

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. *1736-37* Press
Mis.

Dated *17-12-1869*

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
17th December 1869.

No. 100. Read the following letter from the Hon. L. C. INNES, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 22nd November 1869.

In the present financial crisis it has occurred to me that a change in the Postal system might be advantageously adopted, which, while it would produce an increased revenue to Government, would, in the incidence of the charge for carriage of letters, be more just and fair than the existing system. The quarter tola six-pie-post probably succeeds in developing correspondence by letter to the utmost extent of which it is at present capable in India, and in doing so it carries out one of the principal objects of its introduction, that of bringing the advantages of a cheap post within the reach of the very poorest; but of course there was another object, and that was to draw from the Postal Department a revenue adequate to the payment of the Postal service for the time being, with a surplus available for its gradual extension. Admitting that these objects have been attained, it may yet be asked how it is that, in the postal charge, distance is not taken into account, and that the carriage of a letter for 1500 miles costs no more than the carriage of a letter of the same weight for only one mile.

2. It is self-evident that, as a mere matter of fairness to the community, the letter which the State had to carry furthest should be charged higher than the other, and the reason why the charge is adjusted to weight alone, irrespective of distance, must be sought in the objects already stated as those of the introduction of the present Postal system. If any of those objects would be defeated, or marred, by the charge being adjusted to distance, it is obvious that the legislature did well in confining that adjustment to weight. Under the existing system a man has simply to buy his stamp, and having ascertained, once for all, the size of paper which is within the weight—covered by the stamp—the whole operation of writing, posting, and communicating with those at a distance is so easy and inexpensive that writing becomes almost a temptation. If, however, he has to pay for distance the distance must be ascertained, and this entails a new or troublesome operation. A man may be wanting to write to twenty different places, and must ascertain the distance of each before he can post his letters. This information cannot be obtained without a certain amount of trouble and delay. If he is in a poor position, and applies at the Post Office he cannot be sure of being attended to; or the answer may be inaccurate. The distance may be overstated or understated; in the former case from a desire to dispose of a higher stamp than is actually required, and in the latter from inadvertence, or in both from ignorance. The difficulty would, no doubt, prove a substantial check to a large proportion of the correspondence which now takes place under a system in which distance is immaterial. It cannot, however, be denied that, if such a system of charging by distance could be hit upon as would not be followed by any diminution of correspondence, or be attended in other respects with hardship to the poorer classes, it is highly desirable that it should be adopted.

3. Correspondence may be divided into—

1. Letters of merchants and traders.
2. Letters of others written of necessity.
3. All other letters.

Official letters may be left out of account. Upon letters of merchants and traders the charge for distance, if judiciously fixed, would have scarcely any appreciable effect. Upon letters written from some urgent necessity also the effect would be trifling, though hardship might be felt if the charge were high.

Upon other letters the charge for distance would of course have a deterring effect, if the charge were liable to be increased on account of the letter having to pass any point within the range to which such correspondence extends.

The people of India is composed of several nations living within well-defined boundaries, and mixing very little with each other. The correspondence of the people composing each nation must, therefore, for the most part, be restricted to the limits of the area of territory which it occupies; the chief exceptions being in the case of merchants and traders who correspond with every part of India. If, therefore, the limit of the single rate be made to extend up to, or beyond the boundaries of, the local area occupied by any one of these several nations, the check that would arise to correspondence by reason of an additional charge for additional distance would be but trifling.

4. I would apportion India into three Postal Ranges. The southern range would be bounded by the East Coast northwards to Chicacole, and by the West Coast northwards to the mouth of the Nerbudda, and by a line from Chicacole northwards to Condapilly, and thence by a line direct to Chanda, thence to Natchagerry, Beitoor, and Hindu, and along the line of the Nerbudda westward to the sea.

The eastward and westward ranges would lie to the north of this northern range, and their dividing line would commence at Hindu and run along the line of the Nerbudda, east to Hossungabad, thence eastward along the south and east frontier of Bhopaul, and thence by a line along the east Gwalior frontier to Etawah, thence to Futteygurh and so along the west border of Oude to the south-west angle of Nepaul, and by the west frontier of Nepaul to the Himalayas.

In the southern range would be included two families of nations the Mahratta and the Dravidian, and the line dividing the east and west ranges would, in like manner, in a great measure divide peoples who are politically and socially distinct.

The correspondence existing between the peoples of these district tracts must be principally mercantile, or of a kind not likely to be checked by an extra charge for distance.

5. I would only have a single and a double charge for distance, and retain the present charges for weight.

Thus a letter weighing quarter tola from Calcutta to Bombay would pass into the southern range, and be charged one anna, and a letter of half a tola two annas.

At times the postal route may be so fixed that a letter will have to pass into a third range before reaching its destination. In this case I would still only charge two rates.

6. The result would be a fairer adjustment of charge than at present, without any sensible check to correspondence, and a large increase of revenue may, I think, be reasonably calculated upon as a further result.

The additional charges would fall principally upon the classes who are well able to bear them, and to whom the inconvenience arising from the necessity of ascertaining

whether the letter is liable to a double or a single rate for distance would be scarcely appreciable. And where the charge would affect other than mercantile correspondence it would do so only to a very trifling extent, and would hardly touch the poorer classes, who alone, if affected by it, would be likely to regard the additional charge as a hardship. At the same time the system would present a simplicity little inferior to that of the system now existing.

7. The above is a mere hasty sketch in which details find no place; but the principle which my proposal embodies may possibly commend itself to the Government, and be recommended for adoption in some modified form.

At all events I have thought it right not to lose an opportunity of laying before the Government a plan, the adoption of which, in my judgment, would go some way towards the increase of the revenue, without burdening any class.

No. 101. ORDER THEREON, 17th December 1869, No. 1736.

The Governor in Council resolves to forward a copy of the foregoing letter to the Government of India.

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Hon. L. C. Innes.

Exd. J. Wright.

No. 1737.

FROM

THE HON. R. S. ELLIS, C.B.,
Chief Secretary to the Government of Fort Saint George,

TO

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
 FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

SIR,

I am directed to forward the accompanying copy of a letter from the Hon. L. C. Innes, one of the Judges of the High Court, Madras, submitting proposals for a change in the Postal system, which, if adopted, would, he believes, result in a large increase of revenue to Government, and ensure a fairer adjustment of charge in the carriage of letters than is provided for under the present system.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

FORT SAINT GEORGE,
 17th December 1869.

Chief Secretary.

From the Hon. L. C. INNES, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 22nd November 1869.

In the present financial crisis it has occurred to me that a change in the Postal system might be advantageously adopted, which, while it would produce an increased revenue to Government, would, in the incidence of the charge for carriage of letters, be more just and fair than the existing system. The quarter tola six-pie-post probably succeeds in developing correspondence by letter to the utmost extent of which it is at present capable in India, and in doing so it carries out one of the principal objects of its introduction, that of bringing the advantages of a cheap post within the reach of the very poorest; but of course there was another object, and that was to draw from the Postal Department a revenue adequate to the payment of the Postal service for the time being, with a surplus available for its gradual extension. Admitting that these objects have been attained, it may yet be asked how it is that, in the postal charge, distance is not taken into account, and that the carriage of a letter for 1500 miles costs no more than the carriage of a letter of the same weight for only one mile.

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GOVT. OF INDIA
 1869
 DECEMBER

PUBLIC.

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THE HON. L. C. INNES.

Dated December, 17th.

Recd.

Ind.

C. O. 17th December 1869, No. 1736.

RECORDED.
 Nos. 100-102.

Directing that the letter from the Hon. Mr. Innes, submitting proposals for a change in the Postal system, be forwarded to the Government of India.

be wanting to write to twenty different places, and must ascertain the distance of each before he can post his letters. This information cannot be obtained without a certain amount of trouble and delay. If he is in a poor position, and applies at the Post Office he cannot be sure of being attended to; or the answer may be inaccurate. The distance may be overstated or understated; in the former case from a desire to dispose of a higher stamp than is actually required, and in the latter from inadvertence, or in both from ignorance. The difficulty would, no doubt, prove a substantial check to a large proportion of the correspondence which now takes place under a system in which distance is immaterial. It cannot, however, be denied that, if such a system of charging by distance could be hit upon as would not be followed by any diminution of correspondence, or be attended in other respects with hardship to the poorer classes, it is highly desirable that it should be adopted.

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The additional charges would fall principally upon the classes who are well able to bear them, and to whom the inconvenience arising from the necessity of ascertaining whether the letter is liable to a double or a single rate for distance would be scarcely appreciable. And where the charge would affect other than mercantile correspondence it would do so only to a very trifling extent, and would hardly touch the poorer classes, who alone, if affected by it, would be likely to regard the additional charge as a hardship. At the same time the system would present a simplicity little inferior to that of the system now existing.

7. The above is a mere hasty sketch in which details find no place; but the principle which my proposal embodies may possibly commend itself to the Government, and be recommended for adoption in some modified form.

At all events I have thought it right not to lose an opportunity of laying before the Government a plan, the adoption of which, in my judgment, would go some way towards the increase of the revenue, without burdening any class.

Public DEPARTMENT. 1

No. 2545-

From the Honorable S. C. James.

Dated 22^d November 1869.

FOR ORDERS.

I suppose we had better forward this letter to the Government of India for such notice as they may deem proper, but without any recommendation in its favor. In my part I should very much prefer the expediency of departing from the present system of a uniform rate throughout India, with reference however to the local position it will

1869.

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

From

The Chief Secretary to Government,
Fort Saint George,

To

The Secretary to the Govt. of India,
Financial Department.

Dated 17th December 1869.

Per

No. 1787.
Enclosure.

RECORDED.

No. 100-109.

Forwarding copy of a letter from the Hon.
L. C. James, submitting proposals for a change
in the Postal system.

only contents of this & herewith are
sent to the Supreme Court.

R. D.

Public Department.

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PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following letter

from the
Honble L.C. Dunes.
(H.E. 22nd Nov 1889, No. -).

Order thereon 17 December 1889, No. 1736.

The Governor in
Council resolved to for-
ward a copy of the
foregoing letter to the
Government of India
for such notice as they
may deem proper.

To the Hon. L.C. Dunes. dtd 22/11
No. 1737.
The Secretary to the Government of India.
Finl. Departt.

Sir,

I am directed to for-
ward for such notice
as the Government of
India may deem
proper.

Draft letter sent to
G.U.

proper, the accompanying copy of a letter from the Honorable L. C. Dunes, one of the Judges of the High Court, Madras, submitting proposals for a change in the postal system, which, if adopted, would, he believes, result in a large increase of revenue to Government, and ensure a fairer adjustment of charge in the carriage of letters than is provided for under the present system.

2. The scheme, it will be seen, contemplates a single and a double charge for distance while retaining the present charge for weight. Mr Dunes considers that it might be

For Mr. Justice
17. Dec / 69

be introduced without effecting any sensible diminution of correspondence.

Just to you 1/70

Book of 1869 } *Business*

To

Public

The Hon. W. L. C. Sumner.

Wm

Dated *Decr 17* }
Recd. 1869, No. 1936.

Nos. 100 & 101.

*Directing that the said
from the House of Reps.
should, submitting
propose for a change
in the Postal System,
the formation of the
Post of India -*

Recd 14 Aug 190

1869.
Public DEPARTMENT.

From The Chief Secretary to Government,
Fort Saint George.

To The Secretary to the Govt. of India,
Financial Department.

Dated *17 Decr* 1869.
Recd.

No. *1737*.
Enclosure.

no 102.

Oct 20 190

*Forwarding copy of a
letter from the Honble
L. C. Dunes, submitting
proposals for a change
in the postal system.*