

the cost of conveyance be one anna a mile, then the cost of transit of the first despatch would be 500 annas or 5 annas for each letter, while the cost of transit of the second despatch would be 100 annas or 10 annas a letter, though the distance in the latter case is only one-fifth of what it is in the former. Rates regulated by distance would be obviously unfair under these circumstances, and it would be more correct to say that the cost of conveying a letter varies inversely with the number conveyed. Further, long routes are necessarily made up of numerous shorter ones, and often the establishment required for conveyance from one office to the next is sufficient, without being increased, for letters being sent from one extremity of the line to the other. This is self-evident in the case of lines with only one set of runners. Suppose a line of single runners from Calcutta to Allahabad 500 miles. It would not be correct to say that letters sent from Calcutta to Allahabad, the two extremities, cost the Post Office anything in proportion to the distance. The part Calcutta to Benares 400 miles must be maintained to carry letters to Benares, and the only expense incurred in conveying them to Allahabad would be the cost of the establishment between Benares and Allahabad.

It has always been the practice to charge differential rates for various classes of matter. It was shown that in 1845 letters sent to India *via* Marseilles were charged at a rate of more than £12,000 a ton, whereas newspapers were carried for £150 per ton. The penny letter rate has been regarded as the sheet anchor of British postal revenue, and every suggestion to reduce the same has been forcibly resisted. It is said that the cost of conveyance, weight for weight, at the present rates paid by the Post Office chiefly to railway companies, is now much more than it was when penny postage was first established, and when most of the letters were carried by mail coaches. It had been shown at that time by Mr. Rowland Hill that the average cost of conveying an inland letter did not exceed $\frac{1}{16}d.$, and that of a newspaper $\frac{1}{6}d.$ But now, calculating on the same principle, the average cost of conveying a letter

is $\frac{1}{8}d.$, and that of a newspaper (of the present average weight is $2\frac{1}{2}$ ozs.) is $1\frac{1}{4}d.$

In the United Kingdom, there is no limit as to weight, but no letter, unless it be from or to a Government office, must exceed the dimensions $18 \times 9 \times 6$ inches. Petitions and addresses to His Majesty the King, and to the Houses of Parliament, are exempt from charge up to a weight of 2 lbs.

It was found as late as 1895 that 95 per cent. of the letters sent through the post weighed not more than one ounce.

As regards communications with distant places, experience proves that within moderate limits the number of letters is not much affected by the rate of postage; frequency, regularity and speed of communication appearing to have a far greater influence. And simplicity and uniformity of tariff have even more effect on the growth of correspondence than cheapness itself. Cheap parcel rates give a stimulus to the internal trade of the country. The trade of the country demands that everything should be carried at the cheapest possible uniform rate.

France may fairly claim to have been in advance of the United Kingdom not only in facilities for the transmission of money and other commodities, but also in the facilities of the book post and parcel post. In the tariff for ordinary correspondence it has always contrasted unfavourably.

High Rates.—Letters are the *primordia rerum* of the commercial world. To tax them at all is condemned by those who are best acquainted with the operations of finance. "This is the worst of taxes" said Lord Ashburton; "you might as well tax words spoken on the Royal Exchange." Dr. Dionysius Lardner regarded a tax on correspondence as he would a tax on speech; letters were a mode of speaking and hearing at a distance. And Mr. Henry Fawcett, a noted professor of political economy, and for some time Postmaster-General, looked on needlessly high postage rates as a tax on education, which he considered to be the worst of all taxes. And it is

found that unduly high charges, by their reaction on industry, prove seriously detrimental to other financial resources.

The Penny Letter.—The basis of the British postal tariff is a minimum charge of 1*d.* for each letter carried by post. This rate was maintained till the year 1870, when a half-penny post was first introduced for certain classes of documents. In the Sixth report of the Postmaster-General it was said that the average postage on an ordinary inland letter continues to be about 1½*d.*, and in the Seventh report that excluding official packets the average weight of an inland letter is still rather more than a quarter of an ounce.

As in the United Kingdom half-penny matter is said to be carried at a loss and the telegraph service is not self-supporting, the sender of a penny letter contributes nearly a farthing to the Exchequer and possibly the eighth of a penny towards the cost of the carriage of other people's telegrams, newspapers, post-cards and parcels.

Speed versus Postage.—As evidence of the greater importance which the public attach to speed than to low rates of postage, in relation to correspondence with distant countries, it may be mentioned that while the postage from the United Kingdom to India and Australia by way of Southampton was 3*d.* less than by the quicker route to Brindisi, nearly three-fourths of the correspondence was sent by the Brindisi route.

Reduction of Rates.—When Mr. Rowland Hill advocated a reduction of the postage rate, he first assured himself of the area of reproductiveness of correspondence; without this reproductiveness a reduction of rates has fatal consequences on the revenue. Regarding the reduction of rates in Queensland, a writer remarks:—"One of the most striking things is the result of reducing the letter postage from Queensland to countries beyond Australia from 6*d.* to 2½*d.* per ½ oz. According to the theory of many postal reformers, such a reduction may entail an immediate sacrifice of revenue, but the loss is soon made good by the growth of correspondence. In Queensland,

however, the revenue from foreign correspondence, which was £9,300 before the reduction, has fallen every year since, and in 1894 was only £3,700. Moreover, the number of letters, etc., despatched from Queensland, actually fell off considerably during the years 1893 and 1894. These results appear to confirm the opinion of those who think that the state of business in a country, frequency of communication, etc., have quite as much to do with the postal development as low rates of postage."

When the domestic rate in the United States on letters was reduced from 3 to 2 cents in 1893 the result was a decrease in revenue, and the Postmaster-General remarks:—"Besides a reduction of postage, this unsatisfactory result was due to the general business depression prevailing from the autumn of 1883 on the financial circles of the country, and the inference seems fairly indicated that the volume of the mails and the employment of the postal service depend less upon the differences in the rates of postage, when already low, than upon the condition of general affairs, by which the service becomes more or less desirable to business men." The revenue decreased by $23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and only recovered itself very slowly.

Only one more example need be quoted. When a reduction was made in the domestic rate of San Domingo, and there was consequently some reason to expect an increase in the number of letters forwarded by which the decrease in the receipts would be made good, the revenue from postage, which amounted to 6,585,98 pesos in 1888, went down to 3,212,81 in 1889.

Increased Facilities.—It may be laid down as a golden rule that the granting of increased facilities for correspondence always results in an increase. On the introduction of the penny post it was found that increased accommodation resulted in an increased number of letters. What was true then is still true. The experience of the United States Post Office may be quoted. "If the service is improved all

through there will be less occasion for anxiety about its cost, for it has been the experience of many postal administrations that the giving of additional facilities within reasonable limits, is followed by an increased use of the mails and consequent growth of the revenue."

Half-penny matter.—In a report by the Select Committee on Revenue Estimates, it is stated that half-penny matter is carried at a loss, and whenever applications are made for concessions regarding this class of matter they have to be strenuously resisted. The postage on second class matter in the United States was reduced from two cents to one cent per pound in 1885. This low rate has led to the wholesale violation of the purpose of the law. In 1899 the Postmaster-General estimated that "fully one-half of all the matter mailed as second-class, and paid for at the pound rate, is not properly second-class within the intent of the law;" and the cost of its transportation exceeded the revenue derived from it by more than 12,000,000 dollars." Vested interests are powerful every where, and the lesson to be learned by other administrations is that resistance should be offered to all proposals of reductions in the existing charges for the conveyance of printed matter by post.

Book-packets.—In 1848 the book-post was started, for the benefit of education and literature, as Sir Rowland Hill said. It was originally a cheap half-penny post for printed matter, and was extended by concession after concession to meet the needs of commerce; here a little writing, and there a little more writing was allowed, till it became a very maze of intricacies, and there was very little shading off between the half-penny and the penny post. The term *letter* has never been the subject of an authoritative definition, and it was difficult to see why a tradesman's bill, which is in effect an intimation, say from Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson to Mr. Smith, that the latter owes the firm a certain sum of money for goods supplied, should not be treated as a letter, while a formal invitation to dinner or notice of an appointment should

be so treated. The result of the admission of invoices and other documents to the half-penny rate was to establish as the final distinction between book-post and letter rates such trivialities as the precise turn of a sentence, an intimation at the foot of an invoice that "empty casks should be returned" being passed for a half-penny, while the more polite message. "Please return empty casks" was charged a penny. When it was once conceded that some written matter whether combined with print or not, was admissible at the privileged rate, it became impossible to lay down any line of distinction, which could be easily understood by the public, and observed by the staff of the department, between the written matter, which may pass, and the written matter which may not. The general idea underlying the regulations was to admit documents of a conventional, formal or impersonal character, and to exclude those of a personal kind; but the line drawn was necessarily an arbitrary one; and the public found it difficult to understand why of two documents, which are practically identical, one should be charged at the penny and the other at the half-penny rate. The new rules swept away these absurdities. They frankly admitted, which was not admitted before, that certain communications in the nature of a letter, though not circulars, may be sent for a half-penny, and they described and classified these communications. Any definition which involved a reference to the "nature of a letter" was bound to be unsatisfactory, for the simple reason that a letter has never yet been defined from a postal point of view; and, therefore, the plan adopted of discarding this phrase from the definition of a circular, and admitting instead certain classes of documents on certain conditions is perhaps the best that could have been adopted. They further altered the definition of a circular, abolishing the troublesome condition that the document should bear "internal evidence of being addressed to several persons in identical terms," and substituted the plain requirement that the circular should be wholly in print with certain specific exceptions.

The rules of the Postal Union recognise a reduced rate for printed matter, and the same rate, commencing at a higher *minimum*, for commercial documents.

It is believed that newspapers and books yield no profit, even if they do not entail a considerable loss ; for, while the average charge, taking newspapers and books together, is less than that for letters, the expense is greater, since, from their large bulk and weight, newspapers and books give more trouble in sorting, are heavier in conveyance, and are a greater burden to the letter carriers.

Newspapers.—On the introduction of penny postage a high weight was fixed for newspapers, the Government being no doubt of opinion that the liberal dissemination of public intelligence had advantages to the body politic which more than outweighed the burden cast upon the Post Office though this concession involved the carrying of postal matter in its mails at less than cost price. Their policy overbore the scruples of the department.

It is recognised that newspapers are a necessity to present conditions of civilisation, and that they exercise an educational effect on the people ; in some countries, as for instance, New South Wales and Tasmania, they are allowed to be sent in the domestic (inland) service free of postage, while in the majority of others they are carried at rates which just pay for their handling. In France newspapers weighing less than fifty grammes, or 1·7 ounces, may be sent within the department (district) in which they are published for one centime, or one-tenth of a penny, or about one pie. The newspaper post practically established a preferential rate in favour of the proprietors of newspapers as compared with persons interested in other commercial undertakings.

In his sixth report the Postmaster-General says :—" By some of the applicants it was urged, as it has often been by others, that the wide circulation of newspapers is a very desirable object, as it tends to diffuse knowledge, and to bind countries and colonies more to each other. No one is more

convinced of this than myself, or more highly appreciates the talent with which our newspaper press is conducted, or its general value. But the same remark on the diffusion of information, and the strengthening of ties of friendship, applies to letters and books; and ease of attainment also is very desirable with regard to all other comforts and benefits, and in a yet higher degree as relates to the necessities of life. It is of great importance, doubtless, that every person should be able to procure cheap bread, yet no one proposes to establish state mills at which corn should be ground for half the cost, or even at the full expense, without profit.

In truth the demand for special privileges in the case of newspapers is in my opinion only one of the many forms of a claim for *protection*, and resolves itself into a proposal to tax the country at large for the advantage, real or imaginary, of a particular class; and is no more valid than a proposal to protect corn, hardware or cottons.

One of the evils of such privileges is the difficulty of drawing a line of distinction. A few years ago even a high legal officer declared his inability to define a newspaper; and how can it be expected that a power which was wanting in him can be possessed by the crowd of persons, many of them having but little education, engaged in the business of the Post Office?

Yet unless a broad line of demarcation be drawn, not only the department but the public have difficulty in recognising it; and partly from error, and partly by design, endless attempts are made to infringe the rule, and to extend the privilege to matter which it was not intended to include. Such attempts, in turn, give rise, for the protection of the revenue, to many regulations having no apparent necessity, difficult to remember, and irritating in their operation when they have unwittingly been broken. And thus a plan, unsound as I should hold it in its original construction, begets endless trouble and annoyance." In his 49th report, the Postmaster-General states—"Like my predecessors for many years past, I have been urged by various commercial bodies to establish a reduced

rate of postage for 'periodical' publications other than registered newspapers; but after giving careful consideration to the subject, I have not felt justified in adopting the suggestion. The particular proposal pressed upon me was that 'periodicals' should be allowed to pass through the post at the rate of one-half penny for 6 ozs., the existing rate being one-half penny for 2 ozs. If such a concession were allowed, it could not, in my opinion, be fairly confined to 'periodicals' however defined, but I am satisfied that the existing half-penny post is not remunerative. The cost of conveying and handling a 2 oz. packet is, on the average, more than a half-penny; and I can see no sufficient grounds for asking your Lordships to assent to additional loss which would be involved in increasing from 2 to 6 ozs. the weight which may pass at that rate."

A writer has explained how the distribution of newspapers does not pay the Post Office—"The fact is that the Post Office is in a false position with regard to newspapers. It has a monopoly for the distribution of letters, and therefore that can be made to pay. It has no monopoly for the distribution of newspapers, and therefore it is made to carry just those that it will pay nobody to carry, and the news-agents do all the carrying that there is a profit in. It hardly seems a fair arrangement. Here is a news-agent delivering newspapers to every door of a street a mile in length at a farthing each; he can earn nearly ten shillings on his four hundred deliveries of penny papers. True he has one to deliver at John O'Groats and another at Lands End. Consequently he gives them to the postman, with two whole half-penny stamps for the trouble. The postman has a thousand miles more or less to travel in the business, and earns one penny; the news-agent has a mile to foot it, and earns ten shillings. Under these circumstances it is perhaps not much to be wondered at that the distribution of newspapers does not pay the Post Office."

In the United States the abuses of newspapers privilege are rampant, and have been referred to for years in annual reports. The report for the year 1901-02 states that the efforts

of the Post Office to correct the abuses were checked by the appeal of interested parties to the courts, and restraining orders were issued by the Supreme Court of the district of Columbia in a number of cases, which will test the right of the Postmaster-General to exclude from the 1 cent per pound rate magazines of various kinds, etc., not entitled to that rate. Should the decision of the court be favourable to the Post Office, that class of publications would be carried at the rate of 4 cents per pound, which, it is estimated, is what it costs the Government to deliver them.

In a previous report (1887-88) the Postmaster-General, United States, says, the letter postage which alone yields a profit, must make good the loss sustained in the conveyance of printed papers, newspapers, samples, etc., which are transmitted at reduced rates. These articles furnish perhaps one-third of the weight and bulk of the mails, while they return about one-fortieth of the revenue, so that the Administration effects their conveyance below cost price. From 1st July 1907 to 31st December 1907 special weighings of mail matter were undertaken, and it was found that second class matter (newspapers) contributed 63.91 per cent. of the weight of the mails and yielded 5.19 per cent. of the revenue, and it was estimated that the loss to the Administration was about 57,000,000 dollars.

CHAPTER XII.

MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS—*Continued.*

Monopoly.—It has been shown in the chapters on the History of the Post Office that the object of the Crown in establishing the letter post appears to have been quite as much for the formation of a profitable monopoly as for the accommodation of the public. Mr. Joyce in his *History of the Post Office* says :—" However it may have been in after years, the original object of the monopoly, the object avowed and proclaimed was that the State might possess the means of detecting and defeating conspiracies against itself."

By Act 7 & 8 William IV and I. Victoria, chap. XXXIII, the Postmaster-General has the exclusive privilege of transmitting letters with a few exceptions, *viz.*, (1) letters sent by a private friend, (2) letters sent by special messengers on the private affairs of the senders or receivers, (3) writs, etc., issuing from the courts of justice, (4) letters sent out of the kingdom by private vessels, (5) communications from owners of vessels or of their cargoes sent gratis, (6) advices of goods sent by carriers to be delivered with the goods.

Some persons are altogether prohibited from carrying letters even for nothing, unless the letters are such as are allowed in the previous exceptions. Among those so prohibited are carriers, owners and masters of vessels passing from place to place in the British dominions, and passengers by such vessels. On this subject Mr. Bains, in his *Forty Years at the Post Office*, says :—" Why the posting of a letter should be thickly surrounded by a thorny hedge of legal defence will cease to be a matter of surprise if my readers will but address themselves to the consideration of a single task, as one of many which bestrew the legal path—that of drawing up the definition of a letter. What is a letter ? For my part, I should see no chance

of success in making the attempt, especially as a valued colleague, well qualified by long service in the Post Office and intimate acquaintance with postal legislation to decide questions of the kind, once in my hearing gave an opinion to the effect that a strict exposition of the Postmaster-General's monopoly would go far to include all packages closed against inspection which are transmitted to a distance. Habit and common-sense, practice and public opinion, have put limits, generally understood and to a great extent defined by Treasury warrant, to the exercise of the postal monopoly ; but, still, it is the fact that while the carriage of a portmanteau, safely locked, exposes the carrier to no risk of a Post Office prosecution, yet the conveyance of a letter closed against inspection, or even open, unless it comes within the provision of some saving clause, renders the person who conveys it liable to pains and penalties which are real and not fanciful. But no act of Parliament or binding warrant, to my knowledge, positively declares in what a letter consists, nor where the monopoly of the Postmaster-General actually begins and where it ends."

Legal right in the colonies.—By law the Postmaster-General of the United Kingdom is still held to have authority over the rates of postage leviable in the colonies,—at any rate, to places outside colonial jurisdiction—and his power may legally extend even further. At all events, unless by orders in Council or Act of Parliament the management of postal arrangements within a crown colony is specially delegated to the colonial authorities, there the orders of the Postmaster-General, run until he himself shall tacitly, or by instrument, waive his legal rights.

Opening letters.—A Secret Committee was appointed in 1844 to enquire into this subject, and they recommended Parliament to decide that the power and prerogative of opening letters, under certain given circumstances, should *not* be abrogated. They argued that, if the *right* of the Secretary of State was denied, it would be equivalent to advertising to every criminal conspirator against the public peace, that he might

employ the Post Office with impunity. It was decided, in consequence of this finding, that the law should remain unaltered.

Threatening letters.—In English law it is a breach of the peace—the malicious sending of a letter threatening to murder. Criminally it is a felony to send a letter threatening to murder, or to burn, or destroy buildings, etc., or to kill or maim cattle; maximum punishment, penal servitude, ten years. To send a letter demanding money, etc., with menaces, is punishable with penal servitude to the extent of life, and if the threatening be not by letter, maximum punishment, penal servitude for five years. Sending a letter, or otherwise, threatening to accuse of certain of the graver crimes, is punishable with penal servitude (maximum) for life, or not less than five years. It is immaterial whether the person threatened be innocent or guilty of the imputed offence.

Seditious newspapers.—Section 20 of the Indian Post Office Act of 1898 prohibits the sending by post, a newspaper having on it any words, marks or designs of a seditious, scurrilous, threatening or grossly offensive character. In referring to this subject in an article I contributed to the April number of the *Calcutta Review*, 1901, it was suggested that the wording of the Act might be amended so as to give a Local Government power to declare what newspaper was seditious, and to prevent its circulation through the post.—“It would not be practicable for the Post Office to have every newspaper read before it was allowed to circulate through the Post, and so this prohibition is really ignored. But a copy of every newspaper is sent to Government and is supposed to undergo some scrutiny, and should any editor persist in indulging in sedition after warning, it would be a very simple matter for the Local Government to stop the circulation of that paper by the aid of Government machinery. This would mean extinction for the paper, and would be more effective and simple than a troublesome and expensive prosecution, enabling the editor to pose as a martyr before a sympathising native public.”

In England, the Colonies, and the United States the use of the Post has been withdrawn for the sending of lottery circulars and betting offers, and we have only to turn to the Criminal Code to see the relative condignity of sedition and gambling in the eyes of the law.

It was not till the sudden introduction of the Press Bill in 1910 that a Local Government was authorised to declare forfeit any newspaper, book or other document which appears to it to contain matter of the prohibited description, and upon such a declaration the Bill empowers the police to seize such articles and to search for the same. In each case the Local Government is the authority authorised to declare forfeiture, but a check is imposed upon the exercise of this power in that the Bill provides for an application within two months of the date of such declaration, to a special bench of three judges of the High Court on the question of fact, whether the matter objected to is or is not of the description defined in the Bill. If the High Court finds that it is not of that description, it must cancel the orders of forfeiture.

Larceny.—Robbery of the Post had become so frequent, especially in the neighbourhood of the Border, that the two Parliaments of England and Scotland jointly passed Acts in 1698 and 1699 making the robbery or seizure of the public post “punishable with death and confiscation of moveables.” In 1766 an Act was passed by Parliament, fixing the rates of postage between Great Britain and the Isle of Man, and directing that “any deputy, clerk, agent, or letter-carrier who shall steal a letter or its contents shall be guilty of felony and suffer death without benefit of clergy.” This was the penalty a hundred years ago. Robert Dyson was hanged at York in 1797 for stealing a letter, Arthur Baily was hanged at Bath in 1811 also for stealing a letter, and the last execution for this offence was that of John Barrett which took place in 1832. In the United States aggravated mail robbery was punishable with death until 1872. Larceny is still a serious offence in the eyes of the English law. If a Post Office employé, contrary

to duty, opens or detains a letter, or is accessory to its opening or detention, he is guilty of a misdemeanour, and is liable to fine or imprisonment or both.

Test Letters.—All postal officers are acquainted with test letters, which are used by every administration. The following is an account given by Edmund Yates in his *Recollections and Experiences*.—"The ordinary method of detecting an official who had fallen into dishonest ways was by making up a "test" letter, which would fall into his hands and be dealt with by him in the course of his regular duty. In this letter was an enclosure, a coin, or a packet of stamps, which had been previously marked by the testing officer, and could be sworn to in a court of justice. If the letter did not come to hand at the proper time, the suspected man was at once seized and searched, and in most cases, the contents found on him.

It was the theory of those versed in such matters that a man had generally availed himself of a good many chances of theft before the suspicions of the authorities were directed towards him; so that the testing-officer had to deal with no innocent lamb, but with a sheep possessing a considerable amount of blackness, part natural, part acquired, for whom the net must consequently be spread in an artistic manner. A good deal of ingenuity had to be exercised in the writing of the letters, in which the marked bait was enclosed, as the least suspicion of their genuineness would have induced the thieves to destroy them, and to do away with their contents. Hence the great object was to make the letters read as natural as possible.

I recollect one, which amused me very much at the time. It was addressed to some non-existent person in New Zealand, and was written as though by a brother. It went at some length into family details, all very cleverly and graphically narrated: the death of "dear old grandfather" was touched on with much pathos. It then proceeded, "You will recollect the George II six-pence which used to hang on his watch-chain, and which we used to play with when children, sitting on his knee? The poor old man perfectly remembered how pleased

you used to be with it, and desired it might be forwarded to you, after his death, as a memento. So I enclose it." I am sorry to say the coin proved an efficient bait: the thief took the letter, and we found dear old grandfather's George II sixpence in his pocket.

I have often thought since that our proceedings were wholly unconstitutional and highly reprehensible, though they had the effect of bringing affairs to a head very quickly. After the culprit had been arrested and searched, he was hauled off to the Solicitor's office, and there, in the presence of a certain select few, examined by Mr. William Peacock, who acted as a kind of French *juge d'instruction*, administered the most terrifically searching queries, and probed the man to his very marrow.

Our worthy Solicitor had formed his manner on that of certain of the most notable Old Bailey practitioners of the day, and relied greatly on his power of easy *badinage* and smart retort. One day I recollect his being completely "stumped" by a man just brought before him. "Well, sir!" he cried, in his most sarcastic tones—"Well John Smith—I see that's your name—this is a pretty piece of business!" "Is it, sir?" replied John Smith easily, "I haven't heard the particulars of it yet! Wot's it all about?" Mr. Peacock collapsed; but in general he conducted this, I believe, wholly illegal preliminary examination with so much adroitness, and got his facts so completely marshalled, that the committal of the unfortunate wretch by the magistrate was a thing of certainty and speed."

Property in letters.—In India inland articles once posted can be recalled by the senders, and cases can easily be conceived where such a privilege is of the utmost importance to the author of a letter. In principle the Post Office is merely the agent of the sender, and its obligations are not completed until his article is made over to the addressee. According to the commonsense view the sender retains his property in the article, until the latter is made over to the addressee. The British Post Office, however, maintains an old fiction, that as

soon as an article is posted, it becomes the property of the Postmaster-General, so that a letter once posted cannot be recalled. The French Post Office at one time used to contend that a letter once posted became the property of the addressee. As this was contrary to the law in all similar cases of agents or carriers, the French administration had the courage to alter their rules, and made them in conformity not only with commonsense but with common law, and a letter can now be recalled in France, by the sender, provided it has not been made over to the addressee.

In English law, letters after delivery are the property of those to whom they are addressed, but they cannot be published without the consent of the writer. If, however, a man's character is aspersed, and he has in his possession letters which enable him to clear it, he may use them for that purpose, though for no other. In the action brought by the Earl of Lytton against Miss Louisa Devey, the late Lady Lytton's executrix, and the other against Messrs. Swan and Sonnenschein, printers and publishers, Vice-Chancellor Bacon held that the letters belonged after the separation to Lady Lytton to whom they were addressed—"But the right to publish them is quite another thing; and that, in my opinion does not exist. It is a strange notion that, because one man writes to another a confidential communication, the man to whom it is written has a general right to publish it to the world."

Time of posting.—It sometimes happens that the time of posting a letter may decide whether a contract is binding or has been rescinded. One example will suffice. Dr. D. T. Jones, who lives at Sheffield, applied on October 15th, 1898, for 1,000 ordinary shares of £10 each in the London and Northern Bank, Limited, enclosing with his application a deposit of £500, or 10s. a share. His letter was received in due course by the company. On October 26th, Dr. Jones wrote from Sheffield to withdraw his application and request the return of the £500. The withdrawal was sent as a registered letter, and was delivered at about 8-30 on the morning of the 27th

before the arrival of the Secretary. On the afternoon of October 26th, at a Board meeting of the Company it was resolved to allot the 1,000 shares to Dr. Jones. An allotment letter addressed to Dr. Jones, dated October 26th, was delivered in Sheffield on the 27th at 7-30 P.M. The question was whether the withdrawal was in time, and came for decision on an application by Dr. Jones to have his name removed from the register of shareholders. The Company alleged that though the allotment letter did not reach the applicant before 7-30 P.M., it was posted before the letter of withdrawal was received. The settled law, observed Mr. Justice Cozens-Hardy, is that an offer is to be deemed accepted when the letter of acceptance is posted, the reason being that the Post Office is held to be the common agent of both parties. Logic seems to require, though law does not, that the same principle should be applied to the withdrawal of an offer. But the rule is a fair one, because where a man has committed himself to an offer, the other party may after the posting of the acceptance and before the receipt of the withdrawal have entered into engagements and contracted liabilities with third persons. The real witness in the case was the envelope in which the letter of allotment was posted. It bore a stamp-impression with the words: "11 A.M., 27th October, 1898," and it was proved that this stamp indicated that the letter was not posted at the General Post Office, but at a district post office. This shows the importance of the practice on which Jessel used to insist, of keeping the envelopes of letters. They may, as in this case, be more important than the letters themselves. This stamp raised a strong presumption that the letter was not posted until after 8-30. The Company sought to rebut the evidence by that of their own servants. It appears that Mr. Claxton, one of their clerks, was engaged with two others in preparing the letters of allotment during the whole night of the 26th—27th. At about 7 A.M., on the 27th, Mr. Claxton and one of the clerks took the letters, in bundles of 50, in a cab to St. Martins-le-Grand. After some conversation with a porter

in livery outside the building, they handed the letters to a postman who was passing, and gave him 6d. or 1s. for himself. The postman, said Mr. Claxton, went into St. Martins-le-Grand, came back and said all was right. The judge was not satisfied with Mr. Claxton's evidence, but pointed out that the postman was not an agent of the Post Office to receive letters; on the contrary that town postmen were expressly and under penalty forbidden to take letters to the post. There was, too, no evidence where this unknown postman had really deposited the letters. The learned Judge therefore decided in Dr. Jones's favour, and ordered the return of the £500 with 4 per cent. interest.

Communicating by letter of rumours against the character of a Judicial officer.

An important principle of public right was confirmed by a decision of the Sessions Judge at Benares. Mr. Alfred Nundy of Gorakhpur was heavily fined for communicating in a letter to the authorities certain rumours against the conduct of a sub-judge. On appeal, the fine was quashed, and it was pointed out in the judgment that the allegations in the letter written by Mr. Nundy have not been substantiated, but their truth was not the point at issue. The real question was whether a man who was under the impression that information was desired in responsible quarters about the character of a sub-judge was entitled to communicate by letter the rumours that were in circulation. In writing his letter Mr. Nundy was most careful to explain that he was not in a position to verify these rumours. In finding that the communication was privileged and that it was made without malice, the judge points out that the reputations of men holding judicial positions are matters of public interest, and that every citizen does his duty by assisting to preserve the credit of the bench. If Mr. Nundy had professed to know that the rumours were well-founded when as a fact he was only familiar with them as rumours, he would have exceeded the limits of privilege. But

the wording of his letter was most accurate, and he ought never to have been prosecuted for what he did. The judgment is a carefully reasoned statement of the duty which members of the public have in directing attention to anything that may be likely to bring discredit on the administration of justice.

Exemption from serving on juries.—Postal officers are exempted from serving on juries. In England the jury list is exhibited at the principal door of every church, chapel, or other place of public worship, on the first three Sundays in September. If a postal officer's name is entered thereon, the officer should attend the petty sessions, or court, at the time appointed for the revision of the list, and claim exemption.

Overtime.—The Department retains and uses in the public interest the right to call upon any of its servants to perform overtime, whenever the exigency of the service requires the same, and it is the duty of every officer to give such extra attendance at all times as the circumstances call for.

Responsibility.—The responsibilities of common carriers do not extend to the Postmaster-General in the United Kingdom, or to the Secretary of State, in India, or to any of their subordinates; but a Postmaster is answerable in the ordinary courts of law for individual acts of negligence, and by section 6 of the Indian Post Office Act no officer of the Post Office incurs liability by reason of loss, mis-delivery, delay or damage, unless he has caused the same fraudulently or by his wilful act or default. All subordinates of the postal service are, of course, responsible to the Postmaster-General, who may and upon due cause will, besides other and official punishment, require them to make good to the sufferers losses which have been inflicted by proven breach of duty.

Postal servants and politics.—In the United Kingdom the Post Office Act of 1711 prohibited the Postmasters-General and all persons serving under them from intermeddling in elections. They were forbidden under heavy penalties "to persuade any one to give or to dissuade any one from giving

his vote for the choice." This was repealed in 1874. In 1782 Post Office servants were disfranchised, and this was repealed in 1868.

During the general election of 1892 a quasi-political agitation was carried on by some of the London-sorters, who tried to influence candidates for Parliament by exacting pledges for the promise of Parliamentary support. The leaders were dismissed, and the principle upheld, that officials of the Department are to hold themselves free as public servants to serve either party in the State, without putting themselves prominently forward as political partisans.

Some of the Australian Colonies refuse to allow public servants a vote for the ordinary members of their assemblies, but allow them to return to the legislature, direct representatives of the Civil Service.

A Government servant may not take part in, or subscribe in aid of any political movement in India or relating to Indian affairs, nor may he attend any political meeting his presence at which is likely to be misconstrued or to impair his public usefulness.

Strikes.—In the present complex state of civilisation at which we have arrived, society depends upon the co-operation of several classes of public servants (railway, postal, and telegraph) not only for its food-supply, but for its business and social necessities. It is as monstrous that these classes, who are essentially public servants, whether the business is actually in the hands of the State, or delegated to companies, should use their position to overawe a country as it would be for soldiers or sailors to do the same by physical force. Representation of grievances is one thing, but a secretly concocted strike sprung on the country by surprise is nothing but a dangerous form of conspiracy, and deserves to be penalised as such. In Germany, Holland, Italy and Turkey it is now a penal offence for railway workers to strike. Employés have the right to make a full representation of their grievances, and if the conditions of service do not suit them they can hand in their

resignations. If they do not give statutory notice they should be punished; if they give notice in combination with the express object of demoralising the service, they should be made clearly to understand that whatever the consequences may be they will never be allowed to enter the service again.

The general principle adopted by Mr. Irvine in the great Victoria railway strike is sound, *viz.*, that the acceptance of Government employment on State railways places the workers on the footing of men who owe a certain definite duty to the public, which they cannot be allowed to ignore on account of any private grievances.

The strike of postal officials in Paris during March, 1909, placed the country in great peril. At a time when the question of peace or war in Europe was trembling in the balance of negotiation, the rulers of France were suddenly cut off from communication with their representatives in other countries, and the rulers of these countries, in like manner, were cut off from communication with France. The military strength of the country, even her power to resist invasion, was for the time thrown absolutely into abeyance. Had war broken out, the French defence for the first day or so must have been as disorganised as the telegraph service. It is easy to conceive almost as grave a situation in India. By section 50 of the Indian Post Office Act if a postman or a runner withdraws from duty without permission, or without having given one month's previous notice in writing, he shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to one month, or with a fine up to Rs. 50, or with both. There is no clause in the Act regarding the withdrawal from duty of the clerical establishment.

Gambling and fraudulent schemes.—In several countries the use of the Post is withdrawn for the furtherance of gambling and fraudulent schemes. The Postmaster-General, United Kingdom, in his 54th Report, says :—“ It was represented to me that the impression of the official ‘ paid ’ stamp on packets containing lottery circulars gave them a quasi-official appearance which was likely to mislead ignorant members of the public.

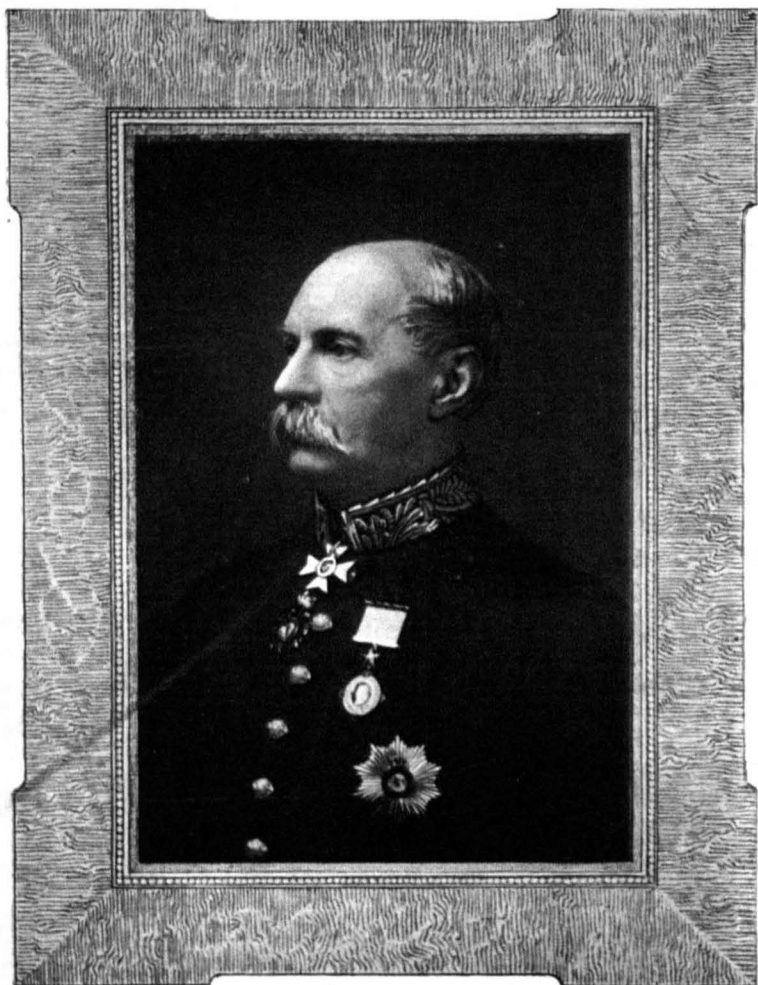
In consequence of this, and in order to decrease the facilities hitherto offered to senders of lottery circulars, any person desiring to post large batches of packets and to pre-pay the postage in money, is now required to sign a form of declaration to the effect that the packets do not contain lottery or betting circulars, and may be required to open a specimen packet. The effect of this arrangement has been to reduce considerably the number of packets containing lottery circulars observed in the post."

In New Zealand, the Minister may, by notification in the Gazette, prohibit the registration, forwarding, or delivery of postal packets, and the issue or payment of money orders to any person whom he has at any time reasonable ground to suppose is engaged in receiving any money or valuable thing as the consideration for an assurance or agreement, expressed or implied, to pay or give any money or valuable thing on any event or contingency relating to any horse-race or other race, fight, game, sport or exercise, or as the consideration for securing the paying or giving by some other person of any money or valuable thing on any such event or contingency ; or in promoting or carrying out any scheme connected with any lottery, scheme of chances or unlawful game ; or in receiving money under pretence of foretelling future events ; or in any fraudulent, obscene, immoral or unlawful business or undertaking ; or in advertising in direct or indirect terms the treatment of diseases of the sexual organs. The Postmaster-General has power to order the destruction of the contents of any postal packet (other than a letter or a letter-card) which he has reason to suspect contains or is supposed to contain any printed or written matter of any kind, or any enclosure of any kind, which is of a libellous, blasphemous, indecent, or immoral nature, or likely to have an indecent or immoral effect ; or an advertisement of any lottery or scheme of chance.

By the Patent Medicine Act which came into force in Canada on 1st April, 1909, all patent medicines have to be approved and passed by the Minister of Inland Revenue, and a

label showing this has been done must be attached before the drug is put on the market, and distribution of samples through the post is made an offence.

From a report on the United States Post Office it appears the Postmaster-General is authorised by law, upon evidence satisfactory to him that any person or company is engaged in conducting through the mails a lottery or similar enterprise, or a scheme for obtaining money or property by means of fraudulent pretences or false representations, to stop the delivery of letters or other matter addressed to such person or company. Upon the issue of a fraud order, postal articles including money orders are not delivered, but stamped "Fraudulent" and returned to the senders. It is claimed that the amount of money saved the public by timely action against swindlers using the mails has never been so large. The fraud orders issued against quack medical concerns probably exceeded in number those against any other class of unlawful enterprises. The Post Office had also to contend with the work-at-home schemes offering the reader profitable employment in his spare moments at home by remitting a small sum for an outfit. The Department was specially successful in its efforts to suppress the so-called prize package schemes. It was the practice of manufacturers and dealers in certain commodities to place in their packages premiums or prizes of different characters and values. It was held that plans of this kind contravene the lottery statutes and the offenders were requested to discontinue the objectionable business. Manufacturers and dealers generally have gladly abandoned the plan upon the assurance that all other persons engaged in its conduct would be required to do likewise.



Sir A. FANSHAWE.

THE GAZETTE OF INDIA, NOVEMBER 17, 1906.

POST OFFICE.

Calcutta, the 16th November, 1906.

No. 8831-301.—In notifying the retirement from service of Sir Arthur Upton Fanshawe, K.C.I.E., C.V.O., C.S.I., Director-General of the Post Office of India, the Governor-General in Council desires to place upon record his appreciation of the eminent services rendered to the State by that officer in the Post Office of India.

2. The connection of Sir Arthur Fanshawe with the Post Office commenced in 1881, and in 1889 he was appointed Director-General, a post which he held until his retirement from the service. Of the seventeen years during which he was at the head of the Department, periods of leave and deputation occupied more than three, so that he was actually responsible for the work of the Department for nearly fourteen years. The period has been one of expansion, in which the work of the Post Office has exhibited rapid and continuous growth. Since 1889 the number of units of mail matter dealt with has more than doubled, while the gross revenue of the Department has risen from Rs. 1,30,00,000 with a deficit of Rs. 7,50,000 to Rs. 2,47,50,000 with a surplus of Rs. 11,30,000. As head of the Department it was Sir Arthur Fanshawe's task to develop such institutions as the Post Office Savings Bank and the Money Order and Life Assurance Schemes which were inaugurated by his predecessors. His energies were also devoted to the reduction of rates, the formation of more intimate postal relations with foreign countries and Native States, the acceleration of the Railway Mail Service and of the Steamer Service to Europe, and to the extension of Post Office facilities for the convenience both of the general public and of the Departments of Government. An administrator of exceptional ability, at once firm and judicious, Sir Arthur Fanshawe deserves the chief share of the credit for the development of the Post Office system during the period of his incumbency and for its present efficient and flourishing condition. The Governor-General in Council found him on all occasions a most sound and sagacious adviser, whose views were expressed with admirable lucidity and on whose judgment it was safe to rely.

W. L. HARVEY,
Secretary to the Government of India.

PART II.

CHAPTER XIII.

EARLY POSTS IN INDIA.

THE history of India prior to the advent of the British is chiefly a record of successive conquests from the north-west caused by invasions of hordes from Central Asia ; and there has seldom been peace for any long period, for when the country was not suffering from external invasions, it was engaged in internal strife. In a "Memorandum on some of the results of British administration during the past fifty years of British rule in India," published by the India Office in 1909, credit is taken of the fact that India internally had enjoyed unbroken peace for this period. The comment of the local *press* being, that the fact was so obvious as to tempt us to overlook its significance, and it added :—"But in the long and confused history of India where is a similar period of profound peace to be found?" In Europe, as described in previous chapters, it was in the early part of the sixteenth century that postal services began to be established. In 1468 Louis XI established a service in France, and a service is said to have existed in England during the reign of Edward IV. In Germany a service was started in 1504 and in Portugal 1520. A monopoly of letter carrying was established in England 1635, and in 1643 the French Post Office was declared the property of the State. Whereas it can be imagined that the condition of India was not favourable to the preservation of documents, and consequently difficulty has been experienced in tracing any allusions to organised postal services maintained for State purposes. Previous to the Moghul Empire in India (1526-1761) a geologist would say that the record is missing as far as postal subjects are concerned, and the record becomes traceable in the time of

the British, who first legalised the use of the State Posts by the public, and then re-organised them to suit the public interests.

About 712—714 the Arab Caliphs conquered Sind and probably maintained their postal service described in Chapter I.

The advancement and splendour of the Moghul Empire in India corresponds in date closely to the Elizabethan period in English history, and prior to this civilisation in India had not reached a high standard, and after the Moghul dynasty till the conquest by the British, civilisation had not advanced, and there is nothing to correspond to the moral and material progress of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Babar, the Founder of the Moghul Empire in India, was a descendant of Chenghiz Khan, and the Moghuls must have introduced their postal service. Ferista states, that Sher Shah during his short reign of five years, 1541—45, was the first who ever employed a mounted post in India, and constructed a road from Sonarung in Bengal to the banks of the Indus in Sind, a distance of 2,000 miles, and placed two dāk horses on the road at every two miles. This establishment of post horses was for the rapid conveyance of Government despatches and for the accommodation of trade and correspondence. On the principal roads Akbar is said to have placed two swift horses and some *mewias* (runners) at a distance of every 5 *kos* (10 miles) for the carriage of Government letters and sometimes private correspondence. A 100 miles were covered in a day and night, and a letter from Agra would reach Ahmedabad in Guzerat in five days. A writer on this subject says :—
“ Under Moghul rule the Post Office, as we understand it, existed only in germ. Communications were kept up by means of *kassids* between provincial satraps and the district authorities ; but private individuals wishing to correspond with each other did so by the agency of special messengers. It is probable that the Government runners were willing for a consideration to deliver private letters, and that in these illicit dealings

we must see the origin of the public post. Here, as in every branch of social economy, the advent of British rule brought with it a recognition of the people's wants. Before the close of the eighteenth century postal lines had been established between the principal towns."

In Selections from the Records of the Government of India, 1748-1767, it is said :—"Runners were employed at an early period to carry the letters, which in those days of isolation were few and far between ; there were no roads but tracks through the jungles beset with tigers, which could only be kept off by lighted torches and the harsh notes of the drum. In 1748 there were dāk runners between Cuttack and Ganjam ; they were very indolent, and it was proposed to substitute mounted postmen for them ; they were in the line to Madras, but we find that between March and September no communication from Calcutta reached Madras, on which the Governor of Calcutta remarked "it is not worth while to put the Company to the expense of *kassids* when we have nothing to advise."

The sea route to England was not only tedious, a six or eight months voyage, but it was also dangerous ; war between England and France was chronic, and French cruisers often captured English vessels, watching for them off the Sandheads or in the chops of the Channel ; hence the Company's letter and despatches were always triplicate. On special occasions, however, letters were sent *viâ* Bombay, Bussora and Aleppo ; the news of the Battle of Plassey reached England through the latter channel.

A regular British postal system appears to have been first introduced in 1766 by Lord Clive, then President in the Bay and Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Fort William. The order on the subject is :—

"*For the better regulation of the Dawks.*—Ordered that in future all letters be despatched from the Government House ; the postmaster or his assistant attending every night to sort and see them off ; that the letters to the different Inland Settle-

ments be made up in separate bags sealed with the Company's seal; that no one may open the packets except the chiefs at different places who are to open only their respective packets; and ordered that they be directed to observe the same rule with respect to the letters sent down to Calcutta."

Under Warren Hastings' administration the Post Office was placed on a better footing, and steps taken to make the posts which were established for official purposes, more generally available for private communications. The existing state of affairs at the time is described in "Consultations, 17th January, 1774":—"The present management of the Dauks is attended with many inconveniences. Private letters are exempt from postage and the whole expense of the establishment falls upon the Company. The Dauks from the same cause are loaded with packages of the most frivolous kind and unreasonable weights. The privilege of sending private letters by the Dauks being confined to the European inhabitants, affords but a partial aid to the necessary intercourse of trade. The establishment is branched out into various departments all independent and unconnected, the expense partly defrayed by ready-money payments and partly by taxes on the zemindars and farmers who make an advantage of them in the deductions of their rents. From all these causes the establishment is involved in a labyrinth of obscurity, without checks and without system. The delays on the road are often greater than those of common *kassids* or couriers without a possibility of correcting them, because it cannot be known by whom they are occasioned. Of these delays the President himself has had repeated proofs in so much that whenever he has had occasion for extraordinary despatch he has made use of express *kassids*, and these never failed to execute the regular Dauks by nearly half the space of time employed by the latter for the same distance. The loose and irregular manner in which letters are received and distributed exposes the correspondence of individuals, and even the public despatches to great delays and to the risk of being lost or intercepted."

On the 31st March, 1774, a regular system was prescribed and brought into force. A Postmaster-General was appointed, and postage was for the first time charged on private letters. The lowest rate of letter postage was 2 annas per 100 miles, copper tickets of the value of two annas, to be used solely for postal purposes, were specially struck for the public convenience.

On the 1st December, 1784, Warren Hastings laid down revised regulations for the Post Office, and further revisions were made from time to time, until 1837, when by Act XVII of that year, a public post was established, and Government reserved to itself the exclusive right to convey letters for hire in the territories of the East India Company.

About 1790 the mail bags in Bengal were conveyed by *hurkaras* or runners, who were changed at intervals of eight miles. Each was attended by a drummer, who beat a loud tattoo while passing through jungly tracts known or suspected to harbour tigers. After night-fall two torch-bearers formed part of the escort, and where the road was especially dangerous a brace of archers were supplied. The little band was thus under ordinary circumstances secure from attacks of their feline foes. Sometimes, however, a hungry man-eater would defy the united forces of the department, scatter drummers, link-men and archers by a sudden onset, and disappear with a victim before his sacred comrades had regained their presence of mind. The district of Chota Nagpore, then known as Ramghur, had an evil reputation in this respect. On more than one occasion the Company's mails were stopped nearly every night for a fortnight consecutively while traversing one of the four passes near Hazaribagh. From one danger which still awaits his descendants in office the runner of 1790 was free. Like Horace's traveller who rejoiced in his empty pockets, he feared no assault by highwaymen. Registration, insurance and value-payable parcels were all in the womb of futurity, and the mail bags seldom contained anything of intrinsic worth. The *banghy dāk* enjoyed a similar immunity, except in the

States of the Nawab Vizier of Oudh. For, be it noted, India had a parcel post a century at least before the introduction of that loudly heralded improvement at home. The banghies travelled somewhat slower than the mails; but a watch might be sent from Allahabad to Calcutta for repair and returned in less than a month. The burden imposed on the State by these primitive but fairly satisfactory arrangements must have been considerable, for the monthly charges of each eight-mile stage were twenty-five rupees. These included the salary of a munshi whose time was largely occupied in collecting dues in kind for letters illicitly conveyed. The pre-payment of postal charges was optional with the sender. They were heavy; and were levied on no fixed principle. A letter to Berhampore, 106 miles from Calcutta, was taxed at four annas, while the postage between the metropolis and Allahabad was only seven annas. But English rates were still dearer. A letter from London to Bath, also 106 miles, was charged 8*d*. It is satisfactory to learn that the respectable speed of a hundred miles per diem was maintained, except during the annual inundations; and that, barring accidents, the bags arrived with tolerable punctuality.

In 1793 letters for Europe were sent by the Company's ships, and the following notification as to postage was issued. "Every private letter or package which weighs more than two ounces to be taxed with the payment of four sicca rupees; exceeding four ounces, sixteen rupees; and so on," the rates being formed of the squares of the number of ounces which they exceeded in weight.

W. H. Carey says in *The Good Old Days of Honorable John Company* that the government had had in contemplation a project of a more frequent and regular communication with Europe through Bussorah, which was on the 1st January, of the year 1798 carried into effect. A certain number of packet-boats were placed on this service, one to leave Bombay every month, and for the accommodation of individual correspondence, private letters of certain dimensions and

under the following restrictions, were admitted into the packet upon payment of postage which would be considered extravagant in our day :—(1) “No letter shall exceed in length four inches, in breadth two inches, nor be sealed with wax. (2) All letters shall be sent to the Secretary of Government, with a note specifying the writer, and with the writer’s name signed under the address, to be countersigned by the Secretary previous to deposit in the packet, as a warrant of permission. (3) Postage shall be paid on delivery of the letter, at the rate of ten rupees a single letter, weighing one quarter of a rupee ; for letters weighing half a rupee, fifteen rupees ; and for those weighing one rupee, twenty rupees.” Two mails were transmitted by each despatch, one of which was sent *via* Aleppo, the other *via* Bagdad.

The post of Mysore, probably the most enlightened of the Native States, can claim some antiquity. On its being taken over in 1889 by the Post Office of India, a Bombay paper wrote :—“The Mysore *anche*—by which name the post office is locally known—was organised over two centuries ago by Deva Raja Urs at a time when there were very few regular postal systems in existence. Since then, constant improvements have been made to meet the requirements of the Mysore people, which it does at rates which entitles it to be regarded as ‘the cheapest postal system in the British Empire—probably in the whole world.’ That this claim is not an extravagant one must be admitted when it is borne in mind that the charge for registering a letter is only half an anna as compared with a fee of two annas in British India. Besides many other advantages, the people of Mysore have the benefit of an express post on the payment of an anna a mile, a great convenience in districts where there are no telegraphs.” It may be added that the amalgamation of the posts in Mysore with the Post Office of India in 1889 was followed by an increase of a million in the number of postal articles delivered in that State during the first year of our management.

In the Bombay Presidency, wealthy opium merchants

often established horse and foot daks for the conveyance of their private correspondence, as a gain of ten minutes sometimes materially affected their speculations. The only native dak in Bengal was the Nizamats Dak between Calcutta and Murshedabad. It was maintained by the Nawab Nizam for the sole convenience of himself, and the members of his family, and those connected with the Palace. The time in transit between Murshedabad and Calcutta was from 50 to 60 hours, considerably longer than the Government Post took to perform the same distance. During the month it conveyed from 400 to 600 letters and from 25 to 80 parcels, and was maintained at a monthly cost of Rs. 197-4-7. It was abolished by Government in 1838.

In Oudh, the King maintained a dak for Government purposes between Lucknow and the principal stations, but this was not available for the convenience of the public; and Poorun Mull maintained a dak in the United (then North-West) Provinces but both of these were suppressed, and were not in existence in 1850.

The following interesting postal notification of 1808-09 is reproduced in full as it gives a very good insight into the constitution and working of the Post Office a hundred years ago.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT OF INDIA.

Notices of 1808-9.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENT, PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

Notice is hereby given that the Honourable the Governor in Council has been pleased to establish the following improved Regulations for the Post Office Department, which are to take effect from the 1st December next.

1. That all letters of every description not on the Public Service shall be liable to postage, except those from, and bearing the signature of the Governor, a Judge of the Supreme Court, a Member of Council, Commander-in-Chief of the Army,

or His Majesty's Naval Commander-in-Chief, on the envelope, or such as may be franked by the Chief Secretary to Government.*

2. That all letters addressed to the Governor, Commander-in-Chief, a Judge of the Supreme Court, a Member of Council, or His Majesty's Naval Commander-in-Chief, shall bear the usual postage, except such as may be exclusively on the Public Service, from an Official Record, and are included in the list hereafter directed to be delivered in Monthly upon honour.

3. That no postage be charged on letters on the Service.

4. That all letters marked "On the Service"† coming from the following Officers, and Offices, and bearing on the envelope the name and official designation of the person by whom they may be written, shall pass free of Postage :—

The Governor.

Chief Judge of the Supreme Court.

The Commander-in-Chief.

The Admiral.

Their Secretaries.

Members of Council.

Puisne Judges of the Supreme Court.

The Chief Secretary to Government.

The Secretaries of the Revenue, Commercial, Military and Medical Boards ; Letters to be endorsed "On the Service" and signed on the envelope with the words "by order of the Board of....."

Register of the Sudder Adawlut.

Do. of Circuit Courts.

Do. of Zillah Courts.

The above letters to be endorsed "On Service" and signed on the envelope with the words "by order of the Court of....."

* All these letters are now franked by Service Stamps.

† The superscription is now "On His Majesty's Service."

They are generally countersigned by the Chief Clerk.

Revenue Collectors.

Commercial Residents.

Residents at Durbars and Foreign Courts.

Accountant-General.

Postmaster-General.

General Officers on the Staff.

Chief Engineer.

Commandant of Artillery.

Town Major of Fort St. George, Commanding Officers of Stations, Corps or Detachments, Assistant Adjutant, and Quarter-Master-Generals of Divisions.

Adjutant-General.

Deputy do. to the King's troops.

Quarter-Master-General.

Military Auditor-General.

Military Paymaster-General.

Paymasters to Stations.

Deputy do. to the King's troops.

Judge Advocate-General and Deputies.

General Agent for Cavalry Supplies.

Agent for Public Cattle.

Agent for Gun Carriages.

Commissary of Stores in charge of the Arsenal at Fort St. George.

Superintending Surgeons of Divisions.

5. All letters from, or to, Non-Commissioned Officers or Privates in His Majesty's Navy and Army, or from, or to, European Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates, or from, or to, Native Commissioned or Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates, in the Honourable Company's Marine and Military Service, shall pass free of postage ; but in order to prevent any abuse of this indulgence, no letters from the above description of persons shall be exempted from Postage, unless they bear on the envelope the official signature of their respec-

tive Commanding Officers.* With a view to prevent as much as possible any abuse of the foregoing indulgence, it is directed that the number of letters so franked do not exceed the proportion of one letter daily to every two hundred men in quarters, and of one letter to every hundred men, when marching or in the field, and further that letters so franked are to be included in the register hereafter directed to be sent monthly.

6. That all letters marked "On the Service," not attested as before described, shall be liable to postage.

7. That when a Public Officer under Government shall have occasion to correspond with individuals not on the Public Service, but on the more immediate business of the individuals, as in the case of transmitting Bills of Exchange, Promissory Notes, Receipts, or any other description of Government Securities, &c., &c., the Public Officer forwarding the letters shall, in such cases, superscribe on the envelope, with his official signature, the words "bearing postage."† When letters having such superscription shall be received at the General Post Office, the Postmaster of the Station to which the letter goes shall collect the amount from the party to whom it may be addressed and delivered; and when *vice versâ*, such letters are addressed by an individual to a Public Officer of Government, the Postage shall be received from the person delivering the letter at the Post Office.

8. All letters from Subordinate Officers to their respective Boards are to be addressed to the Board, and not to the Secretary, who is, however, to frank all letters from the Board in the form before directed; and all letters to the other public officers are to be addressed to the head of the office, and not to any Subordinate Officer in it.

The postage on these letters used to be 9 pies, but since the soldier has been paid according to the ruling rate of exchange, the rate has been raised to one anna. The letters are now generally signed by the man's Company Officer. There is no limit as to their number.

† Now "Service unpaid." This rule still exists.

9. That conformable to the principle of charging $1\frac{1}{2}$ fanams* for each single letter for every 100 miles, the following rates are to be adopted.

Letters not exceeding in weight one rupee to be considered as single.

from 1	to $1\frac{1}{2}$	double,
$1\frac{1}{2}$	to 2	treble,
2	to $2\frac{1}{2}$	quadruple,
$2\frac{1}{2}$	to 3	or 1 oz. †

to be considered as a packet, and to bear five times the original Postage, and for every additional half ounce treble the original Postage of a single letter to the place where such letter is addressed is to be added, to the extent of 12 ounces, beyond which all letters are to be sent by the Cavedy Tappal.‡

10. That Postage be levied on all ship letters to or from all parts of the world, and charged conformable to the following table of rates, with the exception of Europe letters from and to the Governor, Judges of the Supreme Court, Members of Council, and Naval and Military Commander-in-Chief:—Single letters weighing as marked in the preceding table, to pay 3 fanams, and beyond that to increase at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ fanams for every $\frac{1}{2}$ rupee weight till the weight shall exceed 12 rupees, when they are to be considered as Packets, and subject to the Payment of one Pagoda.§

11. All ship letters for the outstations to be liable to the rates specified in the foregoing table, in addition to the established Inland Postage; and that on all ship letters for the outstations upon which the ship postage has not been paid, “ship postage not paid” is to be marked on the envelope, and the ship postage thereof, as well as the inland postage

* A fanam is equal to $1\frac{1}{4}$ annas, not quite 2d., at the rate of 2s. to the rupee.

† *i.e.*, for each oz. about 9d. for every 100 miles inland had to be paid.

‡ “Tappal” means post. The Cavedy Tappal was a sort of parcel post, carried by coolie.

§ A Pagoda was equal to $3\frac{1}{2}$ rupees.

thereon, is to be collected by the Postmaster of the station at which the person resides to whom the letter is addressed. That the ship postage on all letters intended for exportation is to be collected from the parties at the foregoing rates by the Postmaster of the Office into which the letter is first put, along with the inland postage they may bear to the General Post Office.

12. That as an encouragement to persons having ship letters to bring them to the Post Office, a reward of one fanam shall be paid to the person so bringing them on delivery thereof.

13. That all newspapers pay postage, that those (with the exception of the Government Gazette) within the weight of one ounce be considered as single letters, and pay accordingly, and that all beyond that weight pay *pro rata* according to their weight. That the Government Gazette shall be for the present charged only half postage.

14. That the Master Attendant shall immediately report to the General Post Office the arrival of all vessels from Europe, and particularly attend to the early landing of their letter packets, which are to be sent to the General Post Office and there opened, the Secretary to Government, or some one deputed by him, attending to receive the public despatches; and when the letters for the Governor, Commander-in-Chief and Member of Council, shall have been selected, the remainder shall be registered previous to their being delivered to the public.

15. That the boxes of letters for Europe be finally closed at the Post Office; and when closed, forwarded to the Office of the Secretary to Government in the Foreign Department.

16. That the Master Attendant shall give early intimation to the General Post Office of the intended departure of all vessels for any of the Eastern British possessions, Cape of Good Hope, or elsewhere, with which there is no inland communication, and deliver to the commanders of such vessels on their departure any letter packets that may be sent to his office from the General Post Office, and obtain a receipt for the same, which receipt is to be lodged in the Post Office.

17. That hereafter the hours for the despatch of the Tappal shall be six in the evening, and the hours for the General Post Office to be open to the Public shall be as follows :—

From 10 A.M. to 1 P.M., for both the receipt and delivery of letters, and from 2 to 5 P.M., for the receipt of letters only.

18. That no letters or parcels containing money, jewels, or any article of value shall be permitted to be sent by Tappal.

19. That no detention whatever of the mails must be suffered at any of the inland stations ; that when the Public Service requires it an Express may be despatched, but at the risk of the person causing it to be despatched for any improper abuse of this privilege.

In order to ascertain correctly that the preceding regulation has been acted upon to its full extent, a table will be prepared at the General Post Office, showing the distance and time of arrival at each station, with which the returns to be made by the person in charge at each station will be compared, and the Collector be held responsible for any delay which may occur.

20. All Public Officers, both Civil and Military, shall send to the offices of the Paymaster, or other Public Officer from whom he shall receive his pay, a list of the public letters despatched by him during the month preceding, with the following attestation upon honour at the foot of the same.*

“ I do hereby certify upon my honour that the above is a correct list of all the public letters despatched under my signature during the month of——, and that they were solely and entirely on the Public Service.”

21. That no abstract of pay be discharged except it be accompanied by a list to the above effect, and if it be paid without attention to this point, that circumstance alone to be considered as a sufficient cause of retrenchment.

22. The lists given in by the officers in the Civil Department to be forwarded to the office of the Civil Auditor, with the monthly accounts of the person paying the Abstracts, and those

* A register is still kept in all offices, which shows all letters despatched by post, to whom sent, and amount of postage paid on each.

in the Military Department to the office of the Military Auditor-General.

23. That the lists so forwarded do remain in deposit in the office to which they are sent for the purpose of comparing, if required, with the lists which will be ordered to be forwarded direct from the persons in charge of the Subordinate Post Offices to the Postmaster-General.

24. With the view of obviating the possibility of misconception with regard to the letters intended to be exempted from postage, it is to be unequivocally understood that, with the exception of letters from the Honourable the Governor, Commander-in-Chief, a Member of Council, His Majesty's Naval Commander-in-Chief, the Judges of the Supreme Court, or such as are franked by the Chief Secretary to Government, all letters and papers that are not exclusively on the business of the Public Service, and that have not been previously entered as an official record, are to be subject to Postage; and should it come to the knowledge of the Governor in Council that any of the officers—Civil or Military—now authorized to address letters on the Service, make an improper use of the trust so reposed in them by conveying letters on their own private concerns under a cover superscribed "On the Service," the Governor in Council will consider it to be a disqualification for office.

25. Should the name of any Public Officer obliged from his situation to carry on a public correspondence be omitted in the list, he will address a letter to Government stating the nature of his public correspondence, when, if it is deemed of sufficient importance, his name will be added to the list, or some Public Officer already included in the list will be directed to superscribe his letters on the Service.

26. Any officer on duty, or leave of absence, at the Presidency, having occasion to correspond on Public Service, will carry his letter to the Adjutant-General, who, upon being satisfied that the letter is exclusively upon the Public Service, will frank the same.

27. All officers similarly situated at the Subordinate will apply to the Commanding Officers of the stations where they may be.

28. With a view of preventing the suppression of private letters, and the misappropriation of their postage, it is directed that in future all receipts granted at the Post Office for letters delivered in, either at the Presidency or Subordinates, shall be upon stamp paper specifying the rate of single postage, date of letter delivered, place of destination, and size of letter, *i.e.*, whether single, double, or more.*

Distinct stamps shall be used for each description of letters, which shall have engraved on them the word single, double, treble, quadruple, or packet, and the same shall be repeated in each of the native languages.

With this facility of discovery every individual, both European and Native, whose letter does not reach its destination, will be enabled to obtain redress upon application to the Postmaster-General.

The Governor in Council deems it proper to repeat that any deviation from the preceding rules will not fail to subject the offending person to the severest public displeasure.

Published by Order of the Honourable the Governor in Council.

FORT ST. GEORGE, } (Sd.) G. BUCHAN,
November 18th, 1808. } *Chief Secretary to Government.*

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENT.

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

The Honourable the Governor in Council has been pleased to direct that the following Regulations shall be established

* No copies of these stamped receipts appear to have been preserved; it is not stated whether the "stamps" mentioned in the next paragraph were adhesive or impressed, but they were probably the latter, and the word stamp as used there would mean the stamped form. These would be a very early variety of postal though not of postage stamp.

in the Post Office Department in addition to the Regulations published in the Government Advertisement under date the 18th November, 1808 :—

The undermentioned officers shall be authorized to despatch letters *bonâ fide* on the Public Service free from postage, subject, however, to the declaration upon honour, prescribed in the 20th paragraph of the Government Advertisement, under date the 18th November last, *viz.* :—

The Senior Chaplain at the Presidency.

The Acting Naval Officer at Madras.

The Agent for the Government of Ceylon.

The Master Attendant at the Presidency.

The Treasurer of the Government Bank.

The Commissioner at Tranquebar.

Barrack Masters of Divisions when employed upon their periodical tours of inspection.

The Officer in charge at the General Survey.

The Superintendents of the Surveys of Travancore and the Nizam's Dominions.

Judges of the Provincial Courts when employed upon Circuit.

The Superintendent of Police.

The Medical Storekeeper of the Presidency in cases of an emergent nature; the letters and packets despatched by this officer are in ordinary cases to be franked by the Secretary to the Medical Board.

The Conservator of Forests in Malabar.

The Superintendent of Stamps.*

Officers in charge of detached branches of departments, of which the principals are authorized to frank official letters, shall be permitted to despatch letters on the Public Service free from postage, subject, however, to the prescribed declaration upon honour.

* Bill stamps, etc.

Letters from or to Non-Commissioned Officers or Privates of the European or Native Invalids shall pass free from postage under the official signature of their respective Commanding Officers, in the proportion established with respect to the effective troops in the 5th paragraph of the Government Advertisement of the 18th November, 1808.

Published by order of the Honourable the Governor in Council.

FORT ST. GEORGE,) (Sd.) G. G. KEBLE,
February 18th, 1809.) *Secretary to Government.*

In addition to the above, orders have been received for registering to the Superintendent of the Government Press the privilege of franking letters, exclusively on the business of that Institution, and for allowing the Government Gazettes and books printed at the Government Press, to be forwarded by the Tappal, the former post free, and the latter at the rate of postage chargeable on a single letter only.

Orders have likewise been given for the receipt of letters, exclusively on the Public Service, from the Senior Officers of His Majesty's Navy, it being understood that when more than one ship of war is at the same station all service letters must be franked by the senior officers.

FORT ST. GEORGE,
April 6th, 1809.

The following Declaration upon honour shall be made by officers entitled to frank the letters of Soldiers, Sailors, or Sepoys.

I do hereby certify upon my honour that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the above is a correct list of all the public letters, exclusive of Soldiers', Sailors', and Sepoys' letters despatched under my signature during the month of —, and that they were solely and entirely on the Public Service.

By order of the Honourable the Governor in Council.

(Sd.) J. H. PEILE,
Secretary to Government.

By order of Major-General Gowdie, Commanding the Army.

It will be seen that in 1808 there was a Government post. That private letters could be sent on payment. That the rates were about one anna for one tola in weight for every 100 miles.

From 1 tola to $1\frac{1}{2}$ tolas, double.

„ $1\frac{1}{2}$ tolas to 2 „ treble.

„ 2 „ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ „ quadruple.

That articles from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 tolas were considered as packets, and charged five times the original postage. Newspapers were charged an anna an ounce. That all articles above 12 ounces were sent by parcel post. That foreign letters were charged 3 annas if not exceeding a tola, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas for every half tola in excess, up to 12 tolas; and articles above 12 tolas were charged $3\frac{1}{2}$ rupees. Foreign letters for outstations were also charged the inland rates, in addition to the foreign rate. That no letters or parcels containing money, jewels, or any article of value were permitted to be sent by post. That the Revenue Collectors were in charge of the arrangements in each district, and that receipts were given for the payment of postage on each article.

In 1815 the charge for a letter from England to India was three shillings and six pence payable on delivery. Of this sum 1s. 2d. was paid to the ship, and 2d. additional to its commander.

About the year 1816 a Committee was appointed to enquire into the working of the Post Office in the Bengal Presidency, and some of its recommendations appear to have been introduced in 1820, but apparently no records now exist regarding this Committee.

The postal communication between Great Britain and India was at first maintained by the ships of the East India Company, which called at the Cape of Good Hope and Mauritius and conveyed letters to and from those places also, and when towards the end of George III's reign the British Post Office tried to get into its hands all correspondence for places

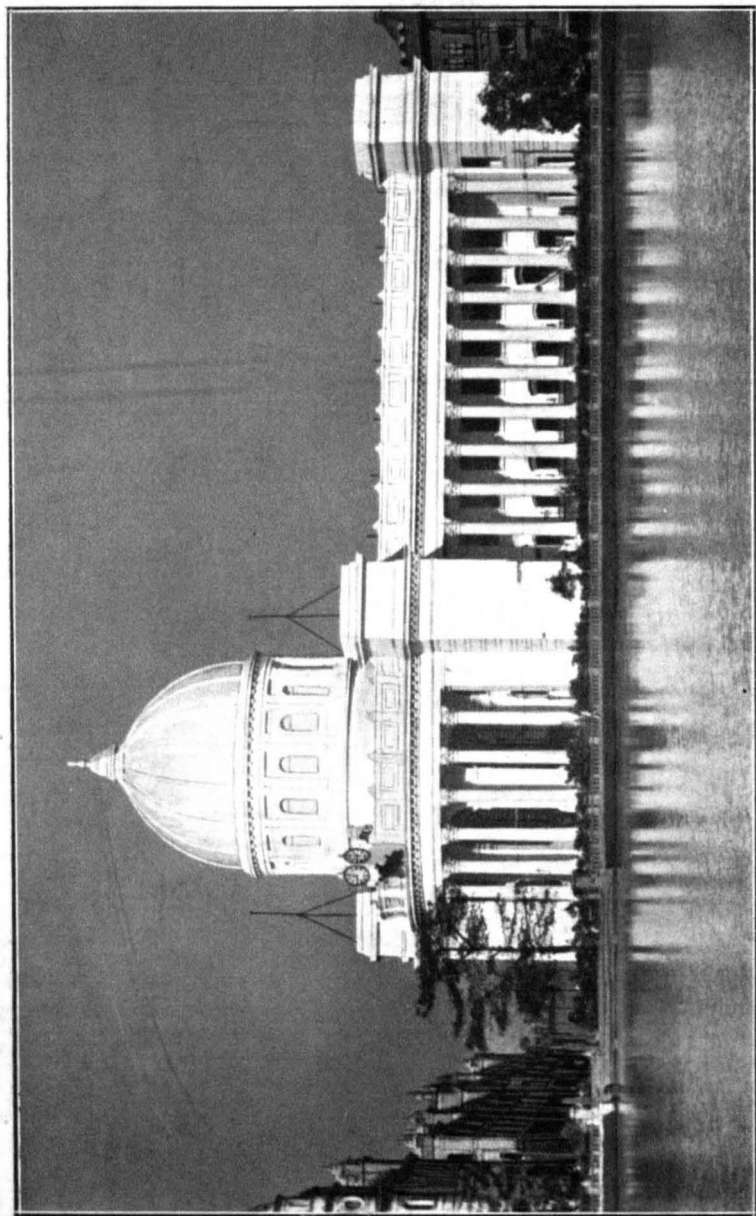
abroad, it naturally got into difficulties with the Company. In the end, by an Act of 1819, it was laid down that letters for the East Indies, the Cape, Ceylon and Mauritius might be sent otherwise than through the post : at the same time every ship sailing for those places was bound to convey mails thither free of charge, and very low rates of sea postage were fixed for correspondence entrusted for transmission to the Post Office. In 1833, it is stated, that there were no less than 427 ships by which mails were sent to and from India, and the postage was exceptionally low for that time, *viz.*, letter 2*d.* for 3 oz. and 1*d.* each additional ounce ; newspapers 1*d.*

When the mails between India and Europe were sent in sailing vessels round the Cape, the voyage generally occupied about six months, whereas the time taken now from London to Bombay is a fortnight.

The first voyage by steamer was made in 1825, and took 113 days round the Cape. The vessel was one of 470 tons displacement, with 120 horse-power. It was not till 1835 that the Indian mails were conveyed over the Isthmus of Suez and through the Red Sea. *St. Martins-le-Grand*, Vol. XI, says :—" The change in the route of the Indian mail from the Cape to Suez is associated with the name of Thomas Waghorn, who first made his appearance at the Post Office in 1827 with a scheme for building a steamship to ply between this country and India, *via* the Cape. He found that, by an Act of Parliament, the owners of vessels sailing to and from India had to carry mails free, and that the Government were not disposed to pass a special Act relieving him from this obligation, so that he might receive a subsidy for the mails he carried. After two years' agitation against what he no doubt considered 'red-tape obstruction,' Waghorn developed a more fruitful idea, that of reaching India *via* Egypt. Hearing that a steamship was about to be sent from Bombay to Suez and back, he started from London on the 1st October, 1829, travelled *via* Trieste to Alexandria, across Egypt to Suez, and, not finding the

expected steamer, made his way down the Red Sea by native boat and finished the voyage in a man-of-war. This journey showed Waghorn the practicability of the Suez route, and henceforward his efforts were mainly directed to its development. The British mail packets already went to Malta, and it was only necessary that they should go on to Alexandria. Between Suez and Bombay the East India Company must establish steamers. Several years passed before the British Government and the Company could make up their minds to spend £100,000 a year on the conveyance of mails, which had until then cost them next to nothing ; but in 1837 the Overland Mail Service was at length established, the arrangements for the transit of the mails across Egypt being entrusted to Mr. Waghorn. Very little experience showed that the best route for the mails between this country and Egypt was through France, instead of by steamer all the way between Falmouth and Alexandria ; and a special Indian mail service under the charge of a British Officer was set up between Calais and Marseilles in 1839. The mail was packed in iron boxes. Its total weight was about 400 lbs. A special coach was provided for its conveyance between Calais and Paris. Between Paris and Marseilles, which was reached on the fifth day after leaving London, sufficient room was found in the ordinary mail coach by excluding passengers from the inside." The idea of packing the mail in metal boxes is explained in Article VI of the Convention of the 30th March, 1836, between Great Britain and France, for the conveyance through France of the correspondence of the East Indies with England, and *vice versa*. " With a view to exempt the correspondence coming from the East Indies from the operation of purification to which it would otherwise be subjected by the sanitary regulations, the cases destined to contain such correspondence shall be made of plate-iron or tin, and shall be hermetically closed ; and they shall not have attached to them any substance considered according to the sanitary regulations as capable of communicating infection."

The conveyance of mails by Government packets between Falmouth and Alexandria often occupied from three weeks to a month. In 1837 a contract for the service between Falmouth and Gibraltar was made with the Peninsular Steam Navigation Company. The arrangement proved a success; and in 1840 the contract service was extended to Malta and Alexandria. In the same year the Company decided to establish steam communication with India. They therefore obtained incorporation under the title of the "Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company," and proceeded to build steamers for the service beyond Suez. At the time the Indian mails were conveyed between Suez and Bombay once a month by steamers belonging to the East India Company; and in 1845 the P. and O. Company undertook to supplement this service by a line of steamers between Suez and Calcutta, with a branch line between Ceylon and China, and received for this service a subsidy of £160,000 a year. In 1854 the P. and O. Company took over the Suez and Bombay Service, and in 1859 established a branch service to Australia.



Calcutta G. P. O.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE POST OFFICE OF INDIA.

A COMMITTEE was assembled in 1836, and the result was a Post Office Act the following year. In their report dated the 14th December, 1836, they advocated the abolition of privileged franking, but Government hesitated to follow the recommendation.

By Act XVII of 1837, which consisted of 50 to 60 clauses, schedules and exemption lists, the exclusive right of conveying letters by post, within the territories of the East India Company was vested in Government. Section VII limited the weight of a letter to twelve tolas on lines where there was a banghy (parcel) post, but section XIV permitted the weight of a letter up to 40 tolas on lines where there was no banghy post. The limit of weight for parcels was 600 tolas. Section XXVIII allowed privileged franking to certain high functionaries, of "sending and receiving all letters and packets by letterpost free of postage." This unrestricted privilege was soon used, to an extent not intended, as will be seen from the following statement made by the Postmaster-General, Bombay. "I have reason to suspect and do believe that it (privileged franking) is abused most grossly every day. In proof of this I beg to quote a remarkable case which occurred at Poona. A member of the privileged class being about to leave that place where his family was located, left with them a large number of envelopes, bearing his frank, and these were used by members of his family in correspondence with private friends at Bombay and elsewhere. Even in the present day many of the privileged class frank letters from their friends to *their* friends, and some even have gone so far as to frank their servants' letters." The department continued to be worked in a primitive fashion, the arrangements being more local than general.

There was no central authority, that is, a Director-General, and the duties of Postmaster-General and Presidency Postmaster were combined. The district post offices were under the charge of revenue collectors. Postage was paid in cash, and the rates varied according to weight and distance.

The period between 1790 and 1840 was one of consolidation rather than of conquest. Steps were taken to knit together our scattered possessions and the great Military stations by Trunk roads, and during 1839 fifty-seven lakhs were spent on the roads with the object of developing internal communications. The most important postal line was that between Calcutta and Bombay which cost a lakh of rupees annually. The sum allowed for the maintenance of three runners on every stage, each of whom carried eighteen pounds. The average weight of the Calcutta letters reaching Bombay by mail steamers being six hundred pounds; eight days were required to pass the whole batch to its destination. The period of transit was ten days; hence, in 1840, letters were often longer *en route* across the peninsula than they are now in accomplishing the entire distance between Calcutta and London. So deplorable was the state of the roads, even on this trunk line, that home letters often missed the mail steamer. In September, 1841, seventeen hundred were thus left behind at Bombay to wait an entire month. On another occasion all the mail letters posted at Calcutta were brought back to the capital. It turned out that the runners had met their *confrères* from Bombay near the "halfway house," and exchanged bags with them unwittingly after indulging in a friendly smoke together.

The organisation was bad to an incredible degree. Purposeless detentions of four days at Bombay were not unusual. Letters for stations intermediate between the larger towns were systematically overcarried to the terminus of the postal lines and then returned to their destination. The newspapers of the period teem with complaints of loss and inconvenience arising from mismanagement. All things considered, it is

doubtful whether any substantial advance took place between 1790 and 1840.

The following is an extract from "Post Office" Rules and Regulations," dated Fort St. George, General Post Office, 9th July, 1840. "With reference to Section XXIV of the Rules for the Management of the Post Office Department, it is hereby notified that under the sanction of Government the use of badges and belts by the letter deliverers will be discontinued at the Presidency in lieu of which they will be supplied by hand-bells, which are designed to be rung in the streets with the view of affording speedy announcement of their arrival with letters and to obviate the detention of deliverers at the doors of houses."

On the 3rd September follows another order on the same subject. "Adverting to my notification dated 9th July last, it is hereby notified that the letter deliverers will from this date be supplied with hand-bells: and as the object of their use is to announce their approach with letters to parties interested, both in the streets and at the doors of dwelling houses, it is requested that any person observing the deliverers failing to ring their bells in the course of their tour of delivery, intimation of the same may be given to the Postmaster-General in order that the conduct of such deliverers may be inquired into and, if necessary, punishment inflicted." Happily time has abolished the hand-bell of the quaintly termed "deliverer."

Up to 1839 the maximum weight allowed for a *single* letter was one tola, and the charge one anna. Then for the purpose of preventing clubbing, a change was made, and quarter of a tola fixed as the maximum weight of letters with single postage, and the interval between the maximum chargeable weight in single and double letters was made three-quarters of a tola. Thus a quarter of a tola was allowed for single letters, and one tola was the weight charged with double postage. It may be mentioned that in those days letters were classed as "single," "double" or "treble," and the rates varied according to the distance conveyed. Thus a letter from Madras

to Calcutta cost one rupee. Clubbing was a practice resorted to generally by natives, but more especially by Marwari merchants and Warriars, of evading postage by enclosing a number of small letters to the same place in one cover. In the Bombay Presidency and the United (formerly North-West) Provinces, a regular trade had sprung up in which a number of persons who called themselves Native Postmasters were engaged. These collected letters, and opened shops for their receipt in all parts of India where they had agents. The letters were made up into packets and despatched through the Government Post. For instance, a packet of 80 letters weighing 320 *wals* or ten tolas was despatched from Ahmedabad to Bombay. The sender was charged one pice per *wal* on each letter which brought the Native Postmaster 320 pice or Rs. 5. The postage on the packet would be Rs. 3-12, so that there would be a profit of Re. 1-4; and as a further charge of one pice was made on delivery, on the 80 letters there was a clear profit of Rs. 2-8. The senders were saved a sum of Rs. 12 and the Government deprived of Rs. 8-4. The practice of clubbing had been recognised by Government in a letter No. 515, dated the 18th October, 1887, from the Secretary to the Government of India to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, with reference to a petition from a Parsi named Merwanjee Furdonjee, one of the persons engaged in the trade. In this letter it was said that he "will be entitled to send parcels of letters by the Government Dawk paying according to the weight and to receive remuneration for the local distribution which is quite a different thing from conveying letters by dawk for hire on his own account." But when the weights were altered to prevent clubbing it was not foreseen what would be the result from leaving an interval between the weight of a single and double letter three times as great as the weight of the former, and the consequence was that, although the practice did not increase, it did not diminish to the extent expected.

Rule 4 of a notification in the Marine Department, Bombay Government Gazette, dated 14th September, 1843, enacts

that no postal package is "to be larger than one man can conveniently handle" which is somewhat vague, depending more upon the man than the package.

By a Madras Government notification in 1844, headed "Talook Tappals," Tahsildars were ordered to receive letters and give receipts for them, and were also made responsible for the delivery of letters in their own and surrounding villages. Letters were not weighed with much precision. "British weights not being in general use in this country," and in a notification, dated 20th November, 1846, the public is recommended to use "one rupee and one copper pie" as the best substitute for $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce weight.

In 1853 the postage of a letter exceeding an ounce by the smallest scruple sent from England to India, *viâ* Marseilles was 7s. 9d. This was probably the most expensive route in the world. It was not the weight or bulk of the mails conveyed by this route that made the exorbitant charge for letter postage necessary, for a copy of the London *Times* weighing three ounces, was sent to India, *viâ* Marseilles for 3d., or for only 1d. per ounce. Thus letters were charged at the rate of £12,000 per ton, while printed matter paid at the rate of £150 per ton.

The arrangements in Sind under that enlightened administrator, Sir Bartle Frere, appear to have been very efficient, as described in the life of that officer by Mr. John Martineau, who says:—"The facility and rapidity of postal communication in Sind was greatly improved by the substitution recommended by him in an official letter in June 1851, of a horse and camel dāk for post-runners between Hyderabad and Sukkur. The result was a saving of eleven hours in time, and a gain of seven pounds in the weight of the mails carried in the distance of 200 miles."

One of the causes of its success lay in the system of "speed-money," introduced by Mr. Coffey, the Postmaster in charge of the arrangements. Every hour that the mail was late was put down against the contractor; every hour

gained was put down to his credit. At the end of the month the balance was struck, and he was fined, or paid "speed-money" as the balance might stand—so much to his credit—or his debit.

"Instead of timing themselves so as just to escape fine, the sowars press on as fast as they can; the relieving horse is always ready saddled, and the sowar ready at the post-house long before the shout of the incoming rider is heard, and directly he pulls up, the bags are thrown on to the fresh horse, the rider mounts, and is off without a moment's unnecessary delay. This, which I have watched scores of times, is very different from the usual mode of procedure, where the contractor is paid well for a good average rate, and has little or no inducement to exceed it. . . . Hence they are always devising plans to save time; and when it is physically impossible for horses to travel, I have known part of the distance done by camel, part by foot-runners, and part by boat, to the extent of 30 miles in one line, and the whole time far from bad. ("Frere to Riddell. May 7th, 1855.")

It was also in Sind, under the rule of Sir Bartle Frere, that the first postage stamps were introduced and used in India. This was the Sind District Dâk Stamp.

In 1850 a commission was appointed to report on the working of the Post Office, point out defects, suggest remedies, and report on several proposals for a uniform rate of postage. The report submitted by the commissioners in 1851 is a most interesting one, as by a study of its pages an insight can be obtained as to the working of the department in the years 1850-51. I propose first to show the working of the presidency offices sixty years ago, and then of the department generally, before proceeding to discuss the report.

Calcutta G. P. O., 1850-51. The Postmaster-General, Bengal, in addition to the general control exercised over the Department was also Presidency Postmaster. He received a salary of Rs. 2,000 per mensem, and for the working of the Presidency Post Office, 113 clerks were employed at a