

WHAT RURAL FREE DELIVERY MEANS.

Senator Simmons Expects Much From It.

HOW TO SECURE IT.

The Forms of Petition For Routes.

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE.

How the Service is Established, and the Method of Delivery. Senator Simmons Interested.

Senator Simmons sees great possibilities for North Carolina in the establishment of rural free delivery routes.

"They mean a more general interest in education, for they will bring about a more general circulation of newspapers and periodicals in the country districts; and that in turn means schools," said the Senator yesterday. "Also the establishments of these routes means better roads; closer touch between neighbors, and greater familiarity with current events in the outside world; in short, a betterment in the intellectual, social and material welfare of the people. Their establishment ought to be encouraged by everybody, especially by the newspapers, for nobody will be benefited more than the editors. For this reason, every daily and weekly newspaper in the State would do the people and itself a service by publishing in a conspicuous place the department rules and regulations, and, where convenient, keep them standing for a reasonable time."

Senator Simmons went on to say he was sure the Senators and members of Congress for this State were as anxious and zealous in the matter as those from other States, but, to secure the desired results, the movement of these routes would have to come from the people, and in order that the people may move, it is necessary that they understand what conditions entitle them to a route and what they will have to do to get it. He attributes the failure of North Carolina to get her proportionate share of these routes, up to the present time, largely to the fact that the people generally have not known these prerequisites, and not to any indifference on the part of our Senators and the Congressmen or the people themselves.

"There has been much complaint," he added; "that the department would not send special agents to make the examination. This is largely perhaps, because there are so few applications. Let the applications go in by the hundreds and the agents will come. The department will get in earnest when it sees the people are in earnest."

"The press of the State has done its duty in arousing interest among the people on this important subject, but these instructions which are specified, plain and full, if generally copied by the papers will greatly aid in promoting this movement."

Speaking about the appointment of carriers, Mr. Simmons said he thought that was a matter that should be held in abeyance until after the route is established, because this raises a question which sometimes creates friction, and these routes are of too much importance to allow the matter of who shall carry the mail to interfere with unity and harmony of action in securing the route. After the route is established, if the majority of the original petitioners agree in recommending a suitable person for carrying, their wishes will no doubt have great weight with all concerned. Certainly it would seem no one who is willing to leave to the people the decision

of a matter in which they are chiefly interested ought to object to any applicant so endorsed.

It is stated in the instructions sent out that the price for boxes, such as the department requires, ranges from one to three dollars. It is presumed that some of the houses named in the circular charge more and some less for these boxes. In order that the people may know where they can get the cheapest boxes. Senator Simmons has addressed a letter to each one of the fourteen box manufacturing houses mentioned in the instructions, and will later publish the rates quoted him in reply to these letters.

The following instructions recently issued by the Postoffice Department in regard to rural delivery has been furnished us by Senator Simmons, accompanied with the suggestion that they be published for the information of the people.

RURAL FREE DELIVERY.

Department Instruction in Regard to Their Establishment.

Postoffice Department, First Assistant Postmaster General, office of Superintendent Free Delivery System.

Washington, D. C., March 28, 1901. The following instructions, which embody department orders and regulations up to date, are issued for general information.

HOW TO OBTAIN RURAL FREE DELIVERY. Present a petition addressed the First Assistant Postmaster General, signed by those who desire the service. This petition should be signed only by heads of families, and should mention the number in each family over sixteen years of age. It should set forth the nature of the country where the delivery is desired, whether densely or sparsely populated, the principal avocations of the people, the character of the roads, and the distances which, under existing conditions, each person has to travel to receive his mail, and should be accompanied by a map or plat indicating the route or routes proposed.

The petition should read something like this:

[Form of petition.]

To the First Assistant Postmaster General, Washington, D. C.

The undersigned heads of families, residing in..... County, State of....., respectfully ask that the Rural Free Delivery Service be extended to them, the delivery to start from..... Postoffice,..... County,..... State,

or such other point as the officers of the Department may deem best adapted for the service. A map or rough sketch of the proposed route is herewith inclosed. Your petitioners are mostly (here state avocation, such as farmers, truck gardeners, dairymen, cattle raisers or whatever the chief occupation of the people may be.) The roads over the proposed route are (state whether pike, gravelled or otherwise.)

No unbridged creeks and the roads are passable at all seasons of the year.

Name of head of family. Number in family over 16 years of age.

Distance in miles from nearest postoffice.

This petition, when properly signed, should be sent to the Representative in Congress, or to one of the Senators, with a request that he endorse thereon his recommendation of the services asked, and forward the petition to the Department.

Conditions of the Service.

It must be borne in mind that the intention of Congress in authorizing the free delivery of mails in rural districts was not to grant a suburban delivery to cities includ-

ed in the Free Delivery Service, not to establish a village free delivery. The purpose of the Rural Free Delivery System is to give postal facilities to those who have none; to carry the mails daily to remote communities, the residents of which would otherwise have to travel from two to twelve miles to receive their letters and newspapers.

The roads must be good. This is an essential pre-requisite to any investigation.

No route can be established under ordinary circumstances that is less than from 20 to 35 miles in length, or which serves less than 100 families.

The route should be so arranged that the carrier will not be required to travel over the same ground twice on the same day.

Those desiring the delivery must hereafter be prepared to put up, at their own expense, appropriate and secure boxes in accordance with the orders of the Department.

The Postmaster-General has designated the following named boxes as complying substantially with the requirements laid down by a commission appointed by him for that purpose:

1. The Postal Improvement Box, of Norristown, Penn.
2. The Bates Hawley Postal Signal Box, of Joliet, Ill.
3. The Henry Rural Free Delivery Box, manufactured by the American Metal Co., of Indianapolis, Ind.
4. The Centure Post Company Box, of Adrian, Mich.
5. The Bond Steel Post Company Box, of Detroit, Mich.
7. The Corbin Cabinet Lock Company's Box, of New Britain, Conn.
8. The C. G. Folsom Box, of South Bend, Ind.
9. The P. B. Engler Box, of Taneytown, Md.
10. The John H. Forney (Enterprise) Box, of Burlington, Iowa.
11. The Kelly Foundry Maching Company Box, of Goshen, Ind.
12. The W. W. Sweigart Box, of Yorkroad, Maryland.
13. The Beaver Manufacturing Company Box, of Beaver Pennsylvania.
14. The Geo A. Wirt Box, of Greensburg, Indiana.

Before service will be established, it will be necessary for the patrons to select one of these boxes for use on the route.

The prices of these boxes range from \$1 up to a little over \$3, including locks.

When a Rural Free Delivery Route has been equipped with boxes of any one of the above named description the Department will consider these boxes as entitled to the protection of the United States Statutes which provide severe penalties for willful or malicious injury to them or interference with their contents.

Delivery of Rural Carriers.

Rural Carriers are not required to deliver mail to houses standing back from the main road, except in the case of registered mail, special delivery and pension letters. The patrons are expected to meet the Department half way by affording the carriers every facility for the performance of their duties, by keeping to roads clear after the heavy snow falls, and using their influence to maintain the condition of the roads, in all weather up to the standard required by the Department.

Rural carriers are permitted to deliver non-mailable packages provided their doing so does not interfere with the prompt handling of the mails which must be made the first consideration.

How Service is Established.

An intimation of intention on the part of petitioners to comply with these conditions will greatly facilitate the investigation and subsequent establishment of service.

Upon receipt of a petition, favorably endorsed by Representative in Congress, the Department refers the papers to the Special Agent in Charge of the Division which includes the State in which

the petition originates. He assigns a Special Agents to visit the location indicated, to map out a route or routes, and to select rural carriers, to be appointed by the Department. In such cases the advice of the Representative in Congress is sought, as regards the carries to be appointed and in respect to other postal service which may have to be discontinued on the establishment of Rural Free Delivery.

The Special Agent is not authorized to name a time when rural free delivery will be established on the route recommended by him. That rests with the Department in Washington.

In considering petitions for establishment, extension or charges. Special Agents are instructed to use all care to take into account routes already established or petitioned for, with a view to permanent systematic service covering the area involved. The aim of the Department is to serve the people with the promptest and most efficient postal service, not to built up or tear down any service at the expense of another.

Carriers.

Rural carriers give bond in the sum of \$500, with two sureties. Each bond requires a 50 cent revenue stamp to be affixed thereto.

Carriers are paid by warrants, directly issued by the Treasury Department upon certificated forwarded by the Postmaster. Their rate of pay is fixed by the Department, and includes horse hire, but not necessary toil or ferrage, for which a separate account must be rendered. The maximum rate of pay as at present established is \$500 per annum for a full route of approximately 25 miles or \$100 per annum for each five miles traveled on shorter routes.

One or more substitute carriers should be provided in connection with each service established, who must give bond in the same sum as the regular carrier and who alone are permitted to carry the mails in the absence or disability of the regular carrier.

All rural carriers are under the general control of the Postmaster from whose office the service is established, and it is his duty to report any delinquencies upon their part and to require them to strictly follow the routes laid out for them. The Postmaster, however, is not authorized to make either removal or appointment of carriers. These are directed from the department.

A regular carrier must carry the mail regularly every day of the year, Sundays alone excepted, save when sick or leave of absence granted by the department. His failure so to do will result in a demand for his resignation and the promote of the substitute, if fitted. The policy of sub-letting rural carriers' work at convenience will not be permitted. When a substitute performs service in the absence of a regular carrier he will receive the full pay of the carrier.

Postage Stamps, Regulation, and Money Orders.

Rural carriers to take with them on their trips for the accommodation of their patrons a sufficient supply of stamps, stamped envelopes and postal cards. Postmasters may if they choose, give credit to the carrier for stamps supplied to the extent of five dollars (\$5.00) to be accounted for each day, and the carrier's bond being responsible thereof. If the carrier finds an unstamped letter in a collection box, and the requisite amount of money also deposited, they are also instructed to affix the necessary stamp. They are empowered to register letters or packages and to deliver the same, giving and taking receipt in form provided. They are also authorized to accept money for money orders, giving their receipt therefor, and, if the patrons of the delivery desire to make the carrier their agent for this purpose, the carrier may enclose the orders, when issued, in addressed envelopes confided to to his charge and mail them without returning the orders to the sender.

A. W. MACHEN,
Supt. of Free Delivery.

W. M. JOHSON,
First Assistant Post. Gen.

Approved March 28, 1901.

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