

Nos. 48 and 49.—“Adjustment of Postage on Intercolonial Parcels posted out of course and received in the Colony of destination by other than Parcel Post.”—“Mode of charging and accounting for irregularly-posted Parcels.”

In the case of parcels sent out of course (*i.e.*, articles despatched from one colony as packets, &c. but regarded in the colony of destination as *parcels*), we advise that double the amount of deficiency at parcel rate be collected on delivery.

Nos. 50 and 51.—“Discontinuance of Registration of Parcels in New South Wales.”—
“Intercolonial Charges for Certificates of posting of Parcels.”

We recommend that certificates of posting of parcels be given at a charge of 3*d.*, the one certificate to include as many parcels as the sender may choose to enter upon the list, and for an additional 2½*d.* for each parcel an acknowledgment of receipt by addressee will be obtained and forwarded to the sender by post.

No. 52.—“Apportionment of Intercolonial Parcel Postage equally between the Colony of origin and Colony of delivery.”

We recommend that the present division of postage on parcels posted intercolonially be maintained—despatching Colony 5*d.* ; receiving Colony 3*d.* : Queensland dissenting.

Nos. 53 and 54.—“Claim of London Office to be credited with 1*d.* per lb. for sea transit from Australia to England on parcels sent to Foreign Countries *viâ* the United Kingdom.”—“Apportionment of postage on parcels exchanged with Foreign Countries through the intermediary of the United Kingdom.”

In 1896, at the suggestion of the London Office, it was agreed that the postage on parcels exchanged between the United Kingdom and the Australian Colonies should be reduced *from* 1*s.* 6*d.* for the first 2 pounds or fraction, and 9*d.* for each additional pound, *to* 1*s.* for the first pound or fraction, and 6*d.* for each additional pound.

The proposal for such reduction of postage was first made in 1894, but the apportionment of postage then suggested by the London Office was considered to be unfair to the Colonies, and it was not until after the exchange of considerable correspondence on the subject between the London and Colonial Offices that the former office agreed in 1896 that the postage should be apportioned as under on parcels forwarded in both directions ; *viz.* :—

Colonial share—First pound, 7 <i>d.</i> ; each additional pound, 3 <i>d.</i>
Imperial ,, ,, ,, 5 <i>d.</i> ; ,, ,, ,, 3 <i>d.</i>

(NOTE.—Owing to the heavy expense incurred by the Colonies in initiating the Parcel Post System in 1886, the London Office agreed to allow them the larger share of the postage, and the Colonial share is still 2*d.* more on each parcel than that received by the United Kingdom.)

Subsequently to the above-mentioned division of postage being agreed upon, the London Office, in a circular letter dated the 30th December, 1896, suggested that the Australian Colonies should accept the *same* credit on parcels sent from Foreign Countries to Australia *viâ* England as on those sent direct from the United Kingdom to Australia, *viz.*, 7*d.* for the first pound, and 3*d.* for each additional pound, *in lieu* of the credits then received, *viz.*, 9*d.* up to two pounds, 2*s.* 3*d.* between two pounds and seven pounds, 3*s.* 9*d.* between seven pounds and eleven pounds. This suggestion, although entailing a loss on the Colonies, was adopted for the sake of uniformity.

On the 18th June, 1897, the London Post Office wrote to the Adelaide Office intimating that it would be necessary for the Australian Post Offices to credit the Imperial Post Office with 1*d.* per pound rate (for sea postage from Australia to London), in addition to the onward postage from England, on all parcels which they might send to other countries *viâ* the United Kingdom, after the 31st July, 1897. In a reply, forwarded from New South Wales to London (dated 14th September, 1897), attention was drawn to the particulars stated above, and that office was reminded that *at the present time no special payment is made to the Orient and P. & O. Companies for the sea transit of parcels* (those Companies having since the 1st February, 1896, abandoned the special charges made up to that date for such transit) ; and it was pointed out that *subsidies now allowed cover payment for the conveyance of all mail-matter (including parcels), and the Australian Colonies, as joint parties with the United Kingdom to the contracts with the Companies named, are entitled to the full benefit of the altered arrangement.* It was therefore intimated that, under the circumstances, it was thought that the demand made was unreasonable, and that the London Office was not justified in making a special levy on the Australian Colonies with respect to the sea conveyance of parcels any more than it would be in acting similarly with regard to ordinary correspondence (letters, &c.) ; and it was added, in conclusion, that as the Colonies had reduced the postages on parcels to and *viâ* the United Kingdom, on the understanding that they were to receive certain credits, it would now be necessary, in order to comply with the request made, either to submit to a loss of revenue, or to increase the postage rates on the parcels. Victoria and South Australia also objected to compliance with the request made.

The London Office, under date the 5th November, 1897, replied, expressing regret that the proposal of that office was considered by Australia to be unreasonable, and asking for a re-consideration of the matter,