

THE WORK OF THE POST OFFICE.

The work of the Post Office continues to increase. The number of letters delivered in the United Kingdom during the twelve months of the financial year 1881 was 1,176,423,600, showing an increase of 4.3 per cent; the number of post-cards, 122,884,000, an increase of 7.4 per cent; the number of book packets and circulars, 248,881,600, an increase of 16.3 per cent; and the number of newspapers, 133,796,100, an increase of 2.5 per cent. There is again a marked increase in registered letters, the number recorded being 10,034,546, against 8,739,191 of the previous year, or an increase of 14.8 per cent.

The gross revenue collected within the year was a little over 8½ millions, arrived at thus:—

Postage on letters, post-cards, newspapers, &c.	£6,478,696
Commission on money orders	246,033
Commission on postal orders	3,750
Value of unclaimed money orders	4,943
Revenue from telegraphs	254,731
	1,633,884
	£8,367,311

The expenditure was:—

For Postal service, including money order and postal order business	£3,470,213
Packet service	665,446
Telegraph service, including expenditure by other departments	1,305,006
	£5,440,665

The net revenue was, therefore £2,926,646 being an increase of £88,017 on the previous year.

The total expenditure shows an increase of £268,360, almost wholly due to the additional outlay necessarily involved in carrying on a business which is rapidly growing in nearly every branch.

Over 5,300,000 letters were dealt with in the Returned Letter Office, 475,000 of which it was found impossible to deliver or return. One contained a bank-note for £100, still unclaimed; and attached to the seal of another was a sovereign, which was returned to the owner, who had forgotten to remove it. In addition to the letters, about half a million post-cards, 4,000,000 book packets, and 400,000 newspapers found their way to the same office. More than 27,000 letters—an increase of 3000 over last year—were posted without any address whatever, 5000 furnished no clue to the name of the sender, and 1340 contained articles of value to the amount of nearly £5000. The use of too fragile covers occasioned the escape of some 30,000 articles, and, no doubt, entailed much disappointment.

POST OFFICE REGULATIONS.

The rates of postage on inland letters to be prepaid are as follow, viz:—

For a letter not exceeding 1 oz.	1d.
Exceeding 1 oz., but not exceeding 2 oz.	1½d.
„ 2 oz., and less than 4 oz.	2d.
„ 4 oz., and less than 6 oz.	2½d.
„ 6 oz., and less than 8 oz.	3d.
„ 8 oz., and less than 10 oz.	3½d.
„ 10 oz., and less than 12 oz.	4d.

A letter exceeding the weight of 12 oz. is liable to a postage of 1d. for every ounce, beginning with the first ounce. A letter, for example, weighing between 14 oz. and 15 oz. must be prepaid 1s. 3d.

A letter posted unpaid is chargeable on delivery with double postage; and if insufficiently prepaid is chargeable with double the deficiency.

No letter may be above 18 inches in length, 9 inches in width, or six inches in depth.

Letters for the Country posted in London or the London Districts on Saturday too late for the ordinary Evening Mails, but in time for the last Evening Collections are delivered next morning, if for places within the range of the Midnight despatches; if for places beyond that range, they are delivered on Monday. The late fee charged for posting inland ordinary letters, after the time of closing the boxes for the dispatch of a mail, is reduced to a uniform rate of a halfpenny.

All Post Offices in the London District are closed on Sundays, with some few exceptions, which are open for the receipt and dispatch of telegrams during the hours stated in Postal Guide.

On Bank Holidays the Postal and Telegraph arrangements in London are of an exceptional character, and due notice is given of them by means of Notices to the public exhibited at Metropolitan Post Offices.

Inquiries for Missing Letters, &c., should be made at the Secretary's Office, New Building, between ten a.m. and four p.m. (Saturdays between ten and one).

The Returned Letter Office is in Telegraph-street, Moorgate-street. The Money Order Office is at No. 1, Aldersgate-street. The Post-Office Savings Bank is in Queen Victoria-street, E.C.

LETTERS "TO BE CALLED FOR."

There is a Poste Restante both at the General Post Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand, and at the Charing-cross Post Office, where letters "to be called for" can be obtained between the hours of nine a.m. and five p.m. No letters (except communications from the Savings Bank Department) are taken in "to be called for" at the other district or branch offices, and any so directed are sent to the Returned Letter Office to be returned to the writers.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN LETTERS.

Full particulars of the rates of postage on letters to the colonies and foreign countries will be found in the British Postal Guide, published quarterly, price Sixpence.

No letter for any colony or foreign country may be above two feet in length or one foot in width or depth. Neither must it contain gold or silver money, jewels, or precious articles, or anything liable to Customs duties, can be sent, even if registered, to any country of the General Postal Union.

INLAND BOOK POST.

The postage is one halfpenny for every 2oz. or part of that weight. A packet posted wholly unpaid is charged with double the book postage; and if posted partially prepaid, with double the deficiency.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN BOOK POST.

The limit of size for a book-packet addressed to any place abroad is 24 in. in length and 12 in. in width or depth.

FOREIGN CARD POST.

Foreign post-cards may be sent to Canada and to all the countries comprised in the General Postal Union, with the exception of British India.

The postage of a card is in every case one half the rate for a single letter. Foreign post-cards with an impressed stamp of 1d. and 1½d. each are sold at that rate, and are transmissible to the majority of the countries of the Union without extra charge, but reference should be made for exceptional rates to the Post Office Guide.

REGISTRATION (INLAND AND FOREIGN.)

The fee for registering a letter, newspaper, or book-packet passing between any two places in the United Kingdom is twopenny.

The fee chargeable for registration to Colonies and Foreign Countries will be found in the Post Office Guide.

Every letter to be registered should be presented at the counter, and a receipt obtained for it, and should on no account be dropped into the letter-box. If, contrary to this rule, a letter marked "Registered" be dropped into the letter-box, it will, if directed to any place in the United Kingdom or the British Colonies, be liable to a registration fee of 4d., instead of the ordinary fee of 2d.

INDIAN PARCEL POST.

1. Persons wishing to send parcels to any part of British India can do so through the Indian Parcel Post Agency—established under authority of the Director-General of the Post Office of India—at 122, Leadenhall-street, E.C.; and (Branch Office) at 25, Cockspar-street, S.W.

2. The charge for parcels is 1s. per lb. or fraction of a lb. (prepayment optional), covering transit from London to destination in India. Insurance may be effected, if desired, at the rate (to be prepaid) of 1s. up to £3 value, 2s. 6d. up to £10 value, and 5s. up to £20 value. Indian Customs duty (if chargeable) will be realised from the addressee.

N.B.—Parcels containing books, or articles treated as books under the British Inland Book Post Rules, are charged 6d. per lb.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN PATTERN AND SAMPLE POST.

There is a Pattern and Sample Post to certain colonies and foreign countries, but it is restricted to bona fide trade patterns or samples of merchandise.

MODES OF PREPAYMENT.

Inland letters, newspapers, and book-packets cannot be prepaid in money but must be prepaid by means of stamps, either adhesive or embossed or impressed. This rule applies also to registered letters.

Exceptions.—At the Chief and District Post Offices, and at the Charing-cross and Lombard-street Post Offices in London, as well as at the Head Offices in Edinburgh and Dublin.

POSTAL ORDERS.

Postal orders, for certain fixed sums from 1s. up to £1, are issued to the public at all post offices at which money order business is transacted.

The following are the amounts for which postal orders are issued, together with the poundage payable in respect of each order:—

Amount of Order.	Poundage.	Amount of Order.	Poundage.
1 0	...	7 6	...
1 6	...	10 0	...
2 6	...	20 0	...

The person to whom a postal order is issued must, before parting with it, fill in the name of the person to whom the amount is to be paid, and may fill in the name of the Money Order Office at which the amount is to be paid. The person so named must, before payment can be made, sign the receipt at the foot of the order, and must also fill in the name of the Money Order Office, if that has not been already done.

POST-OFFICE MONEY ORDERS.

The regulations which came into operation Oct. 1, 1880, with respect to postal orders enacts that the following poundage be paid:—1s., ½d.; 2s. 6d., 5s., or 7s. 6d., 1d.; 10s., 12s. 6d., 15s., 17s. 6d., or 20s., 2d.

The postmaster may require the person to sign his name on the order before payment is made, although it has been already signed. A postal order may be crossed to a particular banker, and the banker to whom it is crossed may cross it to another banker or agent for collection; and when so crossed specially a postmaster shall refuse to pay it, except to the banker to whom it is crossed.

POST-OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS.

The usefulness of this department to the working classes goes on extending. There are now more than ten millions of depositors. Much has been done during the year to encourage thrift.

The total amount of deposits, with the interest due, had on Dec. 31, reached £33,744,637, showing an increase of £1,732,503 over the amount recorded on the corresponding day of 1879. The Post-Office Savings Bank year prescribed by statute terminates on Dec. 31; but, comparing the financial years ended March 31, the result obtained is:—The total amount of deposits on March 31, 1880, including interest to previous Dec. 31, £32,578,405; the total amount of deposits on March 31, 1881, including interest to previous Dec. 31, £32,782,329; estimated increase in the financial year ended March 31, 1881, £2,203,924. The increase in Ireland just now (1881) has a peculiar significance, the amount exceeding by £138,500 the total of the previous year placed in the Savings Banks. Ten thousand new depositors were also enrolled, every county in Ireland contributing its quota, and the increase in the eight counties scheduled as distressed amounted to £848 over and above the growth of the previous year—viz., £33,866, against £25,418.

Post-Office Savings Banks are established at all Money-Order Offices in the United Kingdom, and are open for the receipt and payment of money and for the transaction of Government Stock business daily during the hours appointed for Money-Order business.

Any person desirous of saving one shilling by means of penny contributions, for deposit in the Post-Office Savings Bank, may do so by purchasing with every penny so saved a penny postage-stamp and affixing it to a form to be obtained at any post-office. When twelve such stamps have been so affixed, the form may be taken to any post-office savings bank in the United Kingdom, where it will be received by the postmaster, and one shilling be allowed for the stamps, which shilling will be accepted either as the first deposit in a new account then to be opened, or as an ordinary deposit if the owner of it has already opened an account. If the stamps affixed to the form are defaced, or in any way damaged, they will not be received by a postmaster.