

REVISED SYSTEM OF FINING.

Apparently it is impossible to dispense with some system of fining officers for breaches of duty apart from discipline, such as carelessness, late attendance, and the like. The equal and just incidence of fines has occupied the attention of the Department for many years past, but the best system hitherto devised has failed to eliminate the feeling of irritation or resentment on the part of the hard-working officer, who has felt that his zeal is the occasion of the slip by which he becomes liable to penalty. It has now been determined to abolish local fining altogether, as from the 1st April, 1908, and to limit the assessment of fines to the functions of the General Post Office. Hereafter the faults of officers will come into the purview of the General Post Office in a quarterly written record, and fines will be imposed only in view of continued carelessness or indifference. It is believed that this will introduce a better tone into the work of the officers. Few officers can avoid occasional slips, but every mistake of a man who is in earnest about his work is a reminder to him to avoid its repetition, and it is believed the new system will have the effect of stimulating the better faculties of the staff.

In accordance with section 33 (1) of the Public Service Superannuation Act, the amount of fines levied in the Department since the 1st January, 1908, has been paid to the Public Trustee's Account for credit of the Public Service Superannuation Fund. Fines levied in future will be paid to the same fund.

POST-OFFICE INSPECTION.

During the year the four Assistant Inspectors of Post-offices visited and inspected 1,565 offices, and travelled 32,736 miles. In addition to this they also acted as relieving Chief Postmasters in several districts.

POSTAL CONCESSIONS.

From the 16th December, 1907, the postage on inland post-cards was reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each, and on reply-cards to 1d. From the 1st January, 1908, the rates for inland letters were made 1d. for the first 4 oz., and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each additional 2 oz.; and for registered magazines, 1d. for each 16 oz. or fraction thereof. The registration-fee was reduced to 2d. from the latter date.

Consequent on the introduction of the Rome Convention, the following concessions were made in foreign postage rates as from the 1st October, 1907: From New Zealand to the United Kingdom, British Possessions, and countries at present named in page 3 of the current "Post and Telegraph Guide"—From 1d. for each half-ounce or fraction thereof to 1d. for each ounce or fraction thereof. To all other places—From $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each half-ounce or fraction thereof to $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. for the first ounce and $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each succeeding ounce or fraction thereof.

From the 1st April, 1908, the rate of postage for letters from the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the United Kingdom and other countries participating in the Imperial Penny-postage Scheme is 1d. for each half-ounce. The Protectorate is added to the list of countries receiving New Zealand letters at 1d. the ounce.

The inland parcel-rate of postage was reduced from the 1st January, 1907, from 6d. for the first pound, and 3d. for each additional pound or fraction thereof, to 4d. and 2d. respectively.

PENNY POSTAGE.

A Press telegram from London on the 4th June notified that in the House of Commons the previous day the Postmaster-General had announced that the Government of the United States had agreed to his proposals for the establishment of penny postage between Great Britain and America, as from the 1st October, 1908. It is to be hoped that this will form a precedent for a similar reduction of postage from the United States to other British possessions.

POST-OFFICE AT KING EDWARD VII LAND.

A post-office was opened at King Edward VII Land as from the 20th December, 1907, under charge of Lieutenant Ernest Henry Shackleton. The post-office, which is the most southern post-office in the world, is situated at the base of the Nimrod Antarctic Expedition. The postage-stamps supplied to the office are described elsewhere.

POST AND TELEGRAPH HANDBOOK.

The departmental official handbook has been reprinted. The handbook gives in a popular form the everyday rules relating to the transmission of letters and telegrams, the issue of money-orders, the Savings-Bank, &c.

PROHIBITION OF CORRESPONDENCE AND MONEY-ORDERS.

Correspondence for sixty persons or firms has been prohibited transmission under sections 9 and 10 of "The Post Office Act Amendment Act, 1906," because the Postmaster-General has reasonable ground for supposing that they are engaged in promoting or carrying out a lottery, in fraudulent or immoral businesses, or in advertising in direct or indirect terms the treatment of diseases of the sexual organs nor may money-orders be issued in favour of such persons or firms.

OFFENCES.

On the 1st May, 1907, a mail-bag, Auckland to Helensville, was found as the train left wanson to have been cut open in the guard's van, and £30 abstracted from a remittance-envelope. A bundle of letters was also taken. The police were unable to trace the thief. The letters and the