

took effect on the 1st July, 1875, France being the only country of Europe which did not at once adhere to the Union, but it joined six months later.

The conditions on which countries beyond sea were admitted were at first restrictive. It was laid down that such countries should at first submit to a settlement as to the cost of sea conveyance in their proposed relations with the countries forming the Union, and that an understanding between those particular countries having postal conventions or direct relations with the applicants should precede admission.

In 1876 a special Conference was held at Berne to settle the terms upon which British India and the French Colonies should be admitted to the Union. The rate payable by one country to another for sea conveyance over distances exceeding 300 miles was fixed at 25 francs a kilogramme (about 2½d. a letter, of average weight) for letters and post-cards, and 1 franc a kilogramme (4·35d. per pound) for other articles. British India and the French Colonies thereupon entered the Union in July, 1876; and in April, 1877, Ceylon, Hongkong, the Straits Settlements, Labuan, Mauritius and the Seychelles, Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana, and Bermuda gave in their adhesion.

In 1878 a second full Congress was held at Paris, and the Union renamed the Universal Postal Union—the door being thrown open to the whole world; any State, country, or colony was given the right to claim admission, simply by giving an assurance that it was prepared to carry out the stipulations of the Convention as then revised. The maximum amount for sea conveyance over long distances was also reduced from 25 to 15 francs a kilogramme (about 1½d. per letter) for letters and post-cards.

The new Convention was signed on the 1st June, 1878, and came into force on the 1st April, 1879. Canada entered the Union in July, 1878; Cyprus in December following; and in January, 1879, Newfoundland, British Honduras, the Falkland Islands, and the West African Colonies of Sierra Leone, Lagos, the Gold Coast, and Gambia were added. In July, 1879, Antigua, Dominica, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitt's, and the Virgin Islands became a part of the Union, and a year later the Bahamas were added. On the 1st February, 1881, Tobago, St. Lucia, Grenada, and Turks Islands adopted the new system; and in the following September the entry of the West Indies into the Union was completed by the adherence of Barbadoes and St. Vincent. Outside the British Dominions the movement had been so rapid and steady that, practically, towards the end of 1886 the whole Continent of North, South, and Central America, the whole of the colonial possessions of Spain, Portugal, Holland, and Denmark, the Empires of Persia, Japan, and Siam, the Republic of Hayti, the Dominican Republic, the Sandwich Islands, Liberia, and even the Congo Free State were included in the Union.

Since 1886 further accessions have taken place as follows: Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, British Borneo, British New Guinea, the German possessions and protectorates, Zanzibar, &c.

Immediately after the formation of the Postal Union in 1874 the Australasian Colonies were invited by the Imperial Government to consider whether they would enter the Union. The ocean letter rate was not to be less than 6d., but the payments then made by the Imperial Exchequer to the cost of maintaining the ocean mail-services between the Mother-country and the Australasian Colonies were to have been reconsidered, inasmuch as the entry of the Colonies into the Union "would entail considerable diminution in the receipts of the Post Office," which the Colonies would have to share with Great Britain. The Colonies were already committed to expensive ocean-mail contracts, and declined to take any step which would further increase the loss on their packet-services.

In 1878 the matter was again pressed on the Colonies; and a memorandum was signed on the 11th July by the Postmasters-General of New South Wales and New Zealand, recommending that the Colonies should enter the Union, but on the condition "that no reduction be made in the rate of postage for the ocean services; that the cost of the transit of the mails between San Francisco and New York or Boston be not charged to the Colonies; and that the restrictions which have already, or which may hereafter, be imposed by local legislation in reference to wholly unpaid correspondence are not interfered with." Nothing however came of this, as there was a want of unanimity among the other colonies. It was obvious that one or two colonies would not be permitted to enter the Union without the whole group doing so.

The Imperial Post Office, in 1880, re-opened the question of Australasia's adhesion to the Union. Under the provisions of the Paris amended convention, the entry of the Australasian Colonies into the Union would have put the British Post Office in a position to save £30,000 a year by the supersession of the special apportionment of postage under which an advantage was accorded to the Colonies, and by the adoption of the Union payment for sea conveyance. The Imperial Treasury consented to waive the claim to that saving during the currency of the existing packet contracts, and to share the sum *pro ratâ* among the Colonies providing the packet services, in the event of their joining the Union. It was estimated that New South Wales and New Zealand's share for providing the San Francisco service would be about £17,000 a year.

The Colonies were somewhat favourably impressed with the proposal, but before anything definite could be settled another obstacle presented itself to their entering the Union. The German Post Office had given notice that, at the next Union Congress, which was to meet in 1884, a proposal would be made for the reduction of the very moderate rates payable for sea conveyance, and of the rates of postage allowed to be charged to the public. It was obvious that the sea-carrying countries (a small minority) stood in great danger of this proposal being carried; and the British Post Office suggested that if the Colonies decided to apply for admission to the Union they should exact a guarantee that no such reduction should take place until after the next quinquennial Congress to that of Lisbon; and also that, for the protection of the Colonies' interests in the future, they should demand a vote for each colony in the affairs and deliberations of the Union.