

[New Zealand]

Extract from *Post and Telegraph Official Circular* for September, 1908.

RULE 317.—AUTOMATIC FRANKING-MACHINE: INSTRUCTIONS.

MACHINES may only be installed in such towns as the Postmaster-General has approved, and up to the number authorised.

Before any machine can be installed the Automatic Franking Company must make a written application to the Chief Postmaster of the district in which it is proposed to place the machine.

On receipt of the application the Chief Postmaster, if satisfied that the proposed user of the machine is of good repute financially and otherwise, may grant the application. Special care should be exercised on this point.

The Automatic Franking Company will then place the machine in position, and inform the Chief Postmaster when it is ready for use. The Chief Postmaster will next obtain from the company impressions of the dies (one of each denomination), which must be carefully kept in a special book provided for the purpose. Each die has a distinctive mark and number, and the engraver marks against each impression the peculiarity of each die. It is very important that these impressions be carefully kept, as they serve as a check on the impressions on letters or telegrams. The records should be kept under lock and key. On receipt of the impressions the Chief Postmaster will depute an experienced officer to attend at the office in which the machine is about to be installed, and exhaustively check the machine to see that it records correctly. This can be done by taking impressions of each denomination, and carefully seeing that the dials indicate the amount of the value of such impressions. When satisfied on this point he must call upon the representative of the Automatic Franking Company to put all the dials at zero, and when this is done show the person who is about to use the machine that it is standing at zero. The machine must then be locked and sealed, and the keys of the machine retained and kept in safe custody by the Chief Postmaster. They should only be used when it is found necessary to repair damage to the machine. The seal is to be broken only by a responsible Postal officer deputed for the purpose by the Chief Postmaster. If it is found necessary to remove the machine for repairs an officer of the Department should attend, take a reading of the dials in the presence of the owner or his deputy, and the record of such reading should be initialled by the officer and the owner, or his deputy. When the machine is reinstalled, care must be taken to see that the dials record the amount shown by the reading when the machine was removed, and the slip showing the reading should be enfaced, "Machine reinstalled and resealed on [date], dials reading same as when machine removed." This certificate is to be initialled by the officers concerned, and duly filed by the Chief Postmaster.

CLEARING MACHINES.

At the end of each accounting-period an experienced officer should be deputed to read the dials and make the collections. Collections must be made immediately after the close of each period, and no credit must be allowed to extend beyond the proper period. The officer making the collection must use the forms provided for the purpose, and on returning to the office must at once enter in the cash-book the amount of the various sums collected, also the reading of the dials. It is very important that the reading of the dials be recorded in the cash-book, as the figures will be required when next preparing the receipts for the following period's collections. It will also act as a check on the amounts recorded. Stamps to the value of the amount collected must be affixed to the forms provided for the purpose, and duly cancelled. The document should then be forwarded to the Accountant, General Post Office, supported by form Acct. 142.

PAYMENT OF POUNDAGE.

Poundage at the rate of 1½ per cent. on the total output of the machine is payable at the end of each quarter. Receipts must be taken on the forms provided for the purpose. The total amount paid at the end of the quarter must be summarised, giving the number of machine and name of owner, and credit claimed in the daily Cash Account under heading of "Poundage paid." The payment of the poundage should be made simultaneously with the collection for the last period in the quarter.

Poundage is payable only on every complete pound.

REFUNDS FOR IMPRESSIONS TAKEN IN ERROR.

Refunds will be made at the end of each quarter for the value of the impressions taken in error. The impressions must be quite legible, and the documents on which the impressions are made must be attached to the receipt taken for

the refunds. Cut-out or indistinct impressions will not be allowed for. It is not deemed necessary to deduct the amount of the refunds from the total reading of the machine at the end of each quarter unless the amount exceeds £2.

This payment should also be made at the same time as the payment of poundage. The total amount of the refunds should be summarised, and credit claimed on contingency voucher payable to the Chief Postmaster, supported by receipts. The voucher can then be paid without reference to the Accountant, General Post Office. All papers on which a refund is allowed must also be sent in with the vouchers.

CASH-BOOK.

A double-entry cash-book should be used, one column to record the reading, and the other to show the amount of the collections. A column should also be provided to show the amount of poundage paid and the dates thereof.

ACCEPTANCE OF IMPRESSIONS.

Impressions of the dies of these machines are allowed on correspondence and on inland telegrams in lieu of postage-stamps, but the charges on cablegrams must continue to be prepaid in cash. Correspondence for delivery within New Zealand is to be date-stamped over the frank of the automatic machine at the offices where posted.

Correspondence for delivery in countries beyond Australasia is to have postage-stamps affixed thereto only to the value of the amount shown by the frank of the automatic machine. When this amount is less than the regulation charge the letter or other article is to be treated as short-paid. Only at Chief Post-offices and post-offices where foreign mails are made up are stamps to be affixed to correspondence for foreign countries franked by the automatic machine.

Credit for stamps affixed to foreign correspondence franked by the automatic machine is to be claimed once every accounting-period under the heading "Postage refunded and written off." The stamps must be affixed by a Chief Postmaster, an Assistant Postmaster, a Chief Clerk, or a Postmaster, and in his absence by the senior officer in attendance. A form is being printed showing the daily total thus expended. Postmasters will send the completed forms to Chief Postmasters as remittances, and Chief Postmasters to the Accountant with the accounts in which credit is claimed.

READING OF THE DIALS.

It is very desirable that the periodical reading of the dials be made in the presence of the owner or his deputy, so as to prevent any disputes and to serve the purpose of check on the officer making the collection.

ADVISING ACCOUNTANT, G.P.O., OF INSTALLATIONS.

The Accountant should be duly advised of each installation. The Officer in Charge, Telegraph Office, should also be advised, as impressions are accepted on telegrams.

Occasionally the letters and telegrams should be examined and the impressions checked against the records of impressions. The ribbons used in the machines are all black; impressions with any other colour must be challenged.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Automatic stamping-machine impressions are not allowed in place of the usual Government impressed stamps on cheque-forms, nor may the machine be used for impressing additional value on the back of postal notes.

An impression by the machine may be made upon a receipt in place of a duty-stamp.

Only impressions made upon the actual material of the cover or envelope, or on the label attached to the article posted, will be accepted in prepayment of postage. If a loose label is used it must be strong enough to withstand the wear and tear of passage through the post without becoming separated from its parcel.

Impressions on pieces of paper may not be affixed to mail-matter in the same manner as postage stamps.

Faulty or faint impressions of dies of automatic stamping-machines on letters or telegrams are not to be accepted. The impressions must be absolutely distinct in every respect.

The renewal of ribbons is solely the business of the owner of the machine. [P.O. 08/534.]