

31. INDECENT PHOTOGRAPHS.

This question was brought under notice by the Representative of South Australia, who submitted some objectionable photographs which had passed through his office.

We consider many of these to be of an obscene character, and we think that the Post Office should not be the means of circulating matter of such a demoralising tendency.

32. COMPULSORY REGISTRATION OF ARTICLES OF JEWELLERY (VALUE LESS THAN £1).

This matter was carefully considered at a Postal Conference held in Melbourne in August last year, when the following decision was arrived at:—

“Having considered this question, we would point out that compulsory registration is required by the postal laws of the colonies, and the principle is recognised by the regulations of the Universal Postal Union. It would, in our opinion, lead to friction and endless disputes between the officials and the public if it were made a function of the former to fix the value of articles of jewellery, &c., with a view to determine whether an article should be registered or not.

“In those colonies where the system has been in operation for several years, we find no difficulties have arisen, and we maintain that the additional security afforded by registration, even of articles of small value, is provided at a very reasonable cost.”

We recommend that this decision be adhered to.

33. FUNCTIONS OF SECRETARIAL OFFICE IN REGARD TO POST AND TELEGRAPH CONVENTION.

We recommend that all replies to circulars from the Berne Office should be answered, as arranged, through the Postmaster-General of South Australia, who will endeavour to obtain unanimity of the various colonies before forwarding the decision to the Berne Office.

As regards Telegraph Convention, see 41.

34. FRANKING.

No report to make.

34A. RE-DIRECTION.—UNIFORMITY OF CHARGES.

This matter was discussed at the Hobart Conference, when the following recommendation of the Heads of Departments was agreed to:—

“Item 19.—Re-direction Charge; also Charge for return of Dead Letters.”

“We recommend the adoption of the Postal Union practice in its entirety—that is, to make no charge for re-direction if the article is fully prepaid to the country or colony to which it is re-directed. We are aware that under the existing Postal Laws of some of the Colonies the re-direction charge is compulsory, although inoperative as regards Foreign Countries.”

34B. UNIFORMITY OF ACTION AS REGARDS ANSWERS TO BERNE CIRCULARS.

Dealt with above, under 33.

34C. SIMILARITY OF NAMES OF PLACES (POST OFFICES) IN DIFFERENT COLONIES.

Although we are alive to the inconveniences arising from similar names being given to places in various colonies, we see great difficulty in advising any change, but we are of opinion that the inconvenience would be materially lessened if the persons posting letters addressed to those places would be careful to insert the name of the colony. Care should be taken in future to avoid giving to places names which are already in use.

35. CYPHER MESSAGES.

(a) Mode of counting (definition).

In all cases where Messages contain cypher words we consider that the following rule agreed to at the Hobart Postal Conference in 1892, page 25, should be made universal throughout the colonies:—

“Every message consisting wholly or in part of words in secret language, or in words in any admitted language (English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, and Latin) having no connective meaning, groups of letters or figures, shall be regarded as a cypher message, and every cypher word in such message shall be counted as two words, and the extra charge be added to the minimum rate for a message: provided that such extra charge shall not in any case exceed 50 per cent. on the ordinary rate which would be payable on account of the said telegram. Groups of five letters or five figures shall count as one cypher word.”

* (b) To New Zealand.

We recommend that the New Zealand Government be requested to negotiate with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, with a view of placing the intercolonial business on the same footing as regards cypher messages as defined above.

36. URGENT TELEGRAMS.

We advise that the system of “Urgent” Telegrams now in force in Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, New Zealand, and South Australia should be adopted generally.

37. UNIFORM SUNDAY TELEGRAPH RATES.

We advise that all messages despatched on Sunday be charged double the ordinary rates, excepting cable and Press messages. (New Zealand assenting, except as regards Press rates; Tasmania dissenting.)

38. INTERCOLONIAL