

Postoffice Boss Claims More Service for Less Money

Postal Subsidy to Magazines, Papers Greater Than Entire Cost of Farmer Subsidies Since the Program Began

Rural America no longer is the "forgotten zone" of mail delivery according to Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield.

Millions of citizens now are getting better mail service because of a new emphasis on rural free delivery, Summerfield said, pointing out that the Post Office Department is modernizing service everywhere to deliver the mail faster and at less cost.

In a report on operation for the past year and plans for 1954,

the Postmaster General declared:

"Just a year ago, a new team of executives took over the management of the Post Office Department's \$10,000,000,000 a year business with a directive from President Eisenhower to provide better mail service while reducing posts and the postal deficit.

"We are undertaking one of the largest reorganization projects ever made in the U. S. and the dangerous trends toward poor mail service, poor employee morale and ever-mounting deficits have been reversed.

"For example, the Department closed about 600 out-moded fourth-class post offices and substituted modern rural free delivery service.

"We intend to proceed with this policy of improving rural delivery. It is badly needed, not only by agricultural families who deserve better service but also in the rapidly growing suburban communities around our cities. More and more people are moving into these areas and they must have modern, fast mail delivery six days a week."

One of the big tasks facing the new postal administration was cutting the deficit to help balance the national budget and put the Post Office Department on a more nearly break-even basis, Summerfield pointed out.

"Already we have reduced the estimated postal deficit for the current fiscal year to about

\$440,000,000. That represents a reduction of the deficit by about one million dollars every working day," he said. "But we still are running behind. In the eight years since World War II, the postal deficit totaled \$3,800,000,000. The interest alone on this huge debt costs the American taxpayers over \$100,000,000 a year.

"We believe that Congress should recognize that economies already made and to be made by the new management of the Post Office Department cannot by themselves bring the postal deficit into balance.

"We have asked the Congress to raise the cost of out of town letters by one penny from three to four cents. That hasn't been raised in twenty-one years but meanwhile the cost of operating the Postal Establishment has doubled in that time.

"We have asked the Congress for a modest raise in second-class mail rates for newspapers, magazines and periodicals to bring in added revenues equal to less than nine per cent of the present loss on this class of mail.

"Second-class mail rates are lower today than they were in 1925; in fact our revenues at present rates are barely sufficient to cover our bills for transporting second-class mail, with nothing left over for the enormous expense in handling, distribution and delivery.

"We have also asked the Congress for an increase in third-class mail — comprising advertising matter—circulars, and packages up to 8 ounces. We lost 191 million dollars on this class of mail in 1952.

Our taxpayer should know the size and extent of our losses on both second and third-class mail.

"Since 1936 through the fiscal year 1952 the losses on second-class mail with magazines comprising 68 per cent of the total, were two billion one hundred and twenty-seven million dollars.

"In contrast we are told, published statements indicate this sum is over twice the realized losses of one billion forty-nine million dollars in the price support program given to the farmers of the country by the Commodity Credit Corporation.

"We believe it unconscionable that this postal deficit should be passed on to succeeding generations to pay. Instead, we believe the cost of operating the postal service should be distributed fairly among the actual users of the mails."

Postmaster General Summerfield pointed out to these significant improvement in service this past year:

Later pick-ups from mail boxes in most cities now speed deliveries by a full day.

Air transportation is being used as an experiment in speeding first-class mail and is working out very well at no increased cost.

Merit is the primary criterion for promotion of postal employees to supervisory positions.

Performance standards have been introduced and a saving of \$10,000,000 a year already has been recorded in large post offices.

Longer hours of post office

window service are in effect in 200 larger cities.

Regional offices are being established to decentralize management and provide closer supervision over operations.

Administration has been reorganized and simplified to eliminate duplicate functions and save money.

"Much progress has been made in this first year under the new management," Summerfield said. "Much more can

and will be done in the days ahead to assure better mail service.

"Dramatic proof that our citizens are getting mail service at lower cost is evidenced by the recent holiday mail season when the Department handled more Christmas mail than ever before at lower operating costs. It did so efficiently and promptly so that the Christmas mail was delivered by Christmas Day."

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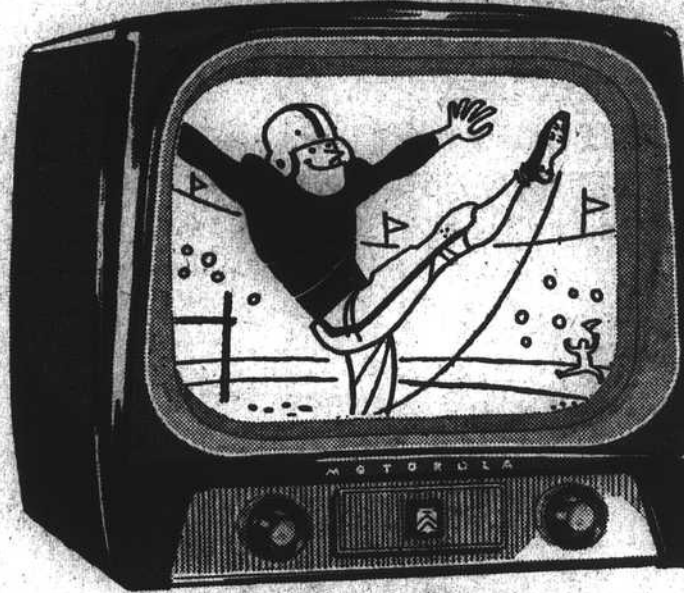
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