

"A person wishing to relieve his correspondent of all charge in respect of a parcel, endorses it 'to be delivered free of all charge,' signs a declaration that he will pay the amount due as soon as it is ascertained, and, if required, pays a deposit. A form, similar to the one annexed, is then made out and accompanies the parcel to the office of exchange of the country of destination, where the parcel is examined, and the charges are assessed. The amount is entered on the form, and claimed on a parcel bill, to which the form is attached as a voucher. The form is then sent back to the office of posting, where a settlement is come to with the sender. The parcel is, of course, delivered free.

"In this country it is proposed to charge for the facility a fee of 6d. per parcel.

"If your office, with the consent of the Government, is of opinion that the proposed arrangement might with advantage be adopted, you will no doubt be good enough to inform me to that effect. A date can then subsequently be fixed by mutual consent for bringing it into operation."

We recommend that the suggestion of London should be approved, provided that the fee, in addition to the postage, instead of being 6d., be 1s., to be equally divided between the United Kingdom and the Colony interested.

No. 41.—"Customs Declarations on Parcel Post Packages."

We recommend that the Regulation of the London Post Office, as under, with reference to valuation of Parcel Post Packets be adopted, viz. :—

CUSTOMS DECLARATION AND DESPATCH NOTE.

"Parcels are subject to Customs Regulations, and the sender of each parcel is required to make, for Customs purposes, upon a special form or forms, which can be obtained at any Post Office, an accurate statement of the nature and value of the contents and other particulars. *Undervaluing the contents, or failure to describe them fully, may result in seizure of the parcels.* The net weight or quantity of the various articles contained in a parcel should, if possible, be stated, and any other particulars which would facilitate the assessment of Customs Duty—such as, in the case of clothing, the material of which it is composed, and whether it is new or has been worn. In the case of articles returned to the country where they originated the fact should be stated."

No. 42.—"Proposed 'Express Delivery' of Parcels and Postal Packets exchanged between the United Kingdom and the Australasian Colonies."

By circular letter dated the 20th April, 1897, the London Office wrote to the respective Australasian Postal Administrations, bringing under notice the system of delivering ordinary *postal packets* by *express* messenger, stating that the system had worked well in the United Kingdom, and was about to be extended to international *parcels*.

The London Office suggests that, if the Colonies are now able to undertake express delivery, it should *apply to parcels as well as to other postal packets*, but, if the Colonies be still unable to arrange for the delivery by special messenger of postal packets received from places abroad, they may desire to give senders in the Colonies the opportunity of securing the express delivery of correspondence forwarded by them to the United Kingdom. If so, the London Office is prepared to deliver specially all ordinary postal packets as well as parcels marked "express," received in the mails from the Colonies. The express fee on *ordinary postal packets*, at the rate of 3d. per mile, cannot be prepaid, but will be collected on delivery, while, *in the case of parcels* for "express" delivery, a special fee of 5d. each parcel should be collected from the sender, and credited to the Imperial Post Office on the parcel bill.

We consider that the requisite facilities for the establishment of the system do not exist here; there is no demand for its establishment; there are objections to its *partial* introduction (*i.e.*, that it should apply *only* to parcels from Australia); the express fees chargeable even under the favourable circumstances of a large traffic would not be remunerative; and the proposal that the Colonies should undertake the collection of fees on behalf of the United Kingdom, and undertake the task of specially treating all such parcels without any remuneration, is considered inequitable.

Under the circumstances we think it undesirable that the proposal should be acceded to.

No. 43.—"France—Parcel Post Convention."

We recommend that, although Queensland is not at present prepared to join the Parcel Post Convention with France, except on certain conditions, the remaining colonies adopt it as soon as possible.

No. 44.—"Establishment of direct exchange of Parcels between the Australian Colonies and Cape Colony, and other South African States and Colonies."

We have carefully revised the Draft Parcel Post Convention, and append the same, as altered, Appendix B. which we advise be forwarded to Cape Colony for approval. It is recommended that Tasmania be requested to act as intermediary in forwarding or distributing parcels passing through its office to and from the Cape without charging territorial or extra sea transit rates, the Australian Colonies being regarded as out-territory for parcel post purposes.