



SUPPLEMENT

To the HONGKONG GOVERNMENT GAZETTE of 15th January, 1887.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 21.

The following Annual Report of the Postmaster General, is published for general information.

By Command,

FREDERICK STEWART,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 15th January, 1887.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
HONGKONG, *January 1st, 1887.*

SIR,—I have the honour to report upon the working of the Post Office in Hongkong and China during the year 1886.

2. The exchange of Parcels with the United Kingdom established towards the end of 1885 has worked with great regularity and smoothness, whilst the steadily increasing numbers of parcels forwarded show that it is appreciated by the public. During the year under review 3,136 parcels have been forwarded from Hongkong to London, whilst 3,516 have been received, making a total of 6,652 parcels exchanged, almost without a complaint of any kind. There have been, of course, as it was foreseen there would be, a few false alarms * of missing parcels, and early in the year some parcels were damaged by an accident on the mail steamer. The damage, however, was trifling, and compensation was paid in the only case where real harm was done. By the last mail in the year several parcels were received in a damaged state from having been put into a box with a package containing pomatum, which had of course melted, and which should not have been forwarded, unless in soldered tin. As far as is known at present, even in this case no serious damage resulted to the contents of the parcels. With these exceptions the parcels have all turned out in good order. It is observed that books are now often sent by Parcel Post, presumably because they do not get knocked about as do articles which are forwarded in mail bags. The London Post Office complains of the insecure way in which many parcels are packed by the senders, leading to the breakage of their contents on the way, and also of the inaccuracy with which contents are described. Thus a parcel stated by the sender to contain silk handkerchiefs and a gold ring is found on examination to contain six silk handkerchiefs, a tea cosy, a gold ring, a bead necklace, a puzzle and a pair of ivory solitaires. Perhaps this notice may tend to induce more care as to both of these matters.

3. The limit of weight for parcels to the United Kingdom and a good many other countries has been raised from 7 to 11 lb., whilst facilities have been provided for forwarding parcels to most of the countries of Europe, to Egypt, and to a good many British Colonies. Direct parcel exchanges with Malta and Gibraltar have also been established. Negotiations have been commenced with several of the Australian Colonies for the establishment of an exchange of parcels, and these are progressing favourably.

4. The number of Transit Parcels, as they are called (that is of parcels sent to or from Colonies and foreign countries through London) has not been great. Possibly the circuitous route, and the necessarily somewhat high charges may have acted as deterrents. The following return shows the exchanges of Transit Parcels for the year.

	<i>Sent.</i>	<i>Recd.</i>		<i>Sent.</i>	<i>Recd.</i>		<i>Sent.</i>	<i>Recd.</i>	
Ascension.....	1	...	Denmark.....	6	...	Malta.....	2	...	
Austria.....	1	...	Egypt.....	4	...	Norway.....	8	...	
Belgium.....	3	...	Germany.....	153	...	Sweden.....	8	...	
British Guiana...	1	...	Gibraltar.....	2	2	Switzerland.....	7	...	
Canada.....	5	...	Holland.....	3	1	Trinidad.....	1	...	
Cape Colony.....	6	2	Jamaica.....	1	...	Victoria (Austr.) ...		1	
							Totals,.....	212	6

* Every week a sheaf of letters is received from various Post Offices representing that this or that Registered Article has not reached its destination. The same stereotyped answer is always sent, that it was delivered on such a day, and that the addressee signed a receipt for it. Nothing further is ever heard of these complaints, which generally arise from the senders' not having allowed time for the arrival of the correspondence. A case was recently noticed in which a person resident in France had registered a letter for Peking, and then within one week from the date of posting had complained of its non-delivery there

5. By far the greater number of parcels sent home contain presents of some kind, whilst the greater number of those sent out contain supplies, such as hosiery, clothing, &c. The largest parcel mail despatched was that of November 8th (the Christmas mail) by which 314 parcels, weighing 588 lb. (net) * were forwarded. The largest parcel mail received was that which arrived here on December 17th, with 246 parcels weighing 642 lb.

6. A new mail service between Bremerhaven, Brindisi, Shanghai and Japan has been commenced by the packets of the North German Lloyds line. The fact that these packets start only once every four weeks, and that their departures from China coincide very nearly with those of the French mails prevents this line being a very important factor in the mail routine, but it has been possible to establish, by its means, a direct Parcel Post to most countries of the Continent of Europe. There was no parcel post to several important European countries (France for instance) whilst the others were served by a circuitous route viâ Gibraltar and London. Only six parcels were despatched by the German Packet which left on December 27th. It might be well for German residents in China, who are desirous of getting out any small articles from Germany, to let their friends in that country know that they can now forward parcels not exceeding three kilogrammes in weight to Hongkong or Chinese ports at a fixed postage of Fr. 4.25 per parcel.

7. The following figures as to the arrivals of the first two German mails in London may be of interest.

	<i>Left Hongkong</i>	<i>Arrived in London</i>	<i>Days</i>
French Mail.....	September 2.	October 4	31 $\frac{3}{4}$
German Mail.....	September 3.	October 5	31 $\frac{3}{4}$
French Mail.....	September 30.	November 1	32
German Mail.....	October 1.	November 4	34

8. A correspondence has taken place between the Imperial Post Office, the Colonial Office, and this Government, as to the renewal of the Contract for transporting the English mails between Brindisi and Shanghai. There were only three offers, those, namely, of the P. & O. Co., of Mr. ALFRED HOLT, and of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. One of the tenders of the first-named Company has been accepted, the mails to be carried for £265,000 a year for ten years. The report of this Department on the subject will be found in the Appendix (B).

9. Although the proposed trans-pacific line of steamers between Hongkong and British Columbia will not do much for this Colony so far as postal matters are concerned, its establishment is to be desired on many other grounds. Since the Pacific mail packets commenced running between this port and San Francisco, correspondence with Canada has increased in the most marked manner, chiefly owing no doubt to the numbers of Chinese who have settled in Victoria (B. C.) and elsewhere.

10. The dispute between the Pacific mail Company and the United States Government, which led to the discontinuance of carrying inward mails from San Francisco by the Company's vessels, has been adjusted, and the mails now arrive by every steamer from San Francisco as before. The inconvenience of having the return mails frequently despatched from here on the day fixed for the leaving of the English or French packet still continues.

11. There has been no extension of Money Order business during the year, which is not a matter of regret, as the Money Order system was really growing too fast for the limited resources of the Department to keep pace with it. It has been found absolutely necessary to have more clerical assistance in the Money Order Office, and this has been provided without very much difficulty. The want of room, however, is increasingly and severely felt, and a simple remedy is not so easy to devise. The business of the Money Order Office, like too much of the work of this Department, is carried on in a dark and crowded corner, where literally there is often not room to turn, and where every square inch is economised as if it were a ship's cabin.

12. This want of room is yearly becoming a more serious question. The Sanitary Board has pointed out that the quarters inhabited by the Chinese staff are overcrowded. They certainly are according to European ideas, even according to Chinese ideas there is not much room to spare. When foreign countries begin to claim their International right to have direct Parcel exchanges with Hongkong, it will be very difficult to see where the necessary room is to come from. A little additional space may be gained by building, and by a re-arrangement of verandahs &c., and then (unless it were possible to put on an additional storey) the limit will have been reached, and at much sacrifice of light and air. The Colony will be face to face with a demand for a new Post Office. The present building was finished in 1865, and was evidently intended to be final. When the office is rebuilt it should be constructed, not for existing needs, but for those of twenty years later.

13. The Secretary of State has consented, in view of the representations of this Department, to allow the employment of unsalaried probationers, in the Post Office only. Postal work is distinctly work which has to be learnt, a beginner, however intelligent, is somewhat worse than useless; he gets in the way, has to be shown everything, and he makes mistakes. Hence the desirability of having an extra hand always in training, so that when a vacancy does occur it has not to be filled by a raw recruit.

* With the boxes, these parcels weighed nearly half a ton.

14. It may perhaps be permissible to point out how, in this Office, unlike most other Post Offices, everything has to be filtered through two languages, one of which at least is but very imperfectly understood by many of the clerks who use it. At home a postman reads the address on a letter and delivers it accordingly. Here he depends on one or two hastily written Chinese characters, and if there happens to be a similarity in sound between the name as dictated, or as written, and some other name (*Hooper* and *Cooper*, *Tai-kù* and *Tai-kùn* for instance) the chances of a mistake are very great.*

15. A Committee consisting of the Acting Harbour Master, the Director of the Observatory, and the Postmaster General was appointed to examine into the question of signalling the English mails from Kowloon Point. It was found impossible to devise any efficient and inexpensive signal which would not clash with the weather signals made at that station. It was therefore recommended that the use of the Kowloon Point gun for mail signals should be discontinued. Fortunately no inconvenience has arisen from the arrival of an unsignalled mail, a circumstance which may be due to an unusual freedom from fog during the year. It is to be hoped that some day all difficulties of this kind will be obviated by telegraphic communication with the projected Gap Rock lighthouse, which would give the community here four hours notice of the approach of the mail.

16. In the meantime a direct telephone line between this Office and the Peak signal station is much to be desired. What with clouds, night-fall, flags blowing straight on end, and other circumstances, the Post Office too often obtains the minimum rather than the maximum of information from the Peak.

17. There have been two casualties during the year. The steamer *Douglas* was lost on February 10th with coast mails on board, which were not recovered. Communication between the Coast Ports and Hongkong having been interrupted for several days by the Chinese New Year holidays, the mails were unfortunately exceptionally heavy. The *Madras* was lost with a mail for this Office from Nagasaki. Most of the correspondence was subsequently recovered by H. M. S. *Midge*, and forwarded to destination.

18. The service to Japan has gone on fairly well, the mails having been forwarded without many excessive delays. The English mail of January 22nd was sent on to Kobe in the *City of Rio* (via Yokohama). It would have been better to keep it here a couple of days longer for the *Zambesi*, but at the time of its despatch it was not known when that vessel would start. The English mail of September 3 was sent to Yokohama in the *Claymore*, whereas it should have been kept for the *Stettin*. The German service was a little new at the time, the *Stettin* was not notified, and it escaped notice that there would be a German Packet leaving within a day or two. As far as is known these were the only occasions on which this Office failed to secure the earliest opportunity for a mail for Japan except one instance (the French mail for Yokohama of October 22nd) in which it was so doubtful which steamer would arrive first that this office would not take the responsibility of diverting the mail from its ordinary route via Kobe. Against these may be set the fact that, on July 13th, the Agent of the Pacific Mail Co. courteously detained the *San Pablo* for the arrival of the English mail, thus saving the Yokohama community a delay of probably at least two days.

19. The abolition of accounts with the London Office, referred to in the last Annual Report as under consideration, has been carried out, and our relations with the United Kingdom are now simply those of the Postal Union, with a special payment of £6,000 a year in addition. The saving of labour, copying, &c. is very considerable.

20. The state of several of our Postal Agencies, specially those of Amoy and Foochow, was taken into serious consideration by the Government on the earnest representations of this Department. It was felt that the existing condition of affairs could not be allowed to go on, and that, unsatisfactory as it might be for Hongkong to be saddled with the whole expense of improving these Agencies, improved they must be—or abolished. † The Estimates for this year would accordingly have embodied provision for a considerable increase of staff at Amoy, had not a proposal been made which promised an entirely new departure.

21. This was a proposal from Mr. Commissioner KOPSCH, on behalf of the Chinese Government, to take over, as a step towards the establishment of a national Post Office, the Postal work carried on by this Government at eight of the Treaty Ports of China. The report of this Department on that proposal will be found in the Appendix (C).

22. Mr. KOPSCH's scheme has of course raised much discussion, especially in Shanghai, where a public meeting was convened to consider the matter. The tone both of this meeting, and of the articles and correspondence in the newspapers, was most fair, reasonable, and moderate. Some of the objections raised possess much force, though only one has as yet been put forward which can be regarded as a real obstacle to the proposal.

* A letter was handed to a Chinese postman who was told to take it to Mr. X. "Do you mean long-bearded X?" he asked. The name being one that did not lend itself to Chinese pronunciation, the *soubriquet* of long-bearded X. had been invented to prevent errors. The same difficulty applies to names of streets, &c. Richmond Terrace is called the New six houses, West Terrace the Old six houses, the Albany is Figure 1 Row (because of its shape), Pedder's Hill is the Two Flagstaffs (though there are no flagstaffs there now), the Wellington Barracks are called after a Chinese character (卍) which their ground plan is supposed to resemble.

† These remarks must not be taken as implying any reflection on the officers in charge of the Agencies in question, whose only fault was their inability to do impossibilities, or to be in two places at once.

23. How China may elect to develop her Postal system is not in any special way the affair of Hongkong, but a single remark on the subject may perhaps be allowable. To demand that so huge an Empire shall be covered with a network of courier services organised by the Imperial Government before that Government may attempt the much more modest task of carrying on the small coast service at present conducted by this Colony, is, as one of the speakers at Shanghai graphically put it, like insisting that a boy shall not go near the water till he has learned to swim. Any successful postal system in China must begin from the coast, and with steamer communication. It may then possibly be pushed up the rivers as steamers are admitted to them, and extended to a few of the shorter land routes, especially as railways are introduced. To make haste slowly should be the motto, and the avoidance of huge schemes like a pestilence the policy of the Chinese Post Office of the immediate future.

24. Should the proposal of the Chinese Government not be accepted, it will be absolutely necessary to improve our Postal Agencies. They cannot be left as they are. On the other hand, no suggestion to open additional agencies at the expense of this Government should be entertained.

25. The time has perhaps arrived when something should be done to bring the Chinese correspondence transmitted to and from this Colony more under control. There can be no doubt that the revenue suffers serious loss from the smuggling of thousands of Chinese letters, not to Chinese ports where there is no national Post Office to receive them, but to San Francisco, Australia, the Straits Settlements, and other places where efficient Post Offices exist. The subject is surrounded with difficulties, and the sweeping measures so often advocated, besides being ruinously expensive, would make the Postal Department here a nuisance and a hindrance to trade which would not be tolerated for a week. The function of a Post Office is to facilitate, not to hinder business. Proposals of a practical nature have, as you are aware, been submitted to the Government in this matter, and they are at present under consideration.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A. LISTER,
Postmaster General.

The Honourable F. STEWART,

Acting Colonial Secretary,

&c., &c., &c.

APPENDIX.

(A.)—APPROXIMATE STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1886.

Supplied to the International Bureau of the Postal Union, Berne.

DESCRIPTION OF CORRESPONDENCE.	INTERNATIONAL.		LOCAL.		TOTAL.	COMPARISON WITH 1885.		
	De-spached.	Received.	De-spached.	Received.		Total in 1885.	Increase.	Decrease.
Ordinary paid letters,	538,500	403,700	61,100	52,600	1,055,900	1,095,000	...	* 39,100
Unpaid and short paid Articles,	9,600	22,300	2,400	15,800	50,100	46,000	4,100	...
Letters on Postal Business,	1,100	600	1,200	1,100	4,000	4,350	...	* 350
Post Cards,	4,300	2,500	2,100	1,000	9,900	13,000	...	* 3,100
Do. with prepaid reply, .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Newspapers and Periodicals,	118,700	243,200	35,100	15,000	412,000	510,000	...	* 98,000
Books, Circulars, Prices Current, &c.,	197,300	82,000	14,000	10,800	304,100	410,000	...	* 105,900
Patterns,	4,800	2,900	...	300	8,000	16,160	...	* 8,160
Commercial Papers, .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Registered Articles,	21,700	30,300	3,400	3,500	58,900	57,874	1,026	...
Letters with value declared, .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Registered Articles with Return Receipt,	200	4,200	50	50	4,500	2,262	2,238	...
Parcels,	3,136	3,516	966	888	8,506	1,570	6,936	...

* The figures in the above table are obtained by multiplying the amount of correspondence forwarded during 28 days by 13. The results are very fortuitous and these decreases are probably more apparent than real. The sale of postage stamps, a much more satisfactory test, shows a steady increase.

(B.)

No. 33.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
HONGKONG, June 16th, 1886.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 939 of yesterday's date, referring to me for an early report the Secretary of State's Despatch No. 57 of May 14, with its enclosures respecting the proposed new contract for the Eastern Mail Service.

2. This subject has been so long under discussion, and is presented by the London Post Office in so clear a light, that there appears to be no doubt as to the course the Colony should pursue. In recommending that the Telegram enclosed in draft should be forwarded without delay, I have the pleasure of knowing that I am in accord with the views of the Legislative Council and of the Chamber of Commerce.

3. That draft Telegram deals with four points.

- (1.) The best tender to accept.
- (2.) The contribution of Hongkong.
- (3.) The Canadian route.
- (4.) The hour of departure from Hongkong.

4. As to the best tender to accept, Lord WOLVERTON's lucid report leaves no question open. I am very glad to see that no experiments are to be tried in the way of leaving the mails to be conveyed, on any portion of the route, by chance steamers.

5. As to the contribution of Hongkong, the Colonial Office has already raised the question whether, if the Imperial Government effects a saving, the Colonies should not share it. The Imperial Treasury replies, Ceylon, yes; Singapore and Hongkong, no. Hongkong's equitable share of the loss was assessed at £12,000 odd, and the Colony has been allowed to pay only £6,000. Unless the saving to the Imperial Government amounted to lowering the expenditure by more than half, this sum could not be reduced. This appears to be a fair way of regarding the matter, and I think this Colony should be content to stipulate that it is not to be asked for more than £6,000.

6. As to the Canadian route, the Imperial Post Office confirms what I have held since first I looked into the proposal. The service would be slower by three days than that *viâ* Suez, and unless fortnightly, and timed to alternate regularly with the French packets, could not possibly replace those of the P. & O. As an alternative route it might be of some service, but unless the homeward packet left here within three days of the departure of the English and French Mails, even this small advantage would be lost.

7. The question of the hour of departure may seem a small one, but it is not so in reality, for it must be remembered that any inconvenience caused by an unsuitable hour will recur fortnightly till it is removed. It is better therefore to attend to the point now than to have discontent and memorialising by and by. It is very desirable that the P. & O. packets, like those of the Messageries line, should leave at noon. The hour of departure of the French packets cannot be altered, on account of saving daylight at the mouth of the Saigon river. Having consulted with Mr. McEWEN, the only member of the Chamber of Commerce I can get hold of this morning, I consider that a uniform noon departure of both mails would meet the wishes of the business and general community, and would do away with the long and fatiguing day now caused fortnightly by the later hour fixed for the departure of the English Mail.

I have &c.,

A. LISTER,
Postmaster General.

The Honourable F. STEWART,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

(C.)

No. 29.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
HONGKONG, May 26th, 1886.

SIR,—I have the honour to enclose a copy of a letter addressed to me by Mr. H. KOPSCH, one of the Commissioners of Customs under the Chinese Government, and a special Commissioner for Postal purposes in China. Mr. KOPSCH enquires whether, in view of an extension to all the Treaty Ports of the Customs Postal Service which has been for some years in existence in China, and the intended establishment of a Chinese national Post Office, this Department will withdraw its Postal Agencies from the Ports of Hoihow, Canton, Swatow, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Hankow, and its Post Office from Shanghai.

2. I enclose a copy of the reply I forwarded to Mr. KOPSCH, pointing out that these Agencies are in reality Agencies of the Imperial Post Office.

3. As His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government will probably think it necessary to refer this matter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, for the consideration of the Imperial Post Office, I permit myself to offer a few words on this proposal.

4. It seems to me that one main consideration should be kept in view, namely the convenience and welfare of the communities at the various Treaty Ports, which perhaps include more of our fellow-countrymen than of any other nation, the convenience and welfare of their correspondents in other parts of the world, and the interests of trade. The experience of more than eleven years in dealing with the only organised Post Offices in the Far East (until the Japanese Offices were established) convinces me that it is desirable in these interests to accept the proposal of the Chinese Government if possible.

5. Extra-territorial Post Offices may be described as necessary evils, and evils which should be got rid of as soon as the necessity for their continuance is removed. The objections to them must be so well known to H. M. Government that I need not here recapitulate them. In China they have certainly been free from one disadvantage attaching to them elsewhere—they have not, hitherto, wounded national susceptibility. But it is quite possible they may eventually do so, and that before very long.

6. The Hongkong Government maintains, under very great disadvantages, eight Post Offices in China. They are worked (except at Shanghai) by Consular Officers, whose Consular duties naturally have to take precedence. Able and diligent as most of these gentlemen are, their frequent removals, and the pressure of other duties inevitably stand in the way of the attainment of any very high degree of efficiency. By the time a Postal Agent has learnt his duties he is due for transfer to another port.

7. The Post Offices at most of the Ports, being in the Consulates, are too far removed from the business parts of the Settlements to be really efficient. Only this morning, in looking into a question relative to Swatow, I am reminded that a letter cannot be registered there without sending a messenger across a (frequently tempestuous) stretch of sea which under the most favourable circumstances it takes an hour to cross and re-cross.

8. Another great disadvantage is that the Hongkong Government of course cannot enforce any Postal Regulations in Chinese Ports. The residents send their letters by the mail if they think fit to do so; if not, and more generally, they send them on board the steamers. Too often the chief function of the Post Office seems to be to take the blame if anything goes wrong.

9. The Customs Authorities propose to replace this very inadequate service with Post Offices at 23 ports (including all those at which this Office maintains Agencies). At most if not all of these Ports all the facilities this office can offer would be given to the public, and I cannot doubt that those facilities would eventually be much extended.

10. The Customs would bring to the task very much larger staffs, officers on duty night and day, buildings in the heart of the business quarters, steam-launches, facilities for boarding steamers both on arrival and departure, the power of search, and, most important of all, the sanction of the national authority, which would allow of the making and enforcing of regulations, such as exist in most ports elsewhere.

11. I am aware that a proposal to hand over Postal business to any one not under the immediate control of the British Government will be regarded by some persons, even by some persons whose opinions are entitled to great respect, with a feeling of little less than horror. Very much the same prejudice existed with regard to the withdrawal of our Post Offices from Japan some years ago. If, since that withdrawal, there has ever been a syllable of complaint from the foreign communities in Japan, I have not heard of it; and if there are Post Offices that do their work better than the Japanese Offices do, I have yet to be made acquainted with them.

12. Moreover the way in which the Customs Postal Agencies have been managed so far (of which I feel I am to some extent in a position to speak), the way in which the whole work of the Customs is done, and the manner in which the lighting of the coast of China has been accomplished and maintained—all these forbid the supposition that Postal work, which only requires ordinary care and attention, would be unsafe in the hands of the Customs establishment.

13. I therefore most cordially recommend the acceptance of the proposal put forward by Mr. KORSCH.

14. With regard to Mr. Korsch's further questions numbered 2 and 3, I may report as follows;—

15. It is not likely that anything can be definitely arranged so early as January, 1887.

16. Supposing foreign Post Offices withdrawn, but China not for some time subsequent to their withdrawal admitted to the Postal Union, the position would be this; China would be a Non-Union Country, the correspondence originating in which would find its way to the rest of the world through two Union Countries, Hongkong and Japan, the bulk of it through Hongkong.

17. It would be far more satisfactory than making any special and temporary arrangements for Hongkong at once to treat China as if it were a Union Country, that is to say:—

(a.) Correspondence posted at Chinese Post Offices would be prepaid in any stamps the Chinese Government chose to use, would be forwarded by Hongkong as paid to destination, and the Chinese Post Office would keep all the sums it collected by way of postage on such correspondence.

(b.) Once a year till China should enter the Postal Union, or once in three years after such entry, observations would be made in Hongkong, during 28 days, of the amount of correspondence originating in China passing through. The totals of these observations would be multiplied by 13.

(c.) China would pay Hongkong the actual sums this Colony would be out of pocket from having forwarded the correspondence at its own expense, plus transit rates of 2 fr. per kilogramme for letters and 25 centimes per kilogramme for other objects. In the case of correspondence made up into closed mails these transit rates would not be charged.

(d.) With regard to correspondence for China from foreign countries, the expenses of transit would be arranged by Hongkong with the countries of origin, which are responsible for such expenses, and the correspondence would reach Chinese Offices as paid.

18. This is precisely the course which has been adopted with regard to the Colony of Macao, the Post Office of which used to be regarded as a kind of semi-recognised agency of this Office. The financial results are, I should imagine, satisfactory to that Colony.

19. A great number of details will require settlement in the event of the acceptance of this proposal, but it is useless to attempt to deal with them at present. I will only say that I know of none incapable of satisfactory adjustment. For the information of the Imperial Post Office I may add that the almost daily communication between this port and Shanghai and the possession by the Chinese Government of a line of steamers will prevent any difficulty as to the conveyance of mails, even if both the English and French Mail lines should cease to operate further than Hongkong.

20. The desirability of simplifying Postal matters at Shanghai, where, in a moderate-sized settlement, there are half a dozen different Post Offices, is a point on which I have reported so often that it is needless now to say more about it.

I have &c.,

A. LISTER,
Postmaster General.

The Honourable F. STEWART,
Acting Colonial Secretary.