

was entitled to separate representation. The Postmaster-General of New Zealand spoke strongly in favour of the motion, affirming that New Zealand was entitled to a vote of her own. Australia and Egypt also urged that the separate vote be given. Appeals for additional representation from the United States, Germany, France, Italy, and Portugal had also been made, and were considered with Great Britain's proposals. There was, however, strong opposition from the outset to New Zealand being given a separate vote, and its nature may be gathered from the fact that Germany was prepared to waive its claim for increased voting-powers for its colonies if the other countries would do the same, in the hope, no doubt, of defeating Great Britain's proposals. Hungary moved an amendment to give an extra vote to the United States only, and to maintain the *status quo* in respect of the other countries. This amendment, which was intended to burke New Zealand obtaining a separate vote, was carried by a majority of three—eleven to eight. Five countries, the United States, Argentine, Denmark, Mexico, and Holland abstained from voting. As Great Britain's motion was not defeated on its merits, the Postmaster-General determined, after conferring with the British and other delegates, to have the question brought up again in full Congress. This was done, and the motion providing for a separate vote for New Zealand was carried by a majority of two, after a hard and anxious struggle, and heated debate. Germany, France, and other countries renewed their opposition to New Zealand having a separate vote; but a better appreciation of the justice of the colony's claim was now shown by the majority of the delegates, and the unreasonable opposition was defeated. On the motion being carried, Germany, France, Italy, and Portugal's applications for additional representation for their colonies were granted, practically without debate, Great Britain and her colonies supporting.

Great Britain's comprehensive proposals for a general reduction in the sea- and land-transit rates, after a very protracted and somewhat acrimonious debate, and the acceptance of an amendment by Switzerland, submitted with the object of reconciling the strong objections raised by France and Italy to the suggested reductions in the railway rates for the transit of forward mails through their territories, were practically agreed to. The reductions mean a considerable saving to New Zealand in respect of the San Francisco service, as the heavy territorial special rates so long paid for the transit of the British and colonial mails between San Francisco and New York are to be abolished. The ordinary territorial and sea rates are also to be reduced, and the total reductions will result in a saving to the colony in respect of the San Francisco service. Up to the present these payments have been made on 1896 statistics. Since 1896 the correspondence has more than doubled, so that under the new statistics to be taken in 1907 the payments would, at the old rates, have increased proportionately. Under the reduced rates, however, the amount will remain about the same as now paid—practically a saving of about £5,000 a year. The reductions do not have effect until October, 1907.

Mr. Shattky's (of Hastings, New Zealand) reply stamp was submitted for consideration; but it, with other similar propositions, was set aside in favour of Great Britain's "reply coupon," which was approved by Congress. This coupon is of the nature of a small postal order, payable to bearer, and exchangeable for a postage-stamp of the value of 25 centimes (2½d.). The International Bureau will supply coupons of the value of 25, 10, and 5 centimes, exchangeable for postage-stamps of equivalent value in any country adopting the scheme. A small additional charge may be made to cover the cost of printing, &c. It was claimed that the coupon system precludes fraud, and disposes of the vexed question of exchange on the values of the currencies of different countries—safeguards which it was held were not provided by Mr. Shattky's scheme. The coupon really provides a reply-paid stamp.

New Zealand's proposal that seeds should be admitted at sample rates was not agreed to.

The proposition by New Zealand to exclude gambling and lottery circulars from the post was met by a decision of the Congress that countries whose legislation did not prevent the transmission of such matter should take power to prohibit delivery, and to notify the International Bureau that such articles would not be accepted. It is the intention to amend our law in this direction.

Another proposal of New Zealand's, to reduce the postage on printed matter to enable the bulky weekly newspapers being forwarded at ½d. for 4 oz., in place of 2 oz., was unfortunately not agreed to.

The transmission of "spent" letters at book rates of postage was adopted under certain conditions.

Post-cards may now have writing on the left-hand front half of the card, and vignettes and photographs on thin paper are allowed to be affixed to the cards. Post-cards, subject to the regulations being complied with, will also be accepted for transmission by post at printed-paper rates.

The regulation against postage-stamps being placed on the back of letters was amended. While not actually prohibiting stamps being affixed on the back of posted articles, the Congress strongly urged the public to place them on the front. There will, however, be no penalty for placing a stamp on the back of an article sent by post.

Many other amendments and reforms of a far-reaching character and for simplifying the general administration were agreed to. These will be referred to in more detail in the separate paper which is to be laid before Parliament.

The several changes and amendments do not have effect until October, 1907. The Congress concluded its business on the 25th May. The next Congress is to meet at Madrid in 1911.

This brief reference to the Congress proceedings would not be complete without hearty acknowledgment of the many courtesies extended by the Italian Government to the delegates and their parties, and appreciation of the lavish hospitality which provided many instructive and diverting excursions and entertainments.

NEWSPAPER POSTAGE.

The penny rate on newspapers from New Zealand has been further extended, and now applies to the following countries: Ascension, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, British Hon-