized my great loss. As he reached for the stacks of chips in the middle of the table I saw that pretty hand—that lovely mitt which had rested for a moment in my own—swept into the discard. Four queens had met their fate. —Spokane Spokesman-Review.

Force of Habit.

The Rev. Allen Fort, pastor of the Baptist tabernacle in Chattanooga, asked J. B. Capeheart, a railroad conductor, to take up the collection one day. It was Mr. Capeheart's first experience as a taker of collections in a church.

He started down the center aisle. There were several children in the first pew, and each put in a penny. The people in the next pew also contributed something each. A big, glum fellow sat alone in the third pew. Capeheart passed him the plate. The man shook his head and stuck his hands deep in his pockets.

Capeheart stopped, put up his hand as if to jerk the bell cord and said, "Well, you'll have to get off."—Saturday Evening Post.

Anxiety of Noah.

It was the first day out, and Noah was standing on the upper deck nervously sweeping the vast expanse of the waters with his eye.

"Smatter, pop?" said Shem, leaning against the rail beside his father.

"Anything gone wrong?"

"I don't know," said the old gentile man. "But if the wind continues to blow in this direction I'm afraid we'll land somewhere in the United States, and if that happens the duty on this managerie of ours will bust me."

A Vain Flirtation.

A young man came out of a West Federal street picture theater one evening last week leading by the arm a companion who appeared to be in a somewhat dazed condition.

The dour tender looked at the two in surprise, as the exhibition had started only a few minutes before.

"Don't you like the show?" he asked.

"Yes, it's all right," replied the man who led his companion, "but my friend here is a trifle under the weather, and he insists on flirting with the girls on the films."—Youngstown Telegram.

A Future Financier.

A very nice young man was calling on his sister. To make things easy, he gave him a beautiful new penny, saying, "Save each penny and soon you will have a dollar."

"I'll soon have a dollar!" replied the boy, with great eagerness.

The young man smiled good naturedly, dug into his pocket, saying: "Well, just how much more do you need?"

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