

The present practice in the different Colonies is as follows :—No charge is made in New South Wales and Tasmania, 3s. per 1000 is charged in Queensland, 2s. in Victoria; South Australia not undertaking the duty at all.

No. 31.—“Counterfeit Postage Stamps—Compliance with Article No. 18, Vienna Convention.”

Under Article 18 of the Vienna Convention the contracting countries undertake to adopt or to propose to their respective Legislatures the necessary measures for punishing the fraudulent manufacture or use of counterfeit stamps, and we think that it is desirable that the necessary legislation to enable the Colonies to give effect to this Article be obtained as early as possible by those Colonies which do not already possess it.

No. 33.—“Postage on certain class of publications.”

A publication was submitted by South Australia with a view to conferring as to whether publications of that class should be treated as packets or books. We are of opinion that, not being published in book form, they should be charged at Packet rate of postage.

No. 35.—“Postal Guides, uniformity.”

We advise that the question be taken up later on if time permits.

No. 36.—“Territorial transit rates charged by one Australian Colony to another such Colony, proposed reduction.”

As the Postmaster-General South Australia has assured this Committee that the present payment on the homeward mails and the payment by Great Britain to South Australia on the outward mails only about covers actual expenses, taking, of course, into account the landing and embarking of mails at Largs Bay, we do not advise that any reduction be made in these rates at present. In connection with this matter, we desire to call attention to the fact that in the new contracts with the P. & O. and Orient Companies, the contractors are required to land and embark the mails at all ports, including Largs Bay; but in the interests of the Colonies it is our opinion that the Adelaide Post Office should still undertake the service of landing and embarking the mails at Largs Bay, as the incoming mails occasionally arrive at such a time as to render it necessary for using the greatest possible expedition in landing the mails, in order that they may reach Adelaide in time for Melbourne express leaving at 4.30.

No. 37.—“Accelerating of train service with English mails from Brisbane.”

It is admitted that the present railway arrangements are extremely inconvenient to Queensland in regard to the connection of the English mails at Sydney. If any arrangement could be made by which the Commissioners of these two Colonies could arrange for a train to leave Brisbane about 1.30 P.M. on Monday to arrive at Sydney at 5 P.M. next day, this would enable the Queensland public to post up to noon on Monday, instead of the business people having practically to close their correspondence on Saturday evening.

No. 37A.—“Question of special trains in event of mail steamers reaching Largs Bay on Saturdays and Sundays.”

As bearing upon the English Mail Train Service, and considering the likelihood under the present contract of the steamers frequently reaching Largs Bay on Saturday and Sunday, we have considered the question of making some provision for forwarding these mails on to their destination by special trains, and thus avoiding the great delay which would be otherwise unavoidable. A Memorandum showing possibilities in regard to special trains is appended, and we recommend that the questions therein set forth be remitted for the favourable consideration of the Colonies concerned.

No. 38.—“Australasian Postal Convention.”

We advise that this question be taken up later on if time permits.

No. 40.—“Proposed arrangement for enabling senders of parcels for despatch per Parcels Post to places abroad, to defray all Customs and other charges arising upon such parcels.”

The proposed arrangement is explained in the subjoined letter from the London Post Office, 12 March, 1897 :—

“I am directed by the Postmaster-General to enquire whether your office would be disposed to take part in an arrangement, which is under consideration here, for enabling the senders of parcels sent abroad by Parcel Post to defray all the charges arising upon them, that is to say, not merely the postage, but also the Customs and other charges, which have now to be paid by the addressees on delivery. Such an arrangement is in operation in connection with the Parcel Post between several of the countries of the Postal Union, and is said to work well. The procedure is as follows :—