



# Post Office Act 1908

1908 CHAPTER 48 8 Edw 7

## *SHIP LETTERS*

### **26 Duties of masters of outward-bound vessels as respects mail bags**

- (1) Every master of a vessel outward bound shall receive on board his vessel every mail bag tendered to him by an officer of the Post Office for conveyance, and having received it shall deliver it, on arriving at the port or place of his destination, without delay.
- (2) If he fails to comply with this section he shall forfeit two hundred pounds.

### **27 Duties of masters of inward-bound vessels as respects postal packets**

- (1) Every master of a vessel inward bound shall collect all postal packets on board his vessel being within the exclusive privilege of the Postmaster-General, and not being letters by his Act defined as shipowners' letters, and inclose them in some bag or other covering, sealed with his seal, and addressed to the Postmaster-General, and without delay deliver those packets to the proper officer of the Post Office demanding them, or, if no demand is made by that officer, then at the Post Office with which he can first communicate.
- (2) The master of every such vessel shall, at the port where the vessel reports, sign, in the presence of the proper officer of the Post Office or other person authorised by the Postmaster-General, a declaration of compliance with this Act (which may be in the form contained in the First Schedule to this Act), and shall not break bulk or make entry of any part of her cargo in any port until he has complied with this section. The declaration shall also be signed by the person in whose presence it is made.
- (3) If the master of a vessel does not duly deliver any postal packets in accordance with this section, he shall forfeit two hundred pounds.
- (4) If the master of a vessel refuses or wilfully neglects to make the declaration required by this section, he shall forfeit fifty pounds.

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- (5) If the master of a vessel breaks bulk or makes entry before the postal packets on board his vessel have been delivered in accordance with this section, he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds.

## **28 Penalty for master of vessel opening mail bag**

- (1) If a master of a vessel—
- (a) opens a sealed mail bag with which he is entrusted for conveyance ; or
  - (b) takes out of a mail bag with which he is entrusted for conveyance any postal packet or other thing,
- he shall forfeit two hundred pounds.
- (2) If any person to whom postal packets have been entrusted by the master of a vessel to bring on shore breaks the seal, or in any manner wilfully opens them, he shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds.

## **29 Duties of officers of customs as to delivery of letters by masters of vessels**

- (1) An officer of customs shall not allow any inward-bound vessel to report until the declaration required by this Act with, respect to postal packets has been made and produced to him, and may refuse to permit bulk to be broken on board such a vessel or entry to be made of any part of her cargo until the postal packets on board the vessel have been delivered as required by this Act, and may search every such vessel for postal packets which may be on board contrary to this Act, and may seize the same and forward them to the nearest post office.
- (2) If any officer of customs permits any vessel to report before the requisites of this Act have been complied with, he shall forfeit fifty pounds.

## **30 Shipowners' letters**

- (1) The following letters (in this Act referred to as shipowners' letters), that is to say, letters of the owners, charterers, or consignees of vessels inward bound, and of the owners, consignees, or shippers of goods on board those vessels, when not exceeding the weights and when complying with the conditions herein-after mentioned, shall—
- (a) if required to be delivered at the port of the vessel's arrival, be delivered to the owners, charterers, consignees, or shippers by the master free of inland postage, and the persons to whom they are to be delivered shall be entitled to the delivery thereof before the delivery of the other letters to the Post Office; and
  - (b) if delivered elsewhere in the British Islands, be delivered by post on payment of inland postage only,
- but subject in either case to the previous payment to the Post Office of the gratuities payable under this Act to masters of vessels bringing the letters.
- (2) Provided that—
- (a) The letters brought by any one vessel to any one such person shall not collectively exceed six ounces in weight (except in the case of letters brought by vessels coming from Ceylon, the Mauritius, India, or the Cape of Good Hope, into any port of the British Islands for an owner, charterer, or consignee

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- of such a vessel, in which case they may be collectively twenty ounces in weight); and
- (b) The owner, charterer, or consignee shall be described as such on the address and superscription; and
  - (c) In the case of owners, shippers, or consignees of goods, it shall also appear by the ship's manifest that they have goods on board the vessel.
- (3) If any shipowners' letters are found by an officer of customs to be in excess of the weights herein-before limited by this section, that officer shall seize so many of the letters as will reduce the remainder within the said weights, and shall take them to the nearest post office.
- (4) If any person with intent to evade any postage falsely superscribes a letter as being the owner or charterer or consignee of the vessel conveying the letter, or as the owner or the shipper or the consignee of goods shipped on the vessel, he shall for each offence be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten pounds.

### **31 Gratuities to masters of vessels**

Post Office regulations may provide for the allowance to masters of vessels in respect of postal packets, or any description thereof, conveyed by them on behalf of the Post Office, and also to pilots, seamen, and others in respect of postal packets, or any description thereof, brought by them to any post office from any vessels, of such gratuities under such conditions and restrictions as the Postmaster-General may, from time to time, think fit.

### **32 Retention of ship letters after delivery of letters to Post Office**

If any person, being either the master or one of the officers or crew of a vessel inward bound, or a passenger thereof, knowingly has in his baggage or in his possession or custody any postal packet, except a postal packet not within the privilege of the Postmaster-General, after the master has sent any part of the postal packets on board his vessel to the Post Office, he shall for every such packet be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five pounds; and, if he detains any such packet after demand made, either by an officer of customs or by any person authorised by the Postmaster-General to demand the postal packets on board the vessel, he shall for every postal packet be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten pounds.