

Fourteenth Day.
9 May 1907.

UNIVERSAL
PENNY POSTAGE.
(Mr. Deakin.)

an Imperial proposition. They fear that it would mean if not a curtailment of any of the existing services which I have referred to, a greater hesitancy in granting them to fresh settlements. They look with some jealousy on any proposal for diminishing the Post Office funds since our constant onward movement means a constant opening of new offices and the making of fresh arrangements at considerable expense. However, that is part of our policy. We are endeavouring to carry our measure, and another effort will be made in that regard. At the same time it is only fair that the Postmaster-General should recognise the very exceptional circumstances under which our work is carried on. Under these circumstances when we have not yet arrived at penny postage within the Empire itself, it does look a little previous, as the Americans would say, to be asking it from other countries.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: One word upon this matter from the point of view so fully represented, which I appreciate to the greatest possible extent, by the British Postmaster-General. In submitting this resolution, it is not with the object of pressing at any undue period upon any portion of the Empire, Great Britain or elsewhere, the bringing into operation of this system, but it is if possible to impress upon, not the distinctly advanced British Post Office, who have done all in their power up-to-date, and done most valuable work, but upon other countries as well as Great Britain, the importance of having universal penny postage through the world. I am glad to have submitted this resolution, if only for the purpose of hearing the statements made by Mr. Buxton as to what has been done by the British Post Office already, and I take the opportunity of saying, as the New Zealand delegate at the Postal Conference, that the representatives of Great Britain there, not only did most valuable work, but were a distinct credit, not only to the postal service of Great Britain, but to the Empire as a whole. I want to place on record my testimony to the splendid way in which the President of that Postal Union, Mr. Babington Smith, carried out most difficult and important work there. I may say that the British delegates remained neutral when this Universal Penny Postage proposition was put before that Conference. We have done all in New Zealand that the Postal Union required to be done. We have the penny rate for 4 ounces throughout our country on letters; we have cheapness and efficiency in both our postal and telegraph services in every way possible. I want to take the advantage of saying how important it is to have within the Empire uniformity both as to charges and system. Australia is a case in point. There against Mr. Deakin's own representations and those of his capable Postmaster-General, Mr. Austin Chapman, Parliament decided on the grounds of loss of revenue, not to go for universal penny postage. Our experience in New Zealand—and it was the experience of Canada, I know also; the then Postmaster-General told me so himself—is that the effect of our coming right down to a penny rate was we recovered our revenue in a very limited period, very much less than the permanent officials contemplated, namely, under three years. The aspect put by Mr. Deakin as one of the reasons Australia has voted against it was to avoid increased mail services. In New Zealand the adoption of it was the cause of our very nearly doubling the facilities for carrying mails to the different portions of our country owing to the increased business that accrued. I sincerely hope that the time will arrive when Mr. Buxton, who is not only sympathetic toward this resolution, but, I am sure, anxious, will be able to do it. Some morning we will find that America and Germany have entered into a subsidiary agreement for a penny postage between themselves, or America and France, or some other great countries. When that is done the whole world must soon follow. My opinion is Britain ought to be ahead, as it always has been ahead. We should not look upon the Post Office as a great taxing machine for general revenue, but regard