

# **PENNY POSTAGE ACT.**

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## **The New Act,**

(2 & 3 VICTORIA, CAP. 52.)

FOR

**REDUCING THE POSTAGE ON ALL LETTERS TO  
A UNIFORM RATE OF ONE PENNY,**

**WITH A FEW REMARKS**

ON THE

**Disadvantages**

**ATTENDANT ON MR. HILL'S PROPOSAL TO USE  
STAMPED ENVELOPES.**

LONDON :

J. W. SOUTHGATE, LIBRARY, 164, STRAND.

*Price One Penny.*

[1839-]

## AN ACT

*For the further Regulation of the Duties on Postage until the Fifth Day of October, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty.*

Section I.\* Recites, Whereas it is expedient that the present rates of inland postage on letters should be reduced to one uniform rate of a penny charged on every letter of a given weight, to be hereafter fixed and determined, with a proportionate increase for greater weights, parliamentary privileges of franking being abolished, and official franking being strictly regulated, and Parliament pledging itself to make good any deficiency of revenue which may be occasioned by such alterations of the rates of existing duties: And whereas it is expedient and necessary to give by law a temporary authority to the Lords of her Majesty's Treasury to take the necessary steps to give effect to such reduction, and to make orders and regulations for the same; which reductions, orders, and regulations shall have force and effect to the fifth day of October, 1840, and no longer; Be it therefore enacted by the

\* Sec. 1. The reduction of Postage on Letters to a uniform rate of a penny charged on each letter, cannot but be highly advantageous to every class of persons, notwithstanding there is great inconsistency in the amount charged in proportion to the distance they are carried, and consequently great extra expense in conveying them to different places. The Parliamentary Privileges of Franking being abolished is decidedly objectionable; it may be said that a penny is so trifling a sum that no person will regard it, but from the circumstance of constituents or others being unable to write to their representatives in Parliament without expense, the latter may very often lose valuable information and suggestions; also the tax of postage, though only a penny a letter be charged, would be no inconsiderable addition to the numerous expenses which an active and patriotic legislator has entailed upon him.

Queen's most excellent Majesty, by, and with the advice and consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That it shall be lawful for the Lords of the Treasury, from time to time, and at any time after the passing of this Act, by warrant under their hands, to alter, fix, reduce or remit all or any of the rates of British or inland or other postage payable by law on the transmission of post letters, and to subject such letters to rates of postage according to the weight thereof, and a scale of weight to be contained in such warrant, (without reference to the distance or number of miles the same shall be conveyed,) and to fix and limit the weight of letters to be sent by the post, and from time to time, by warrant as aforesaid, to alter or repeal any such altered or reduced rates, and make and establish any new or other rates in lieu thereof, and from time to time, by warrant as aforesaid, to appoint at what time the rates which may be made payable are to be paid, that is to say, whether on posting the letter or on the receipt thereof, or at either of those times, at the option of the sender; Provided always, that all such warrants shall be inserted in the London Gazette ten days at least before coming into operation, and shall within fourteen days after making the same be laid before both Houses of Parliament [if then sitting], or otherwise within fourteen days after Parliament shall meet.

II. Enacts, That the rates of postage from time to time to be altered or reduced and fixed by any such warrant shall be charged by and be paid to her Majesty's Postmaster General, for the use of her Majesty, on all post letters to which such warrant shall extend.

III. Enacts, That it shall be lawful for the Lords of the Treasury, by warrant under their hands, to suspend, wholly or in part, any parliamentary or official privilege of sending and receiving letters by the post free of postage, or any other franking privilege of any description whatsoever, as well under an Act passed in the first year of the reign of her present Majesty, intituled "An Act for regulating the sending and receiving of letters and packets by the post free from the duty of postage," as under any other Act or Acts of Parliament now in force, and to make such regulations for the future exercise of official franking as they shall think fit; Provided also, that every warrant to be issued by the Lords of the Treasury for the suspension of the parliamentary privilege of franking shall be inserted in the London Gazette ten days at least before coming into operation, and shall, within

fourteen days after making the same, be laid before both Houses of Parliament [if then sitting], or otherwise within fourteen days after Parliament shall meet.

IV. Enacts, That it shall be lawful for the Lords of the Treasury, by warrant under their hands, and inserted in the London Gazette ten days at least before coming into operation, to suspend, wholly or in part, the regulations and privileges established and given by law in respect of letters sent by the Twopenny Post in London and Dublin, and also by any penny post, and in respect of any other letters which may be now sent by the post at a low or reduced rate of postage, or free of postage, and to declare and direct that all and every or any of such post letters shall be charged and chargeable with the like rate of postage as any other letters transmitted by the post, or to make such other regulations in respect thereof as in any such warrant shall from time to time be expressed.

V.\* Provides and enacts, That it shall be lawful for the Lords of the Treasury, by warrant under their hands, to be inserted in the London Gazette, [which warrant may be rescinded, varied, or altered as they shall from time to time think fit,] to direct that letters written on stamped paper or enclosed in stamped covers, or having a stamp affixed thereto, (the stamp in every such case being of the value or amount in such last-mentioned warrants to be expressed, and specially provided for the purpose under the authority of this Act,) shall, if within the limitation of weight to be fixed under the provisions of this Act, and if the stamp have not been used before, pass by the post free of postage, and also to require that every letter sent by the post shall, in the cases to be specified in any such last-mentioned warrant, be written on such stamped paper, or enclosed in such stamped cover, or have such stamp as aforesaid affixed, or that in default thereof, or in case the stamp on which any letter shall be written, or the stamp on the cover in which it shall be enclosed, or to which it shall be affixed, shall be of less value or amount than in such warrant shall be expressed, or shall have been used before, such letter shall be charged and

\* Sec. 5. The disadvantages from the collecting of postage by envelope, or by paper previously stamped, is fully set forth in the remarks at the end of this Act. It would be deemed more generally beneficial if the present system of stamping, at the receiving houses, remain unaltered; leaving it optional with the sender, whether payment shall be made on posting the letter, or on the receipt thereof; but this will depend on the regulations to be issued by the Lords of the Treasury.

chargeable with such rate of postage as such warrant shall direct.

VI. Enacts, that it shall be lawful for the Lords of the Treasury to order and direct the Commissioners of Stamps and Taxes from time to time to provide proper and sufficient dies or other implements for expressing and denoting the rates or duties which shall be directed by any such warrant as aforesaid, and to give any other orders and make any other regulations relative thereto they may consider expedient.

VII. Enacts, That the Commissioners of Stamps and Taxes shall cause a separate account to be kept of the stamp duties arising under this Act; and it shall be lawful for the Lords of the Treasury, and they are hereby empowered, by warrant under their hands, from time to time to authorize and require the said Commissioners of Stamps and Taxes to direct their Receiver General to pay over such sum and sums of money arising from the said stamp duties, as the Lords of the Treasury shall think proper, to the account of the Receiver General of her Majesty's Post Office at the Bank of England; and all such sums of money which shall be so paid over shall be held by the said last-mentioned Receiver General subject to all annuities and yearly sums now charged by law on or payable out of the Post Office revenue, and all other charges, outgoings, and disbursements to which the Post Office revenue is at present liable.

VIII. Enacts, That the rates or duties which shall be expressed or denoted by any such dies as aforesaid shall be denominated and deemed to be stamp duties, and shall be under the care and management of the Commissioners of Stamps and Taxes for the time being; and all the powers, provisions, clauses, regulations, directions, fines, forfeitures, pains, and penalties contained in or imposed by the several Acts now in force relating to stamp duties (so far as the same may be applicable) shall be of full force and effect with respect to the stamps to be provided under or by virtue of this present Act, and to the paper on which the same shall be impressed or to which the same shall be affixed, and shall be observed, applied, enforced, and put in execution for the raising, levying, collecting, and securing of the rates or duties denoted thereby, and for preventing, detecting, and punishing all frauds, forgeries, and other offences relating thereto, as fully and effectually, to all intents and purposes, as if such powers, provisions, clauses, regulations, and directions, fines, forfeitures, pains, and penalties had been herein repeated and

specially enacted with reference to the said last-mentioned stamps and rates or duties respectively.

IX. Enacts, That all post letters shall be posted, forwarded, conveyed, and delivered, under and subject to all such orders and directions, regulations, limitations, and restrictions, as the Postmaster General, with the consent of the Lords of the Treasury, shall from time to time direct.

X. Enacts, That the penalty which by an Act passed in the first year of the reign of her present Majesty, intituled "An Act for consolidating the Laws relative to Offences against the Post Office of the United Kingdom, and for regulating the Judicial Administration of the Post Office Laws, and for explaining certain Terms and Expressions employed in those Laws," is imposed on every master of a vessel outward bound to Ceylon, the Mauritius, the East Indies, or the Cape of Good Hope, who shall refuse to take a post letter bag delivered or tendered to him by an officer of the Post Office, shall henceforth extend and apply to the master of every vessel outward bound who shall refuse to take a post letter bag delivered or tendered to him by an officer of the Post Office for conveyance; but every such master shall be entitled to the same gratuities as the master of any other vessel, not being a Post Office packet, conveying letters for or on behalf of the Post Office.

XI. Enacts, That it shall be lawful for the Lords of the Treasury to make any reduction or alteration they may consider expedient in the gratuities allowed by law to masters of vessels for letters conveyed by them, for or on behalf of the Post Office, between places within the United Kingdom, and between the United Kingdom and the islands of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, Sark, and Alderney, and to allow any gratuities for the conveyance of letters to masters of vessels passing to or from or between any of her Majesty's colonies or possessions beyond the seas if they shall think fit, not exceeding the gratuities payable to masters of vessels for the conveyance of ship letters from the United Kingdom to places beyond the seas.

XII. Enacts, That whenever the word "letter" or "letters" is used in this Act, the same shall be held to include newspapers, and any other packet, paper, article, or thing, transmitted by the Post, but not so as to deprive newspapers of any privilege they now legally possess of passing free of postage: and that the provisions of this Act shall be construed according to the respective interpretations of the terms and expressions contained in the said Act of the first year of

the reign of her present Majesty, intituled "An Act for consolidating the Laws relating to Offences against the Post Office of the United Kingdom, and for regulating the judicial administration of the Post Office Laws, and for explaining certain Terms and Expressions, employed in those Laws," so far as those interpretations are not repugnant to the subject, or inconsistent with the context of such provisions.

XIII. Enacts, That wherever the order, consent, or direction, or any other act, of the Lords of the Treasury is prescribed or required by this Act, such order, consent, direction, or other act, may be signified under the hands of the Lords of the Treasury or any three of them.

XIV. Enacts, That this Act, and all warrants issued under the authority of the same, shall absolutely cease and determine on the fifth day of October, 1840, unless Parliament shall declare to the contrary (except in respect of any Postage Duties which may then have become payable under or by virtue of this Act,) and of any proceeding for recovery of such duties, and except also as to any offence committed against the provisions of this or any other Act, and any fine or penalty incurred by reason of any such offence, and any proceeding for recovery of any such fine or penalty, or for the punishment of any offender.

XV. Enacts, That this Act may be amended or repealed by any Act to be passed during the present Session of Parliament.

A FEW REMARKS  
ON  
*The Disadvantages*  
ARISING FROM THE  
COLLECTING THE POSTAGE BY ENVELOPE,  
OR  
BY PAPER PREVIOUSLY STAMPED,

Which will materially affect

PAPER MAKERS,

From a smaller quantity of paper being required as respects the Envelopes—which, however small, unless rendered thoroughly unfit for, or not capable of being written on, except the address, would lessen the consumption of paper. To

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL STATIONERS

It imposes a most grievous burthen, in the necessity of providing a largely increased capital to enable them to keep—a *sufficiently* assorted stock—the various sorts of letter paper considerably exceeding two hundred.

MERCHANTS AND HOUSES IN A LARGE WAY OF BUSINESS,

Who, from circumstances that are continually occurring, have occasion to distribute circulars, (and in consequence of the low rate of the postage would probably send to the amount of several thousands,) must be prevented from embracing the facility, as the necessary time for stamping the paper would create so great a delay as to render them useless.

AUCTIONEERS, HOUSE-AGENTS, &c.

From the different sizes of the Catalogues and Particulars, could avail themselves of neither the stamped paper or envelopes. *Private Families*, who will not like to keep a stock of these valuables. *To Country Stationers*, who cannot afford to have large supplies of a commodity so unproductive of profit. *To People living in the Country* generally, especially those who are distant from a market town; and last, but not least, the anxiety that may arise to persons from the uncertainty of the delivery of letters by the officers employed for that purpose, as there would be no check upon them.

The advantages arising from the carrying into practice this great measure are not to be looked upon only in a commercial and economical point of view; but from the facility afforded for the interchange of thought, and diffusion of ideas, it must have a great tendency to promote the advancement of education.