

No. 10.

[Extract from the *London Philatelist*, October, 1908.]

PENNY POSTAGE TO AMERICA.

OCTOBER the 1st saw the most important step towards universal penny postage in the adoption of that scale between the two great Anglo-Saxon races of England and America. Mr. Henniker Heaton—the pioneer of the movement—must have been proud to have seen his lifelong labours thus crowned, and among the many who have congratulated him will be found the names of his numerous philatelic friends. Universal penny postage has not arrived, but practically the English-speaking race all over the world now enjoys the boon, exactly sixty-nine years after Sir Rowland Hill's great innovation was first inaugurated. Australia and Rhodesia have still to abolish the imposition of a slightly higher charge than the penny per ounce for letter-postage to the Mother-country, and one or two islands in the Pacific have to be brought in line. But these anomalies will, it is expected, soon be rectified—negotiations are, in fact, already afoot with that object—and it will then be possible to say, without qualification, that the whole of the British Empire and the United States are linked together by a cheap uniform postal service.

The following notice that has been addressed to the whole of the post-offices of the United Kingdom and the United States as to this historical event may fittingly be recorded in this journal:—

“The Postmaster-General desires to draw attention to the fact that on and after to-day, October 1, the postage payable on letters posted in the United Kingdom for the United States of America will be 1d. for each ounce. This uniform rate of 1d. an ounce will supersede the present rates of 2½d. for the first ounce and 1½d. for each additional ounce.

“A like reduction will be made on the same date in the postage on letters from the United States of America to this country, which will be 2c. for each ounce, instead of the present rates of 5c. for the first ounce and 3c. for each additional ounce.

“There will be no alteration in the rates of postage on post-cards, printed and commercial papers, and sample packets passing between the two countries.

“It may be noted that the present reduction in postage to the United States is additional to that which was introduced on October 1 last, when the rates of 2½d. for the first ounce and 1½d. for each subsequent ounce to the United States (and all other foreign countries) were substituted for the rate of 2½d. for each half-ounce. Thus the postage on a one-ounce letter to the United States, which was reduced in October last from 5d. to 2½d. is now further reduced to 1d.; and similarly the postage on a two-ounce letter, which was then reduced from 10d. to 4d., is now further reduced to 2d.”

[P.O. 08/1621.]

No. 11.

[News extract, 16th October, 1908.]

Mr. J. HENNIKER HEATON, M.P., to the EDITOR OF THE “WEEKLY TIMES,” London.

Carlton Club, London, 6th October, 1908.

SIR,—

Universal Penny Postage.

The cable message from the Prime Minister of New Zealand (Sir J. G. Ward, K.C.M.G.) deserves special attention, because it refers to a stage in the progress of universal penny postage not generally known.

The first country in the world to establish universal penny postage was New Zealand. The following telegram explains this, which I received at the time:—

“Wellington, New Zealand, 17th August, 1900.

“To Henniker Heaton, M.P., House of Commons, London.

“I have much pleasure in informing you that New Zealand introduces universal penny postage from the 1st January, 1901. It will be a fitting commemoration of the new century, and will add another link to the chain of Empire.

“J. G. WARD, Postmaster-General.”

Consequently the three thousand American sailors visiting New Zealand in August last had the pleasure of posting their letters from Auckland (their port in New Zealand) to their homes in the United States at the penny rate.

On the 17th July of last year (1907) the Postmaster-General of America, the Hon. G. von L. Meyer, wrote to me offering penny postage with Great Britain and Ireland if I could privately ascertain that the British Government was favourable to the scheme. I had left for Australia a few days before, and the important letter followed me there. On receipt of it my friend the Prime Minister of New Zealand telegraphed its contents to the British Government, with a strongly expressed wish that England would agree to the proposal.

The subsequent negotiations so happily concluded by the Postmasters-General of Great Britain and the United States are well known; but I think it interesting to record the part taken by a daughter of the Empire in this splendid work.

I have, &c.

J. HENNIKER HEATON.