POSTAL CONVENTION

Signed at London December 15, 1848
Senate advice and consent to ratification January 5, 1849
Ratified by the President of the United States January 6, 1849
Ratified by the United Kingdom January 23, 1849
Ratifications exchanged at London January 26, 1849
Entered into force January 26, 1849
Proclaimed by the President of the United States February 15, 1849
Replaced by convention of June 18, 1867 [1]

9 Stat. 965; Treaty Series 121 [2]

The United States of America and Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, being desirous to promote the friendly Relations existing between their respective Citizens and subjects, by placing the communications by Post between the Territories of the United States and those of Her Britannick Majesty upon a more liberal and advantageous footing, have resolved to Conclude a Convention for this purpose, and have named as their Plenipotentiaries, that is to say,

The President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate thereof, George Bancroft, a Citizen of the United States, their Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Her Britannick Majesty;

And Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Right Honourable Henry John Viscount Palmerston, Baron Temple, a Peer of Ireland, a Member of Her Britannic Majesty's most Honorable Privy Council, a Member of Parliament, Knight Grand Cross of the most Honourable Order of the Bath, and Her Britannick Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs;

Who, after having communicated to each other their respective full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon and concluded the following Articles:

ARTICLE I

There shall be charged upon all letters not exceeding half an Ounce in Weight, conveyed either by United States' or by British Packets between a Port in the United States and a Port in the United Kingdom, an uniform

[1] 15 Stat. 545.
[2] For a detailed study of this convention, see 5 Miller 461.

sea rate of Eight pence, or sixteen cents; and such postage shall belong to the Country by which the Packet conveying the Letters is furnished.

ARTICLE II

There shall be charged by the Post Office of the United Kingdom upon all letters not exceeding half an ounce in weight, posted in the United Kingdom and forwarded to the United States, or brought from the United States and delivered in the United Kingdom, whether such Letters shall be conveyed by British or by United States' Packets, an inland Postage rate of one penny halfpenny.

There shall be charged by the Post Office of the United States upon all Letters not exceeding half an ounce in weight, posted in the United States and forwarded to the United Kingdom, or brought from the United Kingdom and delivered in the United States, whether such letters shall be conveyed by United States' or by British Packets, an inland Postage rate of five cents.

ARTICLE III

Upon all letters posted in one country and delivered in the other, these rates of postage, both sea and inland, shall be combined into one rate, of which payment in advance shall be optional in either country. It shall however not be permitted to pay less than the whole combined rate.

ARTICLE IV

With respect to letters above the weight of half an ounce, each Country shall be at liberty to employ, as regards the collection of the whole combined rate, the scale of progression in operation in its own Territory for charging inland rates of Postage.

ARTICLE V

The United States engage to grant to the United Kingdom the transit in closed mails, through the territory of the United States, of the Correspondence and Newspapers from the United Kingdom to the British North American Provinces, and from those Provinces to the United Kingdom, at the rate of inland postage to be charged under this Convention for Letters and Newspapers between the United Kingdom and the United States.

A British Officer shall be permitted to accompany the closed Mails during their transit.

ARTICLE VI

On the other hand, Her Britannick Majesty engages to grant to the United States the transit in closed Mails through the British North American Provinces, of the Correspondence and Newspapers from one part of the territory of the United States to any other part of the territory of the United

States, at rates not exceeding the rates of inland postage now charged or to be hereafter charged in the North American Provinces, according to the distance such closed Mails may be conveyed within the North American Provinces.

An Officer of the United States shall be permitted to accompany the closed Mails during their transit.

Article VII

The United States further engage to grant to the United Kingdom the transit in closed mails, through the United States, or through any country where the Post Communication may be under the controul or management of the United States, of Letters and Newspapers forwarded from the United Kingdom, its Colonies or Possessions, to any other British Colony or Possession, or to any foreign Country; and from any foreign Country or British Colony or Possession, to the United Kingdom, its Colonies or Possessions.

Article VIII

Her Britannick Majesty engages, on Her part, to grant to the United States the transit in closed mails, through the United Kingdom, or through any country where the Post communication may be under the controul or management of the United Kingdom, of Letters and newspapers forwarded from the United States, their colonies or Possessions, to any other Colony or Possession of the United States, or to any foreign Country; and from any foreign Country, or from any colony or Possession of the United States, to the United States, their Colonies or possessions.

Article IX

When Letters shall be forwarded in closed Mails under the stipulations of Articles V, VI, VII, or VIII of the present Convention, the payment to be made to the Post Office of the United Kingdom or of the United States, as the case may be, shall be made by the ounce, according to the net weight of the Letters, at two rates to the ounce, with the addition of twenty five per cent. on the amount of postage, to compensate the loss that would otherwise be sustained by this mode of computation.

Article X

The Country which sends or receives closed mails through the other, is to render an account of the Letters and Newspapers sent or received in such closed mails, and to account to such country for the Postage due thereon.

Article XI

Letters posted in the United States, addressed to foreign Countries, and intended to pass in transit through the United Kingdom, shall be delivered to the British Post Office free of all United States' postage, whether Packet

or inland, and Letters from foreign Countries addressed to the United States, passing in transit through the United Kingdom, shall be delivered to the United States' Post Office free of all British postage, whether Packet or inland.

In the case of those countries to which Letters cannot be forwarded unless the British postage be paid in advance, such British postage shall be collected in the United States (in addition to the United States' rates of postage) and accounted for to the British Post Office.

In the case of those Countries to which Letters cannot be forwarded unless the United States' postage be paid in advance, such United States' postage shall be collected in the United Kingdom (in addition to the British postage) and accounted for to the United States' Post Office.

ARTICLE XII

The rate of postage to be taken by the British Post Office upon Letters arriving in the United Kingdom from the United States, either by British or by United States' Packets, and to be forwarded through the United Kingdom to Colonies or Possessions of the United Kingdom or of the United States, or to foreign Countries, and *vice versâ,* shall be the same as the rate which is now or which may hereafter be taken by the British Post Office upon Letters to or from such Colonies or possessions or foreign Countries respectively, when posted at the port of arrival, or delivered at the port of departure of the Packets conveying the Mails between the United Kingdom and the United States.

The above postage is irrespective of and beyond the inland rate to be taken in the United States upon such letters if posted or delivered therein, according to the stipulations of Article II of this Convention; and also irrespective of and beyond the sea rate upon such Letters payable according to the stipulations of Article I.

The rate of postage to be taken by the United States' Post Office upon Letters arriving in the United States, either by British or by United States' Packets, from the United Kingdom and to be forwarded through the United States to the Colonies or Possessions of the United States or of the United Kingdom, or to those territories which, according to the Law of the United States, are beyond the limit of their established Post routes, or to foreign Countries, and *vice versâ,* shall be the same as the rate which is now, or which may hereafter be taken by the United States' Post Office upon Letters conveyed, whether by sea or land, to or from such Colonies, possessions, territories, or Foreign Countries respectively, when posted at the Port of arrival or delivered at the Port of departure of the Packets conveying the Mails between the United States and the United Kingdom.

The above postage is irrespective of and beyond the Inland rate to be taken in the United Kingdom upon such letters, if posted or delivered therein, according to the stipulations of Article II of this convention, and also

irrespective of, and beyond the sea rate upon such Letters payable according to the stipulations of Article I.

There shall be excepted from the above stipulations Letters and Newspapers passing through the United Kingdom to and from France, as to which certain rates are fixed by the Postal Convention existing between that Country and the United Kingdom; but the two contracting parties agree to invite France to enter into Communication with them without loss of time, in order to effect such arrangements for the conveyance of Letters and Newspapers and closed mails through the territories of the United States, of the United Kingdom, and of France respectively, as may be most conducive to the interests of the three Countries.

Article XIII

Letters posted in the United States, addressed to the British North American Provinces, or *vice versâ,* when not conveyed by sea, shall be charged according to the rates of Postage which are now or which shall hereafter be in operation in the United States and in the British North American Provinces for Inland letters.

Article XIV

Upon all Letters posted in the United States and addressed to the British North American Provinces, or *vice versâ,* the rates of postage fixed by the preceding Article, shall be combined into one rate, of which payment in advance shall be optional both in the United States and in the British North American Provinces. It shall, however, not be permitted to pay less than the whole rate.

Article XV

The rates to be taken on Newspapers published in the United Kingdom, when conveyed between the United Kingdom and the United States, either by British or by United States' Packets, shall be one Penny for each newspaper in the United Kingdom, and two cents in the United States. Conversely, no higher charges than those above stated, shall be made by the British or by the United States' Post Office on Newspapers published in the United States, either when dispatched from that Country, or when delivered in the United Kingdom.

There shall be no accounts between the two Offices for the transmission of Newspapers; each Office shall retain the postage it shall have charged according to the preceding stipulations.

Article XVI

The rate of Postage to be charged in the United Kingdom upon Newspapers to and from the United States passing in transit through the United Kingdom, shall be one penny for each Newspaper, except where a lower rate is provided by any Treaty between the United Kingdom and a foreign

Country; and the rate of postage to be charged in the United States upon Newspapers to and from the United Kingdom, passing in transit through the United States, shall be two cents for each Newspaper.

Article XVII

Periodical works, not of daily publication, posted in the United Kingdom or in the United States, may be forwarded from one Country to the other, either by British or by United States' Packets, by means of the two Offices, under the following conditions, namely:—

1st There shall be no accounts between the two offices for the transmission of such works:—each Office shall retain the postage it shall have charged:—

2dly They must be sent in bands or covers open at the sides or end, so that they may be easily examined.

3rdly They shall be in every respect subject to the conditions prescribed by the Laws and Regulations of both Countries.

The rates to be levied in Great Britain as well on the above mentioned works addressed to the United States, as on those from the United States addressed to Great Britain, shall be as follows:—

1st For every work not exceeding Two ounces in weight, One penny.

2dly For every work above Two ounces in weight, and not exceeding Three ounces, six pence.

3dly For every work above three ounces in weight, and not exceeding four ounces, Eight pence.

4thly And for every ounce above four, up to sixteen ounces (the limit imposed on the transmission of such articles by the British Office) two pence additional; every fraction of an Ounce being reckoned as a full ounce.

The rates to be levied by the Post Office of the United States on similar works addressed to or coming from the United States, shall not exceed the rates to be charged in the United Kingdom.

Article XVIII

Printed pamphlets not exceeding the weight of Eight ounces, posted in the United Kingdom or in the United States, may be forwarded from one Country to the other, either by British or by United States' Packets, by means of the two Offices, at the same rates and under the same conditions as those fixed for periodical works by Article XVII.

Article XIX

In consideration of two cents United States' currency not being precisely equivalent to one penny sterling, the British Post Office shall account to the United States' Post Office at the rate of Four Hundred and eighty four cents to the Pound sterling; and the United States' Post Office shall account to the British Post Office at the rate of Four Hundred and Eighty cents to the Pound sterling.

Article XX

In case of war between the two Nations, the Mail Packets of the two Offices shall continue their Navigation without impediment or molestation, until six weeks after a notification shall have been made on the part of either of the two Governments, and delivered to the other, that the service is to be discontinued; in which case they shall be permitted to return freely, and under special protection, to their respective Ports.

Article XXI

The forms in which the accounts between the respective Post Offices for the transmission and conveyance of Letters, are to be made out, the time and mode in which payment shall be made by either Post Office to the other, together with all other measures of detail arising out of the stipulations of the present Convention, shall be settled between the Post Office of the United States and the British Post Office, as soon as possible after the exchange of the Ratifications of the present Convention.

It is also agreed that the measures of detail mentioned in the present Article may be modified by the two Post Offices, whenever, by mutual Consent, those Offices shall have decided that such modification would be beneficial to the Post Office service of the two Countries.

Article XXII

The present Convention is Concluded for an indefinite period. It cannot be annulled by either of the two Governments except after the expiration of a year's notice given to the other Government.

Article XXIII

The present Convention shall be ratified by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate thereof, and by Her Britannick Majesty; and the Ratifications shall be exchanged at London within three Months from the date hereof. It shall come into operation as soon as possible after the exchange of the Ratifications.

In Witness Whereof, the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the same, and have affixed thereto the seals of their arms.

Done at London the Fifteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty Eight.

George Bancroft [seal]
Palmerston [seal]