

REPORT and Recommendations by Permanent Heads of Departments, presented at the Meeting of the Postal Conference held in Hobart, February, 1895

(As adopted by the Conference.)

No. 1.—(e). *Delay of Train at Adelaide for English Mails.*

The Sydney and Melbourne Chambers of Commerce invite attention to the serious delay and consequent inconvenience and annoyance caused by the departure of the mail train from Adelaide when mail steamers are actually signalled, and express a hope that strenuous efforts may be made to obviate this in future.

The Postmaster-General, Adelaide, has arranged to provide a special train to leave Adelaide when the mails arrive not more than half an hour late, to overtake the express train at Murray Bridge. When, through the occurrence of holidays, such as Easter, Christmas, &c., or from other causes, a delay of more than one day would otherwise result, there is a further arrangement which provides that when the steamers arrive too late for the 4.30 p.m. express train, or for the overtaking train, a special train is despatched up to 9 p.m. on either Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, at a joint cost to New South Wales and Victoria of £71 15s., South Australia running such train from Adelaide to Serviceton free of charge.

The object of the Chambers of Commerce is that arrangements be made to delay the departure of the 4.30 p.m. express train from Adelaide, or run a special train regularly; but if anything further is desired, it can only be arranged at considerable cost for special trains, which the several Administrations have, after due consideration, already declined to incur.

No. 3.—*Italy charging Sea Surtax: Report by Postmaster-General, Adelaide.*

The Postmaster-General, Adelaide, reports that Italy, from 1st January, 1895, abolished Sea Surtax of 1½d. as recommended at Wellington Conference, which amounts to reduction of postage from 4d. to 2½d.

No. 4.—*Stoppage of Letters addressed to senders of Obscene Matter*

Nos. 4 and 22.—We are of opinion that when letters are addressed to persons who have sent photographs and catalogues of a decidedly obscene character, they should be stopped in the manner provided for in the case of sweeps, &c., and in any amendment of the Postal Laws we advise that provision be made accordingly.

With reference to obscene circulars sent by post by a firm in Holland, we find that steps were taken by the various Administrations to prevent the delivery of these circulars, and we recommend that a joint protest be sent to the Berne Bureau, and as there appears nothing in the Universal Postal Union Convention directly dealing with the transmission of obscene matter, we think that the question should be brought up at the next Quinquennial Congress.

No. 6.—*Delivery of indefinitely addressed Letters to business people.*

The Berne Bureau wrote at the instance of the Hungary Office, inquiring whether the Post Office would undertake to distribute packets of fully prepaid letters which do not bear a precise address, but only a vague one, such as Mr ———, tailor, grocer, &c.

The Berne Office has recently forwarded summary of replies received from other Postal Administrations, most of which are adverse to the proposal of Hungary. We, however, see no objection to deliver in Australia any single article bearing such address, provided that it bears full rates.

No. 7.—*The Colonies remitting through the Treasury*

We suggest that the Australian Postal Administrations be permitted, as formerly, to adjust accounts direct one with the other, and remit their balances direct instead of through the Treasury. The question was considered at the Wellington Conference, when it was reported "that the present arrangement caused delay, but it was proposed to give it a further trial, and the result reported at the next Conference." Further experience has shown that continued delay arises in the settlement of accounts, the amounts due to the Postal Departments frequently remaining unpaid for considerable periods.

No. 8.—*Uniform Statistics.*

We recommend the acceptance of the Forms as prepared by the Sydney Office, with the following exceptions:—

Form 3. Columns Nos. 8 to 11 to be retained.

„ 5. Column 3. The word "Offices" to be substituted for "Statistics."

„ 5. The words "Despatched" to be substituted for "Transmitted."

„ 10. Omit Revenue No. 3, and insert under Expenditure No. 3, "Conveyance of Mails less Contributions from other Administrations."

„ 10. No. 1 to be amended to read as follows:—"Estimated proceeds of sale of Postage Stamps used for payment of correspondence."