The Sioux County Journal.

[ESTABLISHED 1888.]

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J. SIMMONS, - - - Editor.

Entered at the Harrison post office as second-class matter.

THURSDAY, [illegible], 1891.

Improved Country Postal Service.

Iowa Homestead.

Readers of the *Homestead* are aware of the efforts making by the Post-office Department to improve the postal service in the rural districts and to introduce the delivery system in agricultural communities. As noted in these columns in a recent issue, the experimental efforts in this direction with a limited appropriation in about forty selected country districts, resulted in such an increase of business during the first year as to almost if not entirely compensate for the outlay. How encouraging this fact is to the project, may be inferred by an examination of the profit and loss account of the city free delivery system from the date of its introduction, July 1, 1863 until the present time. For the first six years, that is, until July 1, 1869, no effort was made to report separately the earnings and cost of the system, although it obviously did not pay expenses. For the fiscal year ending July 1, 1870, the cost exceeded earnings on local matters by the sum of $548,215.12, and for the following year $595,215.15. For the three following years there was a gradual decrease in excess of cost over income, the year ending July 1, 1873, showing the excess to be but $191,214.75. The next year, 1873-4, there was a profit of $67,577.55 which gradually increased, with each subsequent year. In the fiscal year 1881-2 the profit of the free delivery service exceeded a million dollars, and in 1889-90 the excess of local postage over cost of service was $2,208,561.70. For the first eleven years the business was run at a gradually decreasing loss; for the last seventeen years it has been carried on at a gradually increasing profit, which has in the aggregate greatly exceeded the initial loss.

The lesson to be drawn from these figures is thus: If the city free delivery lost money largely for the first eleven years, and has yet proved greatly profitable, repaying all the early outlay and returning a handsome surplus besides, how much more likely will the proposed country delivery system be to return a profit, when its first experimental trials show it to be almost or quite self-sustainining from the start.

We hope the Postmaster General will be authorized to continue the country service permanently in those localities where it has done so well experimentally and that he will also be given large discretion and ample funds to extend it to other communities. If this discretion be given and wisely exercised, we hope to see it gradually extend over the whole country without any loss to the department, but with actual gain ultimately. The free city delivery system was extended in this gradual way. In 1884 there were but forty-five offices having free delivery and employing seven hundred and fifty-seven carriers. In 1889-90 the service had been extended to four hundred and fifty-four offices, employing nine thousand and sixty carriers. The increase in the service was made cautiously and prudently, as it could be done with safety to the revenues, so that no expensive precipitation frightened the country into its abandonment. The same care and prudence should attend the introduction of the country service.

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4 KANSAS,
Mrs. Henry Brown. Ottawa.
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3. Give the total number of names contained in your list in the list accompanying the same.

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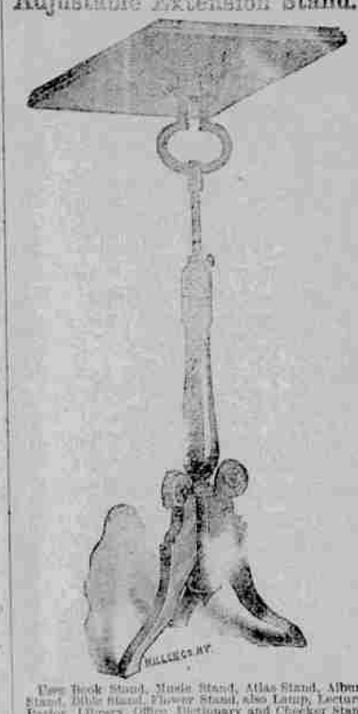

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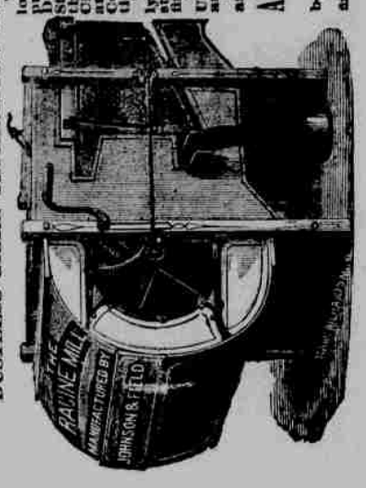

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