M.R.O. 14-5,450—22-10-25.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No.	968	Press ~~Mis.~~
	427. 428	
Dated	30. 4 —	1867.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
30*th April* 1867.

No. 427. Read the following Endorsement of the Secretary to the Government of India, No. 3,563 :—

Read the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, to the Director General of the Post Office of India, dated Fort William, the 8th April 1867, No. 3,561.

1. I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your predecessor's letter, No. 3,722, dated the 6th ultimo, on the subject of the advisability, or otherwise, of the levy of a District Post delivery fee.

2. In reply, I am directed to say that the Governor General in Council concurs in the views expressed by Mr. Riddell, and is pleased to sanction the alteration proposed in paragraph 8 of his letter in Rule XVII. of the District Post Rules, by the addition of the words "*who may not be paid by the Post Office Department*" after the words "every person," and I am directed to forward, for your information, the annexed copy of a Notification sanctioning the alteration.

No. 3,560.

Fort William, Home Department, the 8th April 1867.

NOTIFICATION.

His Excellency the Governor General in Council has been pleased to sanction the addition of the words "*who may not be paid by the Post Office Department*" after the words "*every person*" in Rule XVII. of the "General Rules relating to the receipt, despatch, and delivery of letters by District Posts," published at page 893 of the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 23rd August 1854. The said rule will, in future, be read as follows :—

"*Rule* XVII.—Letters will be delivered by such persons and under such rules as the local "Government may, from time to time, determine. Every person who may not be paid by the "Post Office Department, through whom any District Post letter may be delivered, is authorized "to receive a fee of one pice (a fourth of an Anna) for his own use, in ad tion to any unpaid "postage which may be due on it."

Copies of the correspondence and of the Notification forwarded for information to the Government of Fort Saint George.

(Signed) E. C. BAYLEY,
Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 428. ORDER THEREON, 30th April 1867, No. 968.

Miscellaneous.

Ordered that the Notification, received with the foregoing letter, be published in the "Fort Saint George Gazette," and communicated to the Board of Revenue.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintendent of the Gazette Press.
,, the Board of Revenue.
Exd. S. T. Augustin.

From H. B. RIDDELL, Esquire, Director General of the Post Office of India, to E. C. BAYLEY, Esquire, Secretary to the Government of India,—No. 3722, dated the 6th March 1867.

WITH reference to the correspondence detailed in margin, I have the honor to submit an abstract of the opinions of the several Local Governments on the question whether the permission to levy a District Post delivery fee should be withdrawn or not.

From Home Secy.,	to Director General,	No 1633, dated 17th June 1865.
,,	,,	No. 2601, dated 17th March 1866.
To	,,	No. 3590, dated 31st ,,
From	,,	No. 2076, dated 21st January 1866.
From	,,	No. 107, dated 5th ,, 1867.
To	,,	No. 2852, dated 9th ,,

2. The question was raised by the Government of the North-Western Provinces. The existing Rule is extracted in margin; it was intended to give to village servants, and others not in the employment of the Post Office, who might be entrusted with the delivery of a letter, an inducement to find the addressee, and deliver the letter. But in the North-Western Provinces a fee was levied on letters delivered by Delivery Peons paid by Government, as well as on those delivered through the agency of the village servants. Since the District Post in the North-Western Provinces has been transferred to the Post Office, the levy of fees by paid Delivery Peons has been forbidden.

"Letters will be delivered by such persons, and under such Rules, as the Local Government may, from time to time, determine. Every person, through whom any District Post letter may be delivered, is authorized to receive a fee of one pice (a fourth of an anna) for his own use, in addition to any unpaid postage which may be due on it."

3. The only question remaining for decision is—Whether it is expedient to withdraw the authority given by Section 17 of the District Post Rules under which a fee of one-fourth of an anna may be claimed for his own use, by any person through whom a District Post letter may be delivered.

4. The great preponderance of opinion is in favor of the maintenance of the Rule in what was its original intention. The Government of Madras, however, are of opinion, as shown in the following extract, that the fee should not be levied. Several District Officers in Madras, who were consulted, are of a different opinion. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, the Chief Commissioners of the Central Provinces and of Oude, concur in thinking that it would be inexpedient to abolish the District Post delivery fee :—

"I am to state, in reply, that the Governor in Council is of opinion that the fee should be abolished.

"The fee is so small that, unless the letters are allowed to accumulate, it is not worth the while of a person to undertake the duty of delivery at any distance from the postal town ; such accumulation, of course, involves more or less delay ; but if not allowed, the temptation to destroy the letters, rather than undertake the trouble of delivery, is obvious.

"But, while thus insufficient to secure rapidity and certainty of delivery, the fee is greatly disproportionate to the postage charged. A single letter is conveyed from Peshawur to Cape Comorin for six pice ; and to charge half as much more for delivery in a village, a few miles beyond postal limits, must naturally be regarded as inequitable.

"The Governor in Council considers that the Postal Department should itself undertake the duty of delivery, free of any special charge ; and believes that the impulse which would thus be given to rural correspondence would reduce the additional expense within very moderate limits."

5. The following extract of a letter No. 847, dated the 18th February 1867, from the Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, very clearly explains the object for which the levy of the fee is authorized, and I have nothing to add to the reasons therein given :—

"The Lieutenant-Governor desires me further to state that in Bengal the fee of one pice appears to have been habitually levied in many of the districts where the letters are delivered by the Chowkeedar ; and that in other districts, where no authorized fee was levied, the Chowkeedar still delivered

the letters, though it is probable that he obtained payment of some description for the trouble. The great preponderance of opinion in the Lower Provinces is in favor of the retention and proper authorization of the fee of one pice wherever letters are delivered by the Village Chowkeedar, and in this opinion His Honor fully concurs, leaving it optional for large villages, or circles of villages, to make their own arrangements for their letters being delivered (as suggested in the Resolution* above quoted), should they prefer to do so. Any person objecting to pay the fee of one pice for his letter can still have the letter by going to, call for it himself, at the Police Station.

* 21st August 1865.

"The Lieutenant-Governor desires me at the same time to add that the security which the authorized levy of a small fee on each letter gives for the careful delivery of a letter is far more likely to encourage correspondence than the pressure of the fee is to act as a bar to it; that the levy under authority duly notified and published of a very small fee is likely, so far as it has any effect, to discourage the habit of demanding an indefinitely larger fee, which certainly prevails in Bengal; and that, so far from being looked upon by the rural population as an obnoxious impost, it will be looked upon as a fair remuneration, and as quite worth giving to avoid the trouble and annoyance of calling at the Police Station for letters."

6. It should be, and will be, the endeavor of the Post Office Department to provide for the collection and distribution of letters in rural districts; but this must be a work of time, and there can be no good reason why agency which already exists should not be utilized, and an attempt made to distribute letters through village servants, who are compelled to make periodical visits to towns in which there is a Post Office.

7. The following extract will show the Government the instructions on which the Post Office Department now act:—

"Each Rural Messenger should have a definite beat, comprising a certain number of villages, which should be visited at stated intervals; ordinarily, when it can be arranged, the Rural Messenger should visit market towns in market days; he should be supplied with a horn, and be required to obtain the signature of some known person in the village to certify to his having visited it.

"It is clear that the present Establishment of Messengers is not sufficient to ensure a delivery in every market town and large village, even twice a week; and there must often be cases of letters addressed to remote places, which it would be very difficult for the Messenger to take in his round, in such cases the agency of the village servants should be made use of in the manner contemplated by the District Post Rules; and, in such cases, the Chowkeedars or Bullahar, by whom a letter is delivered, is entitled to demand a fee of one pice for his own use.

"This employment of the village servants need not lead to any application for the employment in the delivery of letters of the Police Force, but the Post Office Inspector or Sub-Inspector of the district, with the consent of the Lumberdar of any remote village to or from which letters are sent, should arrange that they should be taken to the village by the Chowkeedar or Bullahar or Govait, when he returns from his periodical visits to the Thanna.

"I attach some importance to the introduction or maintenance of a system under which the services of village servants may be made available for the distribution and collection of letters; it will, I am satisfied, be impossible for yea s to come to employ Rural Messengers in sufficient numbers to ensure a punctual delivery and collection of letters, even twice a week, in every "large village."

8. If the principle of the above instructions is approved, no alteration will be required in Section 17 of the District Post Rules, unless it is thought expedient to add the words—"Who may not be paid by the Post Office Department" after the words "every person;" if these words are added, the Rule will be as shown in margin.*

* "Letters will be delivered by such persons and under such Rules, as the Local Government may, from time to time, determine. Every person *who may not be paid by the Post Office Department* through whom any District Post letter may be delivered, is authorized to receive a fee of one pice (a fourth of an anna) for his own use, in addition to any unpaid postage which may be due on it."

Abstract of the opinions of the several Local Governments and Administrations on the abolition, or otherwise, of the District Post delivery fee.

Opinion of the Bengal Government.	Opinion of the Madras Govt.	Opinion of the Bombay Govt.	Opinion of the Punjab Govt.	Opinion of the Administration of Oude	Opinion of the Central Provinces Administration.
The great preponderance of Lower Provinces is in favor of the retention and proper authorization of the fee of one pice wherever letters are delivered by the Village Chowkeedars, and in this opinion His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor concurs and adds that the security which the authorized levy of a small fee on each letter gives for the careful delivery of a letter is far more likely to encourage correspondence than the pressure of the fee is to act as a bar to it; that the levy, under authority duly notified and published, of a very small fee is likely, so far as it has any effect to discourage the habit of demanding an indefinitely larger fee, which certainly prevails in Bengal; and that, so far from being looked upon by the rural population as an obnoxious impost, it will be looked upon as a fair remuneration, and is quite worth giving, to avoid the trouble and annoyance of calling at the Police Stations for letters.	The Governor in Council is of opinion that the district delivery fee should be abolished. In support of this opinion, the following arguments have been used:— "The fee is so small that, unless the letters are allowed to accumulate, it is not worth the while of a person to undertake the duty of delivery at any distance from the Postal town; such accumulation, of course, involves more or less delay; but if not allowed, the temptation to destroy the letters, rather than undertake the trouble of delivery, is obvious." The Governor in Council considers that the Postal Department should itself undertake the duty of delivering free of any special charge, and believes that the impulse which would thus be given to rural correspondence would reduce the additional expense within very moderate limits.	No fee is levied in Bombay on account of District Post delivery.	The Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab is of opinion that it would be inexpedient to abolish the District Post delivery fee, for the reason given in the Director General's letter No. 3509, dated the 31st March 1866, paragraph 3.	The Chief Commissioner of Oude agrees with the Director General's opinion, and thinks it inexpedient at present that the fee should be abolished.	The Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces recommends that the extra fee be no longer levied in the case of letters which are distributed by salaried Delivery Peons, and does not advocate the entire abolition of the fee in cases where the delivery is effected by Kotewals (Village Watchmen), and others.

H. B. RIDDELL,
Dir. Genl. of the Post Office of India.

Rev: 1064/67.

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HOME (1867) DEPT.

Post Office.

From the Dir. Genl. of the Post Office.

No. 3722.
1 Enclosure

Dated 6th } March.
Recd. 7th }

With reference to the correspondence noted, submits, with his own views, an abstract of the opinions of the several Local Governments on the question whether the permission to levy a District Post delivery fee should be withdrawn or not.

From 30 April 67 to 2127.

To Public No 557/67.

Rev. Public 1867 April
Gov. of Fort St. George
Secy Govt of India
Home Dept
No 5565

Rec'd 7th May 1867

Transmits Copies of Letters noted in the margin

Rec'd 4th May 1867 No 3722
Sent to Secretary of State 10th May 1867

Read letter from Govt of India No 5565 dated 30th April 1867 forwarding Copies of Letters noted in the margin on the subject of the withdrawal of the permission to levy a District Post delivery fee

Read letter from Secretary of State No 3722 dated 6th March 1867 calling for the opinion of this Government on the question whether the permission to levy a District Post delivery fee should be withdrawn or not

Read letter from Secretary to Board of Revenue No 2968 dated 9th May 1867 submitting the opinion of the Board of Revenue on the question

Ordered that the Notification received with the foregoing letter be published in the Fort St George Gazette and communicated to the Board of Revenue

1 Copy Public Sup. Gazette Dep. Despatch map
2 Copies — Board of Revenue

30-April 67

A 427 to 428