

HELPING OUT THE RURAL ROUTE MAN

Numerous Rules and Regulations That Must Be Obeyed by Route Patrons.

"How would you like to be the mail carrier?"

It is just a pleasant drive if the day is fine and the way is new to you, but after you have been over the same ground every day for months, and know each stone in the roadway and the stumps on the side become old acquaintances you will decide that it is, indeed, a wearisome task, says Henry Herbert Huff in *Successful Farming*.

If you want to see the "other side" of the rural carrier's life, come along some day when mud and water make the roads almost impassable or face a blinding snowstorm steadily for twenty-five miles, and you'll thank yourself that you are not the mail man.

But somebody has to be the mail man and you can help to add cheer to his daily journey and lessen his labors by observing the suggestions to follow.

The Box.—The postal laws require that every family before receiving mail by rural delivery shall erect a suitable mail box. A list of make of mail boxes that have received the recommendation of the postmaster general may be seen at your postoffice. It is strongly recommended that the box be provided with lock and key. If more than one family is to receive mail in the same box, an agreement to that effect must be given in writing to the postmaster.

The Location.—Place the box where it will be most convenient for the carrier. It must be situated and of such height that mail can be deposited or removed without leaving the wagon. Attach the box firmly to a good solid post. Avoid setting the post on a hillside or in any position that will make it difficult or dangerous for the carrier to drive up closely to it in all kinds of weather. The easier you make the carrier's work, the more prompt his deliveries will be.

The Use of the Box.—See that the door works easily at all times. Often in cold weather the door freezes shut and the carrier does not enjoy pounding it open with half frozen fingers. Keep the snow off the mail box and shovel it away from the post.

It is much easier for the carrier to remove letters deposited in the box for mailing if you will set them on end near the door instead of tossing them loosely on the bottom of the box. The postal laws require that money for stamps be placed in a little cup or box, instead of being thrown carelessly in the mail box, causing the carrier considerable loss of time and bother in pulling it out. Any such help inconveniences the patron but little, yet is of material assistance in improving the service.

The Use of Signals.—Be sure that your mail box is equipped with a good signal, as this feature is of great importance to the carrier. Raise the signal when you place matter for mailing in the box in order that the carrier will be sure to stop for it, even though he should have no mail for you. It is the carrier's duty to raise the signal, if it is not already up, when he leaves mail. You should then lower it so the carrier will not see it and stop needlessly, on his next trip.

The rate of postage on matter going on rural routes is exactly the same as though it were going to the furthestmost point in the United States—there are no reduced rates of any kind. Letters require postage at the rate of two cents an ounce or fraction thereof. A letter, properly stamped, may be picked up at any place along the route, to be delivered to a party along the route.

Carriers are permitted to carry parcels for their patrons and charge for this service, provided that it does not interfere with regular work. However, any matter they may carry that is subject to postage must be paid in the regular way. An article of merchandise weighing less than four pounds is subject to postage. This means if you ask the carrier to get you a spool of thread and bring it out on his next trip, you must send money for postage on it, at the rate of a cent an ounce. However, should you ask him to bring a suitcase, or any other article weighing more than four pounds or not coming under any of the postal rates, there will be no charge except such as the carrier may ask for doing the favor. Carriers must not (or anyone else, under penalty) place circulars, bills or other matter in mail boxes unless prepaid at a proper rate. The government means business on this proposition and will punish those who are caught violating this regulation. Moreover, any matter that is placed in a rural mail box must bear the name of the person who is to receive it. Un-addressed matter, though properly stamped, cannot be placed in mail boxes by rural carriers.

Do not delay your mail man on the way, unless with a cup of hot coffee or something. He has a certain schedule to make, and as patrons expect him at a certain time it is injurious to the service needlessly to be delayed. An exchange of greetings or a pleasant word is very proper, but to detain him with gossip or lengthy conversation should be avoided. Do not ask the carrier to wait while you address a letter or make an application for a money order. Instead keep a supply of stamped envelopes always on hand and some money order applications so that you may have your applications filled out when the carrier arrives. A supply of envelopes will necessitate a very small investment and the blanks are furnished gratis. Buy your stamp supplies direct from the carrier, instead of at the postoffice in order that the carrier may get credit for the sales. The government keeps accurate record of each carrier's sales, and routes that show small sales are in danger of being discontinued.

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