

mission of unpaid correspondence; definition of newspapers, as proposed in Article 10; extension of money-order limit; postal-note system; insurance of parcels.

In the case of several of the colonies the existing laws would permit of some of the above measures being adopted under what is termed "the mutual agreement clause of the postal Acts"—that is, by reciprocal arrangements with other colonies, but preclude their adoption within their own territory. It is, however, considered that it would be impolitic and inexpedient to extend measures of reform to persons corresponding with other colonies, which would be denied to the same persons if corresponding with people in their own colony—for instance, it would not be proper to permit of a letter being sent wholly unpaid from Sydney to Wodonga, whilst one to Albury would require prepayment.

*Articles of Value passing through the Post.—Consideration of London Letter.*

As it appears from the London letter of 22nd May, 1889 (Appendix C), that there is no objection to certain exceptional arrangements under which gold and silver bullion, precious stones, jewellery, and other precious articles may be sent to certain foreign countries and British colonies comprised in the Postal Union being extended to the Australasian Colonies, we recommend that such extension be arranged for in all cases where practicable. Provision has been made accordingly in the draft convention.

*Discontinuance of Special Train through France and Italy.*

Having carefully considered the London letter of the 13th June last (Appendix D) in reply to resolution No. 1, Part A, of the Adelaide Conference, that the accelerated train-service by which the homeward Australian mails are carried from Brindisi to Calais be discontinued, we recommend that this proposal be withdrawn for the present. We consider, however, that, when arrangements are being made for a fresh contract, it would be most desirable that the Australian mail-service be made a separate and distinct one, as was originally intended.

*Charges to Non-contracting Colonies for Use of the San Francisco Mail-service.*

We suggest that a recommendation be made to the Government of New Zealand that, in connection with any future mail-contracts *viâ* San Francisco, the charges be reduced to 12s. per pound for letters and post cards sent by such route, on the understanding that New Zealand be charged the same rates for the conveyance of her mails by the Federal mail-service *viâ* Suez.

*Universal Hour Zone Time.*

Mr. Todd having explained the nature of Mr. Sandford Fleming's system, as set forth in the memorandum enclosed in the circular despatch from the Colonial Office dated 21st November, 1890 (Appendix E), we suggest the desirableness of adopting one uniform standard time throughout South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland (those colonies being connected by railway), and also through Tasmania, and with that view we advise that the question be remitted to the heads of the Railway and Telegraph Departments and the astronomers of those colonies for consideration.

In submitting this report we venture very respectfully to suggest that, in those colonies where fresh legislation is needed in order to enable the Australasian Convention to be adopted, such legislation be procured as early as practicable. Our experience enables us to state that the adoption of the Convention will be of very great public advantage, providing as it does for uniformity of action in all the colonies with regard to the rates of postage, general regulations, and treatment of correspondence exchanged between the colonies—the establishment of parcel-post, the postal-note system, more liberal packet regulations, transmission of wholly-unpaid letters, and other reforms. It is true that the Convention provides for a halfpenny postage on newspapers exchanged between the colonies, but it has for long been a matter of serious complaint by those colonies in which a postage is charged on their own newspapers that they have to deliver those received from other colonies on which no postage has been paid; and it will be borne in mind that it is quite open to the Administrations of those colonies to decline to exchange mail-matter except on equal terms of reciprocity—this being the rule which operates in the Universal Postal Union, into which it is proposed that the Australasian Colonies shall at length enter.

In conclusion, we take the liberty of suggesting, with reference to the resolution passed at Adelaide providing for an annual departmental conference, that, the permanent heads having on the present occasion had the opportunity of conferring, a further conference this year will be unnecessary, and that the next might take place at Hobart during 1892, to be convened by the Tasmanian office. During the interim, probably, the needful legislation will have been obtained to admit of the Australasian Convention being carried into effect.

In connection with this report it may be desirable to mention that, although a general decision has been arrived at in the matters discussed, there are a few points on which some of the individual heads are at variance, and which therefore require further consideration.

S. H. LAMBTON, Secretary, Post Office,  
E. C. CRACKNELL, Superintendent, Telegraphs, } New South Wales.

JAMES SMIBERT, Deputy Postmaster-General, Victoria.

CHARLES TODD, Postmaster-General, South Australia.

\*JOHN McDONNELL, Under-Secretary, Post and Telegraph Department,  
Queensland.

†W. GRAY, Secretary, Post Office and Telegraphs, New Zealand.

ROBERT HENRY, Superintendent, Telegraphs, Tasmania (also acting for  
Secretary of Post Office).

Sydney, 7th March, 1891.

\* Excepting the paragraphs relating to the alteration of intercolonial telegraph rates, and the proposal to charge for names and addresses.

† Signed subject to the objections made by the Hon. the Postmaster-General of New Zealand at the Conference meeting of to-day.