

Convention agreed upon between the Post Departments of the United States of America and of the North German Union for the Amelioration of the Postal Service between the two Countries.

ARTICLE I. There shall be an exchange of correspondence between the United States of America and the North German Union, by means of their respective post departments; and this correspondence shall embrace: —

October 21, 1867.
Post, p. 1008.
Correspondence to be exchanged; to embrace what.

1st. Letters ordinary and registered.

2d. Newspapers, book-packets, prints of all kinds, (comprising maps, plans, engravings, drawings, photographs, lithographs, and all other like productions of mechanical processes, sheets of music, &c.,) and patterns or samples of merchandise, including grains and seeds.

And such correspondence may be exchanged, whether originating in either of said countries and destined for the other, or originating in or destined for foreign countries to which these may respectively serve as intermediaries.

ARTICLE II. The offices for the exchange of mails shall be, —

Offices for exchange of mails

(a) on the part of the United States:

1st. New York.

2d. Boston.

3d. Portland.

4th. Detroit.

5th. Chicago.

(b) on the part of the North German Union:

1st. Aachen, (Aix la Chapelle.)

2d. Bremen.

3d. Hamburg.

The two post departments may at any time discontinue either of said offices of exchange, or establish others by mutual consent.

ARTICLE III. Each office shall make its own arrangements for the despatch of its mails to the other office by regular lines of communication; and should at its own cost pay the expense of such intermediate transportation.

Arrangements for despatch of mails, &c.
Cost of transportation.

The two offices, however, mutually agree, that, in making contracts for the despatch of mails from American ports, or from European ports, those steamers and lines should always be employed, so far as consistent with the rates of postage, by which the mails despatched shall earliest arrive at their destination; and when the speed is substantially the same, that the most favorable pecuniary conditions should be preferred. It is also agreed that the cost of international ocean and territorial transit of the closed mails between the respective frontiers shall be first defrayed by that one of the two departments which shall have obtained from the intermediaries the most favorable pecuniary terms for such conveyance; and any amount so advanced by one for account of the other shall be promptly reimbursed.

Contracts for despatch of mails.

ARTICLE IV. The standard weight for the single rate of international postage, and rule of progression, shall be: —

1st. For letters, 15 grammes.

Weight for single rate of international postage.

2d. For all other correspondence mentioned in paragraph two of the first article, that which the despatching office shall adopt for the mails which it despatches to the other, adapted to the convenience and habits of its interior administration. But each office shall give notice to the other of the standard weight it adopts, and of any subsequent change thereof.

Rule of progression.

The rule of progression shall always be an additional single rate for each additional standard weight or fraction thereof. The weight stated by the despatching office shall always be accepted, except in case of manifest mistake.

The *loth* equivalent of 15 grammes.

It is, however, understood that so long as the German office employs the *loth* as its standard for the single weight of letters which it despatches, it shall also be accepted by the United States office as the equivalent of 15 grammes, in respect to the mails which it receives from the German office.

Rates of postage.

ARTICLE V. The single rate of postage on the direct correspondence exchanged between the two administrations shall be as follows:

1st. On letters from the United States via direct line of steamers to Hamburg and Bremen, (conditioned that the sea rate in such case shall not exceed five cents for single letter rate and ten cents per kilogram for other correspondence,) ten cents.

2d. On letters from the North German Union via said direct line, (subject to same condition,) four *silber groschen*.

3d. On letters from the United States via England, fifteen cents.

4th. On letters from the North German Union via England, six *silber groschen*.

5th. Of the international letter postage via England, the ocean single letter rate shall not exceed eight cents, nor shall the English and Belgian single letter transit rates exceed one cent each.

6th. It is further agreed, that whenever any other regular line of steam communication, acceptable to the two offices, may be employed directly between any port of the United States and any port of the north of Europe at such rates that the entire cost of transportation between the two frontiers shall not exceed for each single letter rate five cents, and for each kilogram of other correspondence ten cents, in that case the international single rate of letter postage by such line shall be reduced to ten cents.

7th. On all other correspondence mentioned in paragraph two of the first article, the rate shall be, for the mails despatched, that which the despatching office shall adopt, adapted to the convenience and habits of its interior administration. But each office shall give notice to the other of the rate it adopts, and of any subsequent change thereof.

Prepayment of postage.

ARTICLE VI. The prepayment of postage on ordinary letters shall be optional, subject to the conditions in Article VII., mentioned; but on registered letters, and on all other correspondence mentioned in paragraph two of the first article, it shall be obligatory.

Proceedings when postage is unpaid or insufficiently paid.

ARTICLE VII. If, however, the postage on any correspondence shall be prepaid insufficiently, it shall nevertheless be forwarded to its destination, but charged with the deficient postage.

Upon the delivery of any unpaid or insufficiently paid letter, or of any other insufficiently paid correspondence, there shall be levied in the United States a fine not exceeding five cents, and in the North German Union an additional charge not exceeding two *silber groschen*. This fine, or additional charge, as well as the deficient postage on all other correspondence than letters, shall not enter into the accounts between the two offices, but shall be retained to the use of the collecting office.

Regulations for despatch of mails.

ARTICLE VIII. The correspondence mentioned in paragraph two of the first article shall be despatched under regulations to be established by the despatching office, but always including the following:—

First No packet shall contain anything which shall be closed against inspection, nor any written communication whatever, except to state from whom and to whom the packet is sent, and the number and price placed upon each pattern or sample of merchandise.

Second. No packet may exceed two feet in length, or one foot in any other dimension.

Third. Neither office shall be bound to deliver any article the importa-

tion of which may be prohibited by the laws or regulations of the country of destination. Despatch of mails.

Fourth. So long as any customs duty may be chargeable on any articles exchanged in the mails, such duty may be levied for the use of the customs.

It is further agreed, that except a small local carrier's charge, (so long as it shall exist in the rural districts of North Germany,) no charge whatever, otherwise than is herein expressly provided, shall be levied or collected on the letters and other correspondence exchanged.

ARTICLE IX. Any correspondence may be registered, as well international correspondence as that originating in or destined for other countries to which these two administrations may respectively serve as intermediaries for the transmission of such registered articles. Each department shall notify the other of the countries to which it may thus serve as intermediary. Registered correspondence.

Each department shall use its best exertions for the safe delivery, or, when miscarried, for the recovery of any registered correspondence, but is not responsible pecuniarily for the loss of any such correspondence.

ARTICLE X. Registered correspondence shall, in addition to the postage, be subject to a registration fee, not exceeding ten cents in the United States, and not exceeding two silber groschen in the North German Union, and this fee shall be always prepaid. Postage and registration fee.

ARTICLE XI. Accounts between the two offices shall be regulated on the following basis: From the total amount of postages and register fees collected by each office on letters, added to the total amount of prepaid postages and register fees on other correspondence which it despatches, the despatching office shall deduct the amount required, at the agreed rate, for the cost of the intermediate transit thereof between the two frontiers, and the amount of the two net sums shall be equally divided between the two offices. Basis for settlement of accounts.

ARTICLE XII. The two post departments shall establish by agreement, and in conformity with the arrangements in force at the time, the conditions upon which the two offices may respectively exchange in open mails the correspondence originating in or destined to other foreign countries to which they may reciprocally serve as intermediaries. Open mails.

It is always understood, however, that such correspondence shall only be charged with the rate applicable to direct international correspondence, augmented by the postage due to foreign countries, and by any other tax for exterior service.

But the North German office reserves the right to fix a time, if necessary, when this rule shall only apply to correspondence despatched from the United States for such other countries, unless the latter shall have accepted the same rule in behalf of the correspondence despatched through them by the North German office.

ARTICLE XIII. Each office grants to the other the privilege of transit of the closed mails exchanged, in either direction, between the latter and any country to which the other may serve as intermediary, by its usual means of mail transportation, whether on sea or land, and the terms of transit shall be agreed upon when the exercise of the privilege is required. Transit of closed mails through either country.

ARTICLE XIV. The postal accounts between the two offices shall be stated quarterly, and transmitted and verified as speedily as practicable; and the balance found due shall be paid to the creditor office, either by exchange on London or at the debtor office, as the creditor office may desire. Postal accounts, when to be stated, &c. See post, p. 985.

The rate for the conversion of the money of the two countries shall be fixed by common agreement between the two offices.

ARTICLE XV. When in any port of either country a closed mail is transferred from one vessel to another without any expense to the office of the country where the transfer is made, such transfer shall not be subject to any postal charge by one office against the other. Transfer of closed mails without expense.

Official communications.

ARTICLE XVI. Official communications addressed from one office to the other shall not be the occasion of any accounts between the two offices.

Missent letters, &c.

ARTICLE XVII. Letters wrongly sent, or wrongly addressed, or not deliverable for whatever cause, shall be returned to the originating office, at its expense, if any expense is incurred. Registered correspondence of all kinds, not deliverable for any cause, shall also be returned in like manner. All other correspondence which cannot be delivered shall remain at the disposition of the receiving office. Any postages upon correspondence returned which shall have been charged against the office of destination, shall be discharged from the account.

Provisions of this convention may be extended to other German States.

ARTICLE XVIII. In view of the possible desire of other German States to avail themselves of the advantages of postal association with the States now embraced in the North German Union, it is further agreed that the provisions of this convention shall be extended to and shall comprise them, whenever such other States shall declare their desire to join for this purpose, and notice thereof shall have been given to the United States Post Department.

Regulations.

ARTICLE XIX. The two offices shall, by mutual consent, establish detailed regulations for carrying these articles into execution; and they may modify such regulations, in like manner, from time to time, as the exigencies of the service may require.

Former conventions to cease when this takes effect.

ARTICLE XX. From the time this convention shall take effect, all former conventions between the two offices and between the United States office on the one part, and, on the other part, of Bremen and also of Hamburg, shall cease to be in force, except for the settlement of accounts which shall have previously accrued thereunder.

This convention, being first approved, shall take effect not later than the 1st day of January next, and shall continue in force until cancelled by mutual agreement, or otherwise, until one year from the date when one office shall have given notice to the other of its desire to terminate it.

Executed in duplicate at Berlin the twenty-first day of October, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven.

[SEAL.]

JOHN A. KASSON,

Special Commissioner, &c., &c.

[SEAL.]

RICHARD v. PHILIPSBORN,

Director-General of the Post Department.

POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT, }
Washington, November 12, 1867. }

Approved by the Postmaster-General :

Having examined and considered the foregoing articles of a convention for the amelioration of the postal service between the United States of America and the North German Union, agreed upon and executed in duplicate at Berlin, the twenty-first day of October, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven, by Hon. John A. Kasson, Special Commissioner, &c., &c. on behalf of this department, and by Richard v. Philipsborn, Director-General of the Post Department of the North German Union, on behalf of his department, the same are by me hereby ratified and approved by and with the advice and consent of the President of the United States.

In witness whereof I have caused the seal of the Post-Office Department to be affixed hereto, with my signature, the day and year first above written.

[SEAL.]

ALEX. W. RANDALL, *Postmaster-General.*

by the President of the United States.

I hereby approve the foregoing convention, and in testimony thereof I have caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

[SEAL.]

ANDREW JOHNSON.

By the President :

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, *Secretary of State.*

WASHINGTON, November 12, 1867.