

In the case of correspondence sent *à découvert*, the retransmitting country will be entitled to uniform credits of 6 centimes for each letter, and 2½ centimes for each post-card or other article, irrespective of weight or destination. During a statistical period, therefore, the number of articles sent *à découvert* will in future be counted.

#### Letter-postage.

3. The unit of weight for letters has been raised from 15 to 20 grammes; and for countries which have not adopted the decimal metric system the avoirdupois equivalent of 20 grammes may be fixed at 1 oz. The initial rate for letters remains 25c., or 2½d.; but after the first unit of 20 grammes, or 1 oz., the rate is to be 15c., or 1½d., for each successive unit or fraction thereof.

#### Reply coupon.

4. As a means of enabling the sender of a letter addressed to a place abroad to prepay a reply, the International Bureau will issue to Postal Administrations special coupons exchangeable for a postage-stamp of 25 centimes or its equivalent by the Post Office of any country which adopts the scheme. In order to prevent speculative transactions through the purchase of coupons in countries where the local equivalent of 25 centimes is low in order to obtain at a reduced rate postage-stamps in countries where the equivalent is high, the coupons are not to be sold for less than 28 centimes. In countries with sterling currency, 3d. will probably be the usual sale price.

#### General facilities for the public.

5. There are to be various relaxations of the existing regulations for post-cards, which have proved somewhat irksome since the development of the traffic in picture cards. The title "Post-card" will not be obligatory except for official issues; and the presence of that title on a card will not render it untransmissible at the reduced rate of 5c., or ½d., if it is otherwise in conformity with the printed-matter regulations. Written communications will be permitted on the left-hand half of the address side of all post-cards, whether picture cards or not, and it is not forbidden to attach the postage-stamps to the reverse side, although the new regulations contain a recommendation that they should be placed in the upper right-hand corner of the address side. Engravings or photographs on thin paper may be affixed to post-cards, provided that they are entirely adherent; and the sender may also affix a gummed label (not exceeding 2 centimetres by 5), giving his own name and address, and not only as now a label with the name and address of the person for whom the card is intended. The addition in manuscript to Christmas and New Year cards of expressions of good wishes, compliments, &c., limited to five words, will not debar them from transmission at the printed-matter rate. As before, post-cards may not exceed in size 14 centimetres (5½ in.) by 9 centimetres (3½ in.); but hereafter they must not be smaller than 10 centimetres (3¾ in.) by 7 centimetres (2¾ in.).

The privileges of the sample post have been extended to keys sent singly, consignments of fresh flowers (provided that they are not sent for commercial purposes), tubes of serum and pathological specimens rendered innocuous by their mode of preparation and packing. The practice of allowing old letters and post-cards which have served their original purpose to pass as commercial papers was expressly sanctioned. In printed notices relating to the movements of ships, the date of arrival and the name of the ship may be inserted in manuscript, and not only the date of departure as heretofore; and similarly the date of despatch of goods may be written in printed advices of despatch.

#### Prisoners of war.

6. With the view of giving effect to the provisions of the Hague Convention of 1899 respecting the laws and customs of war on land, it was decided that correspondence and parcels sent to or from prisoners of war should be exempted from payment of postage and insurance fees (and incidentally from all transit charges), and that the money-order service should be available free of charge for remittances to and from prisoners of war.

#### Responsibility of Post-offices and postal machinery.

7. Responsibility for the loss of registered articles was rendered obligatory. A simplification of advantage to the Post Office and one likely to prevent misunderstandings on the part of the public is embodied in a new regulation, whereby the amount to be marked by the despatching office in French currency on unpaid and insufficiently paid correspondence will be double the deficiency, or, in other words, the full charge to be collected on delivery, and not the single deficiency as heretofore. A uniform procedure was laid down for the return of empty mail-bags.

The work of officers dealing with registered correspondence will be lightened by the abolition of the regulation providing for the registration of advices of delivery on their return to the office of origin; and the treatment of applications for missing registered letters and parcels will be accelerated by a new provision that, in relations with countries beyond sea, the inquiry is to be pursued from office to office, following the course of the article concerned, instead of being communicated in the first instance directly from the office of origin to that of destination. Under no circumstances are registered articles to be sent mixed with ordinary correspondence.

#### Postage-stamps.

8. The number of specimen postage-stamps, &c., of new issues to be furnished by the issuing office through the International Bureau to the other offices of the Union has been reduced from five to three; and it will be obligatory for all countries to adopt the colours prescribed for stamps representing the typical rates of 25, 10, and 5 centimes, and to indicate the value in Arabic figures.