

countries that have already adopted the system, and an examination of the remarkable financial results that have followed the admittedly heavy reductions made in the rates of postage on establishing penny post. I was exceedingly pleased to see in the annual report of the Postmaster-General of the United States of America for the year 1903 his opinion on this question, stated in the following language:—

*“Reduction in Foreign Rates of Postage.”*—The International Postal Congress will convene at Rome, Italy, in March, 1904. Believing that the time has arrived for a reduction in the rate on foreign postage, our representative at the Congress will be instructed to urge upon the members of the Postal Union the propriety of a reduction in the foreign rates of postage, especially so far as it may effect the rate now obtaining between the United States and the great commercial nations of Europe. It is confidently expected that if the rates should be reduced from 5 cents to 3 cents, or even to 2 cents, it would result in a very short time in such an enormous increase in the interchange of communications as would bring greater financial returns than obtain from the present rate.”

So that our friends in that great and progressive country realise, as I do, the advantage of reducing the postage-rate to as low as 2 cents, and I trust that the expectations so confidently expressed in that report may be voiced by the delegates representing the United States at this Congress. I hope to find them in accord with the expressions contained in the report of their Department, and giving me hearty support.

British postal reforms have already been very great. The British authorities have been the pioneers in establishing inland penny postage for Great Britain, and their adoption of the Imperial penny post shows that they are anxious to make still greater reforms, at least within the limits of their own Imperial possessions. It would be to me a matter of infinite pleasure to find that the British delegates assembled here were able to give this proposal their hearty support, and thus add another link to the chain of postal reform that their great country has already welded. It would be logical for Great Britain, having already established inland penny post, to crown its work by throwing its weight into the broader scale of universality, and I should dearly like to have the aid of its delegates at this Congress.

The world is progressing, and has in recent years progressed at a great rate. Every nation and every country is looking forward and not backward. Expansion of commerce, development of country, and improvements in arts and sciences are to be found on every side. Probably at no period in the history of the world has the all-important question of education, including that provided in technical schools, received such marked attention as at the present time. Is the postal world to lag behind in a reform that public opinion is demanding from all sides?

I do not for a moment urge that upon the carrying of a resolution such as I am submitting to you it should be mandatory upon the countries in the Postal Union that did not see their way to do so to immediately adopt the penny post. Each country must necessarily have the utmost freedom in deciding any matter that immediately affects its finance. I realise that every country requires to place the financial side in the forefront, and that, however valuable this great Postal Union may be for its adherents, it should not have an overriding authority in matters where the financial side affects the individual country. The affirmation of the principle, however, by the Congress would, I hope, insure to any country desiring to establish universal penny postage the right at least that all letters from that country shall be delivered to every other country within the Postal Union without a surcharge being levied by the delivering country, and, of course, exacted from the addressee of the letter. The affirmation of such a principle would be a great step in advance. Any country establishing universal penny postage would, as the originating country, alone be affected by the financial outcome of the reduced rate, and I would hope that it be allowed to send its letters to every part of the Postal Union without restriction.

It is not my intention to go into details regarding anomalies that are to be found in postal rates in various parts of the world, except to say that there is an incongruity, which the public are keen to recognise, in being able to despatch letters from some countries many thousand miles distant by land and sea for 10 centimes, passing through countries maintaining a 25-centime rate for the conveyance of a letter only a few miles from where it was posted. All these anomalies would disappear if a bold step were taken, and a universal rate established in place of the varying ones now in force.

I have been told that this Congress will not agree to universal penny postage. I shall be very sorry if this be the case, and I would ask the delegates not to come to a decision lightly. I am persuaded that it is only a question of time, and a comparatively short time, when a ripened public opinion will call for its establishment. What an excellent effect would be created if this Congress were in this matter to lead the world in declaring favourably for a universal penny postage!

That great country France has recently adopted penny postage within the boundaries of the French dominions. That surely is indicative of public sentiment.

Italy has reduced its internal rate to 15 centimes, and is moving in the right direction; and, with an odd exception or two, Britain and her dependencies have already declared for penny postage, at least within their borders, and in most cases within the dominion of the British Empire.

Inland penny postage exists at present within the German Empire, and between Germany and Austria and Hungary, and between the United States and Canada and Mexico. It was established in France on the 16th of this month, and operates in Britain, India, Egypt, New Zealand, and other places. The loss of revenue at the outset on inland penny postage, compared with the foreign postage, is much greater, so that the countries that have already established inland penny postage have much less to deter them from establishing the universal penny rate than those which have to face the whole question of an inland as well as an international reduction. That makes one regret