

RURAL FREE DELIVERY.

Of all the institutions that promote the progress of the United States very few compare in importance with free rural mail delivery. Although it is scarcely five years since the system was adopted, it has already revolutionized social business and economic conditions in territory covering over 100,000 square miles. Its popularity is increasing at a rate exceeding that attending any improvement heretofore attempted in the postoffice service and it means more in the way of personal happiness and public advancement than anything else of which I know, says a writer in Success.

The importance of this new branch of the postal service is best indicated by the rate at which it has grown. We began in 1896, with an appropriation of \$40,000. For three years previous to that congress had made each year an appropriation; but with declining revenues and increasing deficits the Postoffice has been loath to take any step that might involve additional burdens. As the matter of establishing rural routes has been left to the discretion of the Postmaster General, the appropriations were unsteady.

In 1896 Congress, in making an appropriation, embodied a mandatory clause; and, with much misgiving, Postmaster-General William L. Wilson, in October, 1896, established the first route, which was out of Charleston, W. Va. On the first of July, 1897, only forty-three routes were in operation. Today there are more than 600,000 farmhouses in which live more than 4,000,000 people. It requires some experience of life in the country to realize what it means to those people to be suddenly brought from an isolated position into daily touch with the outer world, the news and events of which had only sifted to them at haphazard. The territory covered by the rural routes is equal to about 120,000 square miles, equalling in area the New England States, New York and New Jersey. Eventually they will cover 1,000,000 square miles or more. The appropriation for the maintenance of the service advanced from \$40,000 in 1897 to \$50,000 in 1898; \$150,000 in 1899; \$450,000 in 1900; \$1,750,000 in 1901.

London restaurant proprietors don't know when their well off. They are grumbling fiercely because license to furnish music with meals are so difficult to obtain. It appears that it is unlawful in England to provide music in eating places without a special license. The licensing magistrates are very chary about granting these licenses because they think that the music is a temptation to persons who ought to be attending to their work to loiter in restaurants. Which indicates either that English restaurant music must be greatly superior to American restaurant music or that the licensing magistrates seldom eat in music restaurants. The music in most American restaurants is more likely to discourage than to encourage loitering over meals. Indeed, it is suspected that it is frequently provided for the express purpose of enabling the proprietors to serve a greater number of tables during a given time.—Rochester Democrat-Chronicle.

Wonder if the next republican chairman of the house postoffice committee will think it a good plan to jump on the editors of the country papers and the letter carriers at once and the same time. One Mr. Loud of California conceived this brilliant plan and is now a humble citizen in private life scratching around for

bread and butter just like any other common man. The country editors are a power in their own right, but when re-enforced by the boys in blue who carry our letters to our sweethearts, they make an army that can knock the spots out of any little two by four congressman that ever hustled for votes. If Mr. Loud's successor questions this assertion the editors and letter carriers stand ready to carry conviction to his doubting heart at any old moment and don't you cease to remember it.—Boise News.

The New York Herald (Ind.) says the lesson of the recent election must not be lost upon the representatives of those interests who last winter defied the president and the great mass of the American people, whose will he voiced. The trusts must be regulated and the tariff must be revised without delay. President Roosevelt has procured a stay of proceedings for his party, and the obstructionists must now fall into line behind him and yield to the popular will. That is the meaning of the election.

Dr. Gatling, of gun-inventing fame, has about completed a machine that will not only plow, but harrow, seed and roll the ground. This, if successful, will be an improvement over his celebrated gun, though that made for civilization and peace. Having helped rapid-fire fighting, Dr. Gatling does well to turn his attention to rapid-fire farming. After a while farming will be only fun, and we will all want to be farmers.

Another Alaska official is charged with crookedness—this time it is Rev. G. M. Irwin, former State Superintendent of Public Schools in Oregon. But occasionally, as in the case of Mr. Schibred, these charges turn out not to be true, and it will be considered probable that such is the case in this instance, though many people would not be surprised at all if there is something in them.—Telegram.

Irrigation will make an oasis where the prairie dog town now stands; turn the cactus in to a sweet pea vine; change toothpicks for sunflowers, make cabbage of sand burrs, apples from sage brush and convert the croaker who says it is a fake, into a bloated plutocrat with two galluses across his back where but one is stretched now.—East Oregonian

The world has come to resemble pretty closely a corral full of steers. The one with the longest pair of horns hooks the next smaller and he another in turn, and so on down, until the smallest fellow in the lot is shivering in a corner, trying to crawl through a crack in the fence, which means suicide.

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Table with columns: From Portland, To, Time, and other details for various routes.

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