

Grawford 1039(41)

OPINIONS FROM THE PRESS

UPON

"THE PENNY POSTAGE SCHEME OF 1837:

Was it an Invention, or a Copy ? "

BY

PATRICK CHALMERS.

EFFINGHAM WILSON, LONDON, 1881.

A fresh and interesting Statement upon the Subject will shortly be issued.

ALSO,

LETTERS AND OPINIONS

HAVING REFERENCE TO THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
SIR ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL COMMITTEE.

WIMBLEDON, 1st June, 1882.

OPINIONS FROM THE PRESS.

HORNSEY JOURNAL.

The Penny Postage Scheme of 1831: was it an invention or a copy? This question is answered to the distinct disadvantage of the late Sir Rowland Hill, by Mr. Patrick Chalmers.

BANNER OF WALES.

Those Commissioners recommended that "prices current" and such "circulars" should be charged "one penny"; and Sir Rowland Hill had the elements of his penny postage scheme from their report and recommendation, which he had read, for it was printed a year before he proposed his system. Sir Rowland Hill was nobly rewarded for his ability and perseverance in carrying out important *portions* of the scheme which had been suggested and recommended by others. He deserved honour as an able *copyist* of other men's plans; but it was not fair to honour and reward him as the *inventor* of the uniform Penny Postage System. It really is no honour to his memory that he grasped to himself all the rewards and honours of the postal reforms of those days.

BRISTOL GAZETTE.

It generally happens that after somebody has got all the honour and glory and all the profit connected with some invention of great public importance, somebody else comes forward and claims to be

entitled to the credit for prior conception of the same idea. This has just happened in connection with Sir Rowland Hill and the Penny Postage Scheme. Mr. Patrick Chalmers brings to light some very remarkable recommendations in the Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry in 1835, as to imposing a uniform penny rate of transmission of circulars. Rowland Hill admits that he had access to the Blue Books, but suppresses all reference to this suggestion, though by using the word "letter" instead of "prices current," he hit on the road to fame and fortune. Mr. Chalmers further claims that the merit of suggesting the adhesive stamp belongs to his father, James Chalmers, a bookseller in Dundee, and that the publication of such idea dates back before 1837. A Dundee paper, in espousing the claims of Mr. Chalmers, considers them to amply prove "how red-tape can crush the genius of invention and shower its honours and rewards upon those who adopt other people's ideas." What will the partisans of Rowland Hill say to all this?

COLCHESTER CHRONICLE.

* * * conclusively demonstrated that the idea of having a uniform charge of a penny for postage, existed long before Sir Rowland Hill broached the subject, and that in fact the honour of the invention does not belong to the late Sir Rowland, but to somebody else. Somebody is undoubtedly entitled to a monument for so important a discovery, and it seems rather a pity that we have been awakened from the pleasant illusion that we were about to do honour to one to whom honour was due, but the subject deserves to be well ventilated, and justice accorded to the actual inventor of so beneficent a system.

STOCKPORT ADVERTISER.

What if, after all, Sir Rowland Hill was not the real founder of the Penny Postal System? At the fortnightly meeting of the Commission of Sewers, held last week in London, an interesting petition from Mr. Patrick Chalmers, of 35, Alexandra Road, Wimbledon, concerning the Rowland Hill memorial, was read. The petitioner, it appeared, from investigations he had made in the library of the British Museum, had found that in April, 1836—two years before the then Mr. Rowland Hill published his pamphlet on "Post-office Reform: Its importance and Practicability"—the "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry" was issued. This report was one of ten issued by certain Commissioners appointed to inquire into Post-office affairs, and to report to the Lords of the Treasury such improvements and reforms as they might deem desirable and expedient. In the report it was recommended that the rate of postage upon prices current, and similar mercantile publications, then subject to the same high and variable rates as were letters, be reduced to and transmitted by post at a low and uniform rate of postage, irrespective of distance, to be charged by weight and prepaid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the half-ounce. The principles and figures of the Penny Postage Scheme, therefore, put forward by Mr. Rowland Hill in 1837 and 1838 were identical with the proposals which were, as far as respects prices current and such like, embodied in that report.

SOCIETY.

Mr. Chalmers brings a momentous fact to light, which cannot be completely ignored by the Sir Rowland Memorial Fund Com-

mittee. The document which he has unearthed at the British Museum Library is entitled "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-Office Inquiry," and is dated April, 1836. In that report was embodied and recommended, as respects prices-current and such like circulars then subject to the same high and variable rates as were letters, a low and uniform rate of postage, charged by weight, and prepaid by stamp at the rate of 1d. the $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.—the identical principles and figures proposed with respect to letters by Sir Rowland Hill in his scheme of the following year. Moreover, Sir Rowland Hill has made no acknowledgment that the idea was suggested by that report. Can it have been a coincidence?

OLDHAM CHRONICLE.

Mr. P. Chalmers has written a pamphlet on the Penny Postage Scheme, which will enlighten people as to the share which Sir Rowland Hill claimed in introducing penny postage. It appears that a body of commissioners made in 1835—just two years before Sir Rowland Hill projected the penny postage system—an inquiry into the postal system; and in their fifth report a recommendation is made that "prices-current" should be charged 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. This, Mr. Chalmers says, struck him as being exactly what had been proposed by Sir Rowland Hill in 1837 with respect to letters. He looked into "the Life" of Sir Rowland Hill, written by himself, and finds that no reference is made to this report, and he considers that it was intentionally omitted. The pamphlet which Mr. Chalmers has written shows that Sir Rowland Hill is not to be credited with so much as most people suppose in connection with the penny post. Mr. Chalmers gives, in combination with this pamphlet, a chapter on the question of the adhesive stamp. It appears that

Mr. James Chalmers, bookseller, Dundee, was the inventor of the adhesive stamp, and this is demonstrated beyond a doubt. Mr. Chalmers' pamphlet will be read with great interest, and people will learn to appreciate how much honour is denied to people who really deserve it, and how much is appropriated by people who are in a position to claim it without let or hindrance.

NORWICH ARGUS.

* * * These are two pamphlets written for the purpose of showing that Sir Rowland Hill was not entitled to the high praise that has been awarded to him. The author points out that the "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry," held in 1835, first called attention to the desirability of instituting a low and uniform rate of postage for prices-current. All that Sir Rowland Hill did was to apply the principle, worked out in every detail, to letters. It is alleged against him that, having seen the report alluded to, he carefully abstained from acknowledging the source of inspiration, and took to himself credit for more than he accomplished. The same is asserted with regard to the adhesive stamp, which is stated to be the invention of the late Mr. James Chalmers, bookseller, Dundee. Those who feel an interest in the matter will find all the details set forth in the pamphlet. It certainly seems that honour has been withheld where it was due, while contributing causes to the fame of Sir Rowland Hill have been unfairly appropriated.

BRIGHTON HERALD.

A curious controversy is just now going on relative to the origin of the penny postage innovation. Most people have the

impression that the person who conceived the idea of a penny postage and who brought it into practical operation was the late Sir Rowland Hill, This belief, however, is about to be disturbed. We have received a pamphlet from the pen of Mr. Patrick Chalmers, entitled "The Penny Postage Scheme of 1837: Was it an Invention or a Copy?" The author alleges that it was the latter, and he seeks to adduce evidence in support of his statement. Without following the author in all the details of his treatise on this novel inquiry, it is enough to state that the parties whom he affirms to have been the real "inventors," if that word may be suitably applied to the Penny Postage Scheme, were the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry, in whose Fifth Report the entire principles and figures are developed, and recommended to be applied to Prices-current and such-like circulars. It is from this document that Rowland Hill took the scheme of Penny Postage, by simply applying the same principles and figures to letters, and saying nothing about his authority. The pamphlet is certainly worth reading.

NORTH MIDDLESEX CHRONICLE.

It will not be detrimental to the memory of Sir Rowland Hill to say that we think Mr. Chalmers incontestibly proves, by the evidence he brings forward, that Sir Rowland Hill was not the originator of the uniform system of cheap postal service. While it is evident that he was, in points of detail, more the adapter of schemes and views brought before him by others, it cannot be denied that Sir Rowland was an earnest and honest seeker after the end obtained—a fellow-worker with others—with a large capacity for adaptation, and for welding, as it were, fragmentary elements

into a solid and substantial unity. His best friends must regret that one with so comprehensive a grasp of mind should appear at all lacking in candour. With respect to the origination of the adhesive stamp, we think the merit is justly due to Mr. James Chalmers, of Dundee. This claim was stoutly advocated by Joseph Hume, M.P. ("Honest Joe Hume," as he was popularly called); admitted by all who were cognizant of the facts; and in 1846, the fellow-townsmen of Mr. James Chalmers did him public honour in recognition of his long and unwearied services in the cause of postal reform, and as the inventor of the adhesive stamp. Why he did not receive more public acknowledgment and reward, will ever remain a problem to which the tight knot of Government red-tapeism will, we suppose, prevent a solution. It is, however, never too late, in some measure, to redress an error; and it would be but an act of justice for the present Government to at least investigate the claim made by Mr. P. Chalmers for the honour due to his father's memory. It should also be remembered that the whole postal scheme, including the adhesive stamp, by which the world is reaping such incalculable advantages, is but yet in its youth, and will, doubtless, receive still further development. This affords an additional reason why the matter should not be relegated to oblivion; and delay in according justice is no reason why it should never be accorded.

BRIGHTON ARGUS.

Sir Rowland Hill is not only popularly supposed to be the author of the Penny Postage Scheme, but he was pretty liberally rewarded by the State on that ground, and since his death a Committee (of which Mr. Wynne E. Baxter is a member), has been

formed to raise a memorial to him as a public benefactor. Mr. Patrick Chalmers, of No. 35, Alexandra Road, Wimbledon, has, however, accidentally discovered a document which throws considerable doubt on Sir Rowland's claim to be the originator of the Penny Postage Scheme, whatever he may have done towards its development. Mr. Chalmers, in a letter to the Memorial Committee, calls attention to the fact that in the "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry," dated April, 1836, the Commissioners recommend that prices current and publications of a similar nature, then subject to the same high and variable rate of postage, as were letters, be passed through the post-office at a low and uniform rate of postage charged by weight and prepaid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the half-ounce. Mr. Chalmers asserts that in his writings, Sir Rowland Hill exceptionally avoids reference to this pre-existing document, while putting forward in the main, its valuable principles and figures to be those of his own conception, as applied by him to letters in his Penny Postage Scheme of 1837. The discovery of these two facts in the opinion of Mr. Chalmers, alters the whole relations as hitherto existing betwixt Sir Rowland Hill and the public. The Committee, however, simply decline to entertain the subject, as being "too late in the day."

MID-SURREY STANDARD.

Mr. Patrick Chalmers, of Wimbledon, has, for some time past, made a diligent research as to the authorship of the Penny Postal system, a scheme so long associated with the name of Sir Rowland Hill that the community at large has looked upon him as a primary worker-out of that idea which has made his name memorable. Mr. Chalmers has raked up, from the musty shelves of the British

Museum, a Blue Book bearing date April, 1836. This reveals the fact that the bright idea of the Penny Post was evolved from the brains of those matter-of-fact individuals called Commissioners. If this be so—and there is the ugly book to prove it—the laurel wreath must be torn from the head of an usurper, and search must be made for one to whom the honour must be given. It is quite possible Sir Rowland committed what was, to his way of thinking, a justifiable robbery of another's brains. It is daily done now-a-days. How much easier was it to commit such a felony in the more barbaric days of 1837, when the pillory of publicity did not exist in the same degree as it does now. If, as we say, Sir Rowland contemplated such an appropriation, he felt there was a warrantable amount of safety in doing so. The Blue Book would be soon buried—in the past. A bookworm, to be sure, might swallow it, but he would never reveal its contents to the outside gaze. The thought of such a champion as Mr. Chalmers springing up never entered Sir Rowland's head. If it had, he would not have attempted—to parody a popular phrase—"to rob a poor man of his brains." Though Mr. Chalmers' discovery will tend to throw a little more falsehood on history, we believe he will eventually be thanked by the public for his Blue Book scrutiny.

BLAIRGOWRIE ADVERTISER.

He contends that the honour of originating the Penny Postage System, which was claimed by the late Sir Rowland Hill, and in recognition of whose "invention" a National Memorial is on foot, was not due to Sir Rowland, as is generally supposed, but that on the contrary he had but a very small share in it. Mr. Chalmers shows that Sir Rowland Hill adopted from others the idea of a cheap

and uniform rate of postage for circulars and prices-current, and at most proposed the carriage of letters on that system ; that Mr. James Chalmers was the originator of the principle of the adhesive stamp.

* * * Mr. Patrick Chalmers seems to be sparing no effort to have the honours rightly awarded, and we have confidence his efforts will meet with considerable, if not complete, success.

AMERICAN BOOKSELLER.

A Mr. Patrick Chalmers has discovered that Sir Rowland Hill did not invent the Penny Postage scheme, but only copied it. His evidence lies in documents in the British Museum, which he asserts have been ignored by Sir Rowland Hill. Mr. Chalmers has followed up his pamphlet on "The Adhesive Stamp" by the issue of "The Penny Postage Scheme of 1837: Was it an Invention or a Copy?" (Effingham Wilson.) There is certainly some startling evidence in the pamphlet adduced to support the author's argument, and it will be interesting to learn what the committee of the Rowland Hill Memorial think of it.

MID-SURREY STANDARD.

"The Penny Postage Scheme: Was it an Invention or a Copy?" is the title of an ably-written pamphlet from the pen of Mr. Patrick Chalmers, a gentleman who has nobly and perseveringly worked to give the public some truthful details respecting the Postal Scheme hitherto claimed by the late Sir Rowland Hill. History is not always true: it cannot be so. Mr. Chalmers has proved its falsity in respect to the origin of the adhesive stamp. Chroniclers have given Sir Rowland Hill the honour of introducing it, but the author of the above *brochure* has proved the gullibility

of the historians, and shown—we think conclusively—that Mr. James Chalmers, of Dundee, the father of Mr. Patrick Chalmers, was the originator. * * * Sir Rowland Hill's proposal related simply to the impressed stamp, and it is a gross wrong to remember his name in honour and to forget or ignore one to whom the honour is due. Mr. Patrick Chalmers has had a somewhat unpleasant duty to perform, and he has had to encounter considerable opposition : but his task has been honestly undertaken. We hope that Mr. Patrick Chalmers will shortly see that his labours have not been in vain.

TOTNESS TIMES.

* * * The writer argues his points in a powerful manner, always with fairness, but never flinching from the duty he has taken upon himself.

THE CHRISTIAN UNION.

A somewhat curious controversy is just now going on among a select party, relative to the origin of the Penny Postage innovation. We say select, because nearly every one believes the true and only person who conceived the idea of a penny postage and who brought it into practical operation was the late Sir Rowland Hill. This belief, however, is about to be disturbed a little, at least, there is a "side-wind" which is rising adversely to this opinion. We have received a pamphlet from the pen of Mr. Patrick Chalmers, entitled "The Penny Postage Scheme of 1837: Was it an Invention or a Copy?" The author alleges that it was the latter, and he seeks to adduce evidence in support of his statement. Without following the author in all the details of his treatise on this novel inquiry, it is enough to state that the parties whom he affirms to have been

the real "inventors," if that word may be suitably applied to the Penny Postage Scheme, were the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry, in whose fifth Report the entire principles and figures are developed, and recommended to be applied to Prices Current and such like Circulars. It is from this document that Rowland Hill took his scheme of Penny Postage, by simply applying the same principles and figures to letters, and saying nothing about his authority. If we may judge from the information set forth in his pamphlet the author has devoted much time in ransacking old and official records in order to obtain information and evidence amply confirmatory of his case. He does not say that Sir Rowland Hill did not give effect to its adoption in an official sense * * * * *

It is a question that will more or less interest every one, on account of its peculiar significance to the proposed public memorials.

THE MAN OF ROSS.

A pamphlet showing conclusively that the Penny Postage was not the invention of Sir Rowland Hill. * * * This re-calls to our mind the Sunday School movement for which Mr. Raikes got all the thanks and honour as the originator, whereas he, like Sir Rowland Hill, was but a mere copyist.

THE STRATFORD AND SOUTH ESSEX ADVERTISER.

An interesting pamphlet dealing with the whole question of the Postage Scheme. It enters fully into the question upon which it treats, and should be in the hands of every one interested in the matter of Postal reform.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIR ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL COMMITTEE.



It will be recollected that an announcement appeared in the papers some months ago, on the part of the Sir Rowland Hill Memorial Committee, that the inscription decided upon by them for the statue to be erected in the City was—

“ ROWLAND HILL—HE FOUNDED PENNY POSTAGE.”

The next announcement we have of the proceedings of the Committee is as follows, from the *City Press*, of date 18th March :—

“ ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL .

“ On Thursday a meeting of the Rowland Hill Memorial
“ Committee was held at the Mansion House, the Lord Mayor
“ presiding. A discussion arose as to the inscription upon Mr.
“ Onslow Ford’s statue to be erected at the Royal Exchange,
“ which had been determined at a previous meeting to run thus :
“ ‘ Rowland Hill—He founded Penny Postage.’ Mr. Whitehead
“ now proposed that the last sentence should run, ‘ He gave us
“ ‘ Penny Postage.’ Mr. Northover seconded. The Lord Mayor
“ thought that a mere mention of the name, birth and death on the
“ statue would be sufficient. Dr. Walter Lewis moved for, and
“ Mr. Causton, M.P., seconded, the following inscription : ‘ Sir

“ ‘Rowland Hill, K.C.B., Born 1795, died 1879.’ Mr. Whitehead
 “ withdrew his motion, and the latter suggestion was unanimously
 “ adopted. Mr. C. Barry moved, and Mr. R. Price seconded, the
 “ following addition to the words: ‘By whose energy and per-
 “ severance the national Penny Postage was established.’
 “ Eventually this was carried by nine votes to six, the Lord Mayor
 “ voting in the minority.”—*City Press*, 18th March.

It will be seen that the above proceedings on the part of the Committee, amount to a complete admission of the discovery I laid before them, *viz.*, that the Penny Postage Scheme of 1837 was *not* an invention, but only a concealed *copy*, from the Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, and such was the unquestioned conclusion arrived at by others, including Members of the City Corporation. The change in the inscription was important and significant—“He founded Penny Postage” was unanimously abandoned—he “established” it was substituted—while a minority of six to nine were in favor of an inscription merely nominal.

Finding that no corresponding notice, after some days had elapsed, appeared in the daily papers for the information of the public at large, I addressed the following letter to the Lord Mayor, as Chairman of the Committee:—

“ WIMBLEDON, 25th March, 1882.

“ MY LORD,

“ Observing your Lordship’s name in the list of the minority
 “ of six to nine, in favor of a merely formal inscription at the
 “ meeting of the Sir Rowland Hill Memorial Committee, upon the
 “ 16th inst., I desire to draw your Lordship’s attention to the fact

“ that no notice of any such meeting, resulting in an alteration of
 “ the highest significance, has found its way to the daily press.

“ Having been instrumental in showing the Committee that
 “ Sir Rowland Hill did *not* ‘found the Penny Postage,’ as the
 “ Committee have, by this act, now confirmed, it is only right that
 “ I should further state to your Lordship that my statements, so
 “ far, give but an inadequate idea of the very marked deception
 “ which has been practised by Sir Rowland Hill upon the nation.

“ The proceedings of Mr. Pearson Hill, as already intimated
 “ in my printed letter of the 15th inst., laid before your Lordship,
 “ leave me no other course now than, in self-defence, to develope
 “ the whole case to the public, and sooner or later the public will
 “ be in possession of all the facts.

“ It is my duty to state this to your Lordship, in order that
 “ your Lordship may take into consideration whether the fact of
 “ the change in the inscription—what the change is to be, if not
 “ also your reasons for having so decided—should not at once
 “ be frankly stated to the public.

“ As matters stand, reflections may afterwards be made at the
 “ want of information to which the public may have considered
 “ themselves entitled in the usual course.

“ I have the honour to be, &c.,

“ PATRICK CHALMERS.

“ TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,
 “ MANSION HOUSE.”

To this letter, I was immediately favoured with the following reply:—

“THE MANSION HOUSE,

“LONDON, 27th March, 1882.

“The Lord Mayor presents his compliments to Mr. Chalmers and begs to acknowledge the receipt of his letter of the 25th inst., which shall have due attention.”

And accordingly, in all or most of the daily papers of the 29th March there appeared the following announcement:—

“THE ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL.—The Bronze Statue of Sir Rowland Hill by Mr. E. Onslow Ford is likely to be ready for erection in July next. The Mansion House Committee have resolved that the pedestal shall bear the following inscription:—Sir Rowland Hill, K.C.B., born 1795; died 1879. By whose energy and perseverance the National Penny Postage was established.”

It will be seen from the above correspondence and its result, that a letter written by me as the person “instrumental in showing the Committee that Sir Rowland Hill did *not* found the Penny Postage,” and so confirmed by them, addressed to the Chairman of that Committee—telling him, moreover, that I had further statements of interest to make, was, in the same spirit, courteously acknowledged, and acted upon in accordance.

To a letter which appeared in the “*Standard*” newspaper of 30th March, I replied on the 1st of April, as follows, in the full conviction, as I was entitled to feel, that it was my own statements which had influenced the Committee in the significant alteration.

they had made in the inscription, and the consequent notices of same handed to the daily press, at my own instigation :—

“ THE ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL.

“ TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘STANDARD.’

“ SIR,—As the person who has been instrumental in bringing
 “ about the change of opinion upon the part of the Memorial
 “ Committee, which has at length induced them to unanimously
 “ abandon the inscription, ‘ He founded Penny Postage,’ permit
 “ me to meet the challenge of your Correspondent, ‘ One of the
 “ ‘Public,’ whose letter I have just read, by saying that I adhere to
 “ the statements already laid by me before that Committee. It is
 “ now many months since I first acquainted the Committee that the
 “ Penny Postage Scheme of 1837 was not the conception of the
 “ late Sir Rowland Hill, but was a concealed copy by him from a
 “ neglected Blue Book, the ‘ Fifth Report of the Commissioners of
 “ ‘ Post-office Inquiry.

“ By unanimously abandoning the inscription, ‘ He founded
 “ ‘ Penny Postage,’ the Committee at length acknowledged the truth
 “ of what I laid before them. But one thing the Committee have
 “ neglected to do, and that is to make this truth known to the
 “ public.

“ It is only through my own efforts, in a letter respectfully
 “ addressed by me to the Lord Mayor on the 25th ult., that the
 “ scrap of information reported in ‘ *The Standard*,’ and other papers
 “ of the 29th ult., has been allowed to reach the public. Let the
 “ Committee make known the whole truth of this matter; let them

“ say out frankly what the public have a right to know, and by so
 “ doing relieve themselves of the responsibility of keeping back a
 “ weighty and important secret.

“ I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“ PATRICK CHALMERS.

“ WIMBLEDON, *April 1.*”

To the above letter a reply appeared in the *Standard* of the following day from Mr. Whitehead, the honorary secretary, denying my instrumentality in the change of inscription—equally denying that any inscription whatever had been settled, *though two had already been officially announced.*

As so clear a victory on my part was not agreeable, a *third* inscription had consequently to be found, and at a Committee meeting, on the 21st April, under the presidency, *not* of the Lord Mayor, but of Mr. Gilbey, this third edition was settled as follows:—
 “ Rowland Hill. He founded uniform Penny Postage, 1840.”

The introduction of the date, the year “ 1840,” concedes the whole question of *conception*. But those only who are conversant with the history of Sir Rowland Hill will understand this.

By the year 1840 (the then) Mr. Rowland Hill had become located at the Treasury for the purpose of carrying out his scheme. But the *scheme itself* was brought forward by him in 1837. By thus avoiding all responsibility, consequently, for anything *prior* to 1840, the Committee may be taken to admit that they cannot answer for the originality of the 1837 scheme, just as I have been pointing out. In this way, the *conception* of 1837 is practically

admitted to form no part of the "foundation" of "Uniform Penny Postage" as far as Rowland Hill is concerned; it is from and after 1840, when the *executive* part of the work began, that his claim to having "founded uniform Penny Postage" can now alone be sustained.

A more complete admission of the truth of what I have laid before the Committee could not be desired; yet how many, without further explanation from the Committee, as well as on the part of the press, will for one moment understand the full significance of "1840" upon the statue of Sir Rowland Hill?

PRESS OPINIONS ON THE CHANGES OF INSCRIPTION FOR THE SIR ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL.



NORWICH ARGUS.

Sir Rowland Hill did sufficiently good work in his day to warrant his name being honoured, without putting forth spurious claims. It has been insisted for him that he invented the Penny Postage Scheme and devised the adhesive stamp. Mr. Patrick Chalmers, of Alexandra Road, Wimbledon, states distinctly and boldly that "the Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry," bearing date April, 1836, and now in the British Museum, "recommended as respects prices-current and such-like "circulars, then subject to the same high and variable rates as were "letters, a low and uniform rate of postage, charged by weight "and prepaid by stamp, at the rate of penny the half-ounce." Mr. Chalmers says that these were "the identical principles and "figures proposed with respect to letters by Sir Rowland Hill, in "his scheme of the following year." The fact is, that the great postal reformer sucked other people's brains; and now it is proposed to erect a monument to him under false pretences. Sir Rowland Hill copied the postal scheme without acknowledgment, and adopted the principle of the adhesive stamp in the same manner, although it was the product of Mr. Chalmers' father's brain. We are putting Mr. Chalmers' case, which bears very strong evidence

on the face of it; at any rate, the Rowland Hill Memorial Committee have doubts on the matter. It was originally intended to place upon the statue to be erected at the Royal Exchange, London, the words, "Rowland Hill—he founded Penny Postage." They have abandoned this, and have substituted the following:—
 "Rowland Hill, K.C.B. Born 1795, died 1879. By whose energy and perseverance the national Penny Postage was established." All claim to invention is thus yielded, and Mr. Chalmers has just cause of complaint against the Committee who treated his communication so disdainfully, but who are now compelled to admit that all he contended for was just and right. His revenge is complete, though public morality suffers, and with it, to some extent, a great name.

SOCIETY.

Only one inference can be drawn from the change which the Rowland Hill Memorial Committee have made in the wording of the motto to be put on the statue. "He founded penny postage" was the original, but this has been changed to, "By whose energy and perseverance the national penny postage was established." which is a totally different thing. A general idea and wish was expressed that Sir Rowland Hill's name only should appear, with no notice of the great work he had carried out. The addition of the motto was carried by three votes, so that the minority must have had some good grounds for their opposition.

PERTSHIRE CONSTITUTIONAL.

The Secretary of the Rowland Hill Memorial Committee has officially announced that a further change is to be made in the

proposed motto for the statue to be erected in the Royal Exchange. Mr. Whitehead, who makes this announcement, it is to be hoped will not be given the task of composing it, as he has written to the papers explaining that the motto he proposed, "He gave us Penny Postage," is synonymous with "He founded Penny Postage,"—a somewhat loose interpretation of the English language. It may be said that Sir Walter Raleigh "gave" tobacco to the English people, but no one will accuse him of having created the tobacco-plant.

FIGARO.

It seems that the Rowland Hill Memorial Committee have for a third time chosen a motto for the Royal Exchange Statue. This one is to read, "He Founded Uniform Penny Postage, 1840." Is not the Committee continuing to blunder? For I have always understood that, according to Sir Rowland's own writings, he founded Penny Postage in 1837. Some explanation ought to be made as to the reason for deciding on this new date. The Post-office documents of 1836 more than suggest that the scheme was discovered in that year.

SOCIETY.

Despite Mr. Whitehead's bombastic assertion that he and his colleagues were to select a motto for the Rowland Hill Memorial which would testify "in still stronger terms than ever to the justice of Sir Rowland's claims, in spite of all his assailant's criticism," "public gratitude as the originator and founder of the system of Penny Postage"—they have descended from their high horse, and fixed as the new motto—"He founded Uniform Penny Postage, 1840." This practically leaves the 1836 discovery as victor in the

field, and rather snubs the memory of Rowland Hill, for Sir Rowland himself claimed that his invention was founded in 1837. The Committee have argued their bad case very badly indeed.

DUNDEE ADVERTISER.

The change in the composition of the inscription is a proof, though unacknowledged, of the success of the labours of Mr. Chalmers. The energy and perseverance of Sir Rowland Hill were never questioned, but it was proved beyond dispute that there were advocates of Post-office reform and cheap postage long before Sir Rowland Hill stepped upon the scene to enter into their labours.

DOVER CHRONICLE.

It would appear as if the honest and fair members of the Rowland Hill Testimonial Committee have been out-voted on a second division in respect of the inscription to be placed upon the statue, and the epitaph—"He founded the uniform Penny Postage in 1840," is to be engraved on it. Well, it is not the first time the City of London has lent itself to the perpetuation of an imposition."

FIGARO.

"In your issue of the 15th inst., you have a note regarding the Rowland Hill Memorial for the Royal Exchange, and you say the motto for this is to be 'By whose energy and perseverance the National Penny Postage was established.' This is scarcely correct, as Mr. Whitehead, the hon. treasurer and secretary to the Memorial Committee, only the other day officially announced that this motto was again to be changed. The original motto selected was 'He

founded Penny Postage,' but some doubts being cast on this expression being wholly correct, the word 'founded' was changed to that of 'established'; and this is again to be revised. I understand that the attention of the Memorial Committee has been called to the existence of a document in the British Museum, dated 1836, and termed the 'Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry,' in which was embodied and recommended as respects prices current and such like circulars, then subject to the same high and variable rates as mere letters, a low and uniform rate of postage charged by weight, and prepaid by stamp, at the rate of a penny the half-ounce—these being the identical principles and figures proposed with respect to letters by Sir Rowland Hill in his scheme of the following year. In short, that the principles and figures of the Penny Postage Scheme of 1837, so far from having been the conceptions of the late Rowland Hill, as hitherto understood, were a copy from this pre-existing document. The finding of this document I believe, dates subsequent to the settling of the motto on the Westminster Abbey Memorial, which credits Sir Rowland with having 'originated' the Penny Postage. The selection of the word 'established,' therefore, would seem to be a correct one, as he who established the boon of Penny Postage is fully worthy of a memorial to his name."

VANITY FAIR.

A correspondent writes :—"I should very much like to know what Sir Rowland Hill's family think of the proposed change in the wording of the motto to be carved on the memorial to be erected to Sir Rowland's memory. At one time the committee had unanimously

agreed that 'he founded Penny Postage' was to be the motto. This, I find, has now been changed to 'by whose energy and perseverance the national Penny Postage was established.' And even this appeared to be doubtfully appropriate, seeing that it was only carried by nine to six votes. The Lord Mayor voted in the minority. Now this is a very decided insult to the memory of Sir Rowland Hill, unless there be good reason for the change. As no doubt has ever been cast on Sir Rowland Hill's energy and perseverance, why should these features be alone dealt with? It is a comparatively small honour to credit him with having 'established' Penny Postage, if that of having 'founded' it is purposely denied him."

The **DAILY NEWS**, of 26th April, publishes the following letter from me upon the subject :—

"THE ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL.—To the Editor of the *Daily News*.—Sir,—The latest edition of the inscription proposed by the Committee, and just published in your columns ('Rowland Hill—He Founded Uniform Penny Postage, 1840') will prove unintelligible to your readers without some explanation. Before the year 1840, Mr. Rowland Hill had become located at the Treasury for the purpose of carrying out his scheme, which every one admits he effectually did. But the *scheme itself* was brought forward by him in 1837. By thus avoiding all responsibility, consequently, for anything *prior* to 1840, the Committee practically admit that they cannot answer for the originality of the 1837 scheme, just as I have been pointing out. As the notice in your columns omits to explain this, for the information of the illustrious personages who are to be

invited to inaugurate the statue, as well as of your readers at large, you will doubtless not object to admit these explanatory lines.—
Your obedient Servant, PATRICK CHALMERS. Wimbledon. 22nd April.”

To the above, in this instance, no reply has been attempted.

It now remains with the Committee, with the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen and gentlemen of position whose names have appeared upon the Committee list, and with the press, to decide whether the illustrious personages to be invited to the inauguration of the statue, and the public, are to be allowed to remain in ignorance of what has transpired, or if they are to be frankly informed that by now introducing the date “1840” into the inscription, all pretensions to originality of conception are given up, and that the Penny Postage Scheme of 1837 was *not* a conception but only a concealed *copy*.

P. C.

WIMBLEDON, 1st June, 1882.