



BELIZE

**POST OFFICE ACT
CHAPTER 228**

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CHAPTER 228

POST OFFICE

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POST OFFICE

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R. L., 1958.
CAP. 187,
R. E. 1980-1990.
40 of 1963.
33 of 1980.
12 of 1984.
22 of 1987.

[1st August, 1878]

PART I

Preliminary

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the Post Office Act.

Interpretation.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

“delivery to the Post Office” includes delivery to a letter carrier or other person authorised to receive postal packets for the post;

“delivery to the person addressed” includes a delivery at the house or office of the person to whom the postal packet is addressed, or to him, or to his servant, agent or other person considered to be authorised to receive the postal packet according to the usual manner of delivering that person’s postal packets;

“inland”, when used in relation to any postal packet or any description thereof, means posted within Belize and addressed to some place in Belize, and, when used in relation to post or postage, means the post carrying or the postage charged on the packet;

“mail” includes every conveyance by which postal packets are carried, whether it is a horse, vehicle, vessel, aircraft or any other aircraft conveyance, and also a person employed in conveying or delivering postal packets;

“mail bag” means a bag, box or parcel, or any other envelope in which postal packets are conveyed, whether it does or does not contain postal packets;

“master of a vessel” includes any person in charge of a vessel, whether as commander, mate or other person;

“officer of the Post Office” includes the Postmaster General and any district postmaster, officer, clerk, letter carrier or any other person employed in any business of the Post Office, whether appointed by the Governor General, or employed by the Postmaster General, or by the Public Services Commission, or by any other person under him or on behalf of the Post Office;

“postal packet” means anything in course of transmission by post from the time of its delivery to a Post Office to the time of its delivery to the person to whom it is addressed, and, in the provisions of this Act for the protection or benefit of the Post Office, for the protection of mails, mail bags and officers of the Post Office, and touching offences committed in relation to a postal packet, includes a telegram;

“post office” means any house, building, room, vehicle, vessel, or place where postal packets, or any of them, are, by the permission or under the authority of the Postmaster General received, delivered, sorted, or made up, or from which postal packets, or any of them, are, by the authority of the Postmaster General, despatched, and includes a post office letter-box;

“post office letter-box” includes any pillar-box, wall-box, or other box or receptacle, provided by the permission or under the authority of the Postmaster General for the purpose of receiving postal packets, or any of them, for transmission by or under the authority of the Postmaster General;

“post office packet” includes vessels belonging to or employed by the Government, or vessels employed for the conveyance of postal packets under contract;

“vessel” includes any ship or boat other than a post office packet.

PART II

*Appointment, Powers and Duties etc., of
Postmaster General, Postmasters and other Officers.*

Appointment of
postmasters.

3. The Governor-General may, from time to time, appoint a Postmaster General for Belize, and the Public Services Commission may, from time to time, appoint and such district postmasters and other officers of the Post Office as may, from time to time, be requisite.

General and dis-
trict post offices.
40 of 1963.

4. There shall be a General Post Office in Belize City, and the Minister may, from time to time, establish such district post offices as may be requisite.

Declaration to be
taken.

5. Every person appointed an officer of the Post Office shall make and subscribe before a justice of the peace the declaration set forth in the First Schedule.

Privilege of convey-
ing letters, etc., vest-
ed in the Postmaster
General. Certain
cases excepted.

6.-(1) The Postmaster General, by himself or by the other officers and servants of the Post Office, shall have the exclusive privilege of conveying from one place to another, between which postal communication is or may hereafter be established, and of receiving, collecting, sending and delivering all letters, except,

- (a) letters sent by a private friend in his way, journey or travel, so as such letters be delivered by such friend to the party to whom they are delivered;
- (b) letters sent by a messenger on purpose concerning the private affairs of the sender or receiver thereof;
- (c) letters sent out of Belize by a private vessel, not being a packet boat;
- (d) letters of merchants, owners of vessels of merchandise, or the cargo or loading therein sent by such vessels of merchandise, or by any person employed by such owners for the carriage of such letter, according to their respective directions, and delivered to the

respective persons to whom they are directed, without paying or receiving hire or reward, advantage or profit for the same, in anywise;

- (e) letters concerning goods or merchandise sent by common known carriers to be delivered with goods which such letters concern, without hire or reward or other profit or advantage for receiving or delivering such letters.

(2) Nothing contained herein shall authorise any person to make a collection of such exempted letters for the purpose of sending them in the manner hereby authorised.

(3) The following persons are expressly forbidden to carry a letter, or to receive or collect, or deliver a letter, although they have not received hire or reward for it, that is to say,

- (a) drivers of mail carts, or persons in charge of mails;
- (b) common known carriers, their servants or agents, except a letter concerning goods being conveyed by them;
- (c) owners or masters of vessels sailing or passing coastwise or otherwise between, to or from places in Belize, or their servants or agents, except in respect of letters of merchants, owners of ships, or goods on board;
- (d) passengers or other persons on board any such vessels.

7. The Postmaster General, or the district postmasters, may examine any newspaper, parcel, book-packet or other article, whether sent by the post without a cover or in a cover open at the sides or ends, in order to discover whether it is contrary in any respect to the conditions required to be observed, and in case any one of the required conditions has not been fulfilled, the whole of every such newspaper, parcel, book-packet or other article may be charged at letter rates.

Authority to examine newspapers, parcels or book-packets.

Detention by Postmaster General of letters, etc., which in his opinion contain dutiable goods.

8. The Postmaster General shall detain any letter, package, or other postal matter arriving in Belize from abroad which in his opinion may contain or consist of goods liable to duties, giving prompt notice of such detention to the person to whom such postal matter is addressed, in order that such postal matter may be examined by such person or his agent in the presence of an officer of Customs, and, in case any dutiable goods are found, such goods shall not be delivered by the Postmaster General until the Comptroller of Customs, on payment of the duties, issues his warrant for their delivery.

Restriction of postal packets.

9. Postal packets may be registered upon payment of the registration fee in addition to the postage.

Government's liability for loss of foreign postal packets.

10.—(1) Except as provided in this section, neither the Government nor any person employed by or acting on behalf of the Government, shall have any liability, in respect of the loss of any registered postal packet addressed to a destination outside Belize.

(2) There shall be paid to the sender, or at his request to the addressee, of a registered postal packet posted in Belize and addressed to any other country of the Postal Union or posted in any other country of the Postal Union and addressed to Belize, an indemnity of ten dollars on the Minister being satisfied that such packet or any of its contents has been lost in Belize or in the maritime service thereof.

(3) The Minister may enter into an arrangement with any other country of the Postal Union, whereby in the event of doubt as to the place of loss of any postal packet, such indemnity shall be paid partly by Belize and partly by the other country party to such arrangement.

(4) Any reference in this section to a postal packet shall be construed as including a reference to the contents of such a packet.

Government's liability for loss of inland postal packet.

11.—(1) Proceedings shall lie against the Government in respect of loss of or damage to a registered inland postal packet, not being a telegram, in so far as the loss or damage is due to any wrongful act done or any neglect or default committed by a person employed as a servant or agent of the Government while performing or purporting to perform his functions as such in relation to the receipt, custody, carriage, delivery or other dealing with the packet, however,

- (a) no proceedings shall lie under this section in respect of any postal packet registered before the commencement of the Crown Proceedings Act, Cap. 167;
- (b) the amount recoverable in any proceedings under this section shall not exceed the market value of the packet in question (excluding the market value of any message or information which it bears) at the time when the cause of action arises;
- (c) the amount recoverable in any such proceedings shall not in any event exceed the maximum amount which, under this Act, is available for compensating the persons aggrieved, having regard to the fee paid in respect of the registration of the packet; and
- (d) the Government shall not be liable under this section in respect of any packet unless such conditions as are prescribed by regulations in relation to registered inland postal packets have been complied with in relation to that packet.

(2) For the purposes of any proceedings under this section, it shall be presumed until the contrary is shown on behalf of the Government, that the loss of or damage to the packet was due to some wrongful act done, or some neglect or default committed, by a person employed as a servant or agent of the Government while performing or purporting to perform his functions as such in relation to the receipt, custody, carriage, delivery or other dealing with the packet.

(3) Subject to subsection (4) of this section, no relief shall be available under this section except upon a claim by the sender or the addressee of the packet in question, and the sender or addressee of the packet shall be entitled to claim any relief available under this section in respect of the packet, whether or not he is the person damnified by the injury complained of, and capable of giving a good discharge in respect of all claims relating to the packet under this section.

(4) Where the court is satisfied, upon an application by any person who is not the sender or addressee of the packet, that the sender and the

addressee are unable or unwilling to enforce their remedies in respect of the packet under this section, the court may, upon such terms as to security for costs and otherwise as the court thinks just, allow that other person to bring proceedings under this section in the name of the sender or the addressee of the packet.

(5) Any reference in subsections (3) and (4) of this section, to the sender or addressee of the packet includes a reference to his personal representatives.

(6) Where, by virtue of subsections (3) and (4) of this section, any person recovers any money or property which, apart from those subsections, would have been recoverable by some other person, the money or property so recovered shall be held on trust for that person.

(7) Regulations may be made by the Minister for prescribing the conditions to be observed for the purposes of this section in relation to registered inland postal packets.

(8) In this section,

“inland postal packet” means a postal packet which is posted in Belize for delivery, at any place in Belize, to the person to whom it is addressed;

“sender” in relation to a postal packet, has such meaning as may be assigned to it by the regulations.

(9) Any reference in this section to a postal packet shall be construed as including a reference to the contents of such a packet.

12. Except as provided in sections 10 and 11 of this Act, no proceedings in tort shall lie against the Government for anything done or omitted to be done in relation to a postal packet by any person while employed as a servant or agent of the Government, or for anything done or omitted to be done in relation to a telephonic communication by any person while so employed, and no officer of the Government shall be subject, except at the suit of the Government, to any liability for any of the matters aforesaid.

Government's liability in connection with postal packets.

13. The Government may, on the part of Belize, adopt and adhere to the provisions of any insurance agreement of the Universal Postal Union and take all such steps and make all such arrangements as may be necessary in that behalf.

Adherence to insurance agreement of Postal Union.

14.-(1) The Minister may make regulations in accordance with any agreement so adopted and adhered to for the establishment, maintenance and working of a system of insurance of letters, boxes and packets upon and in accordance with the conditions and scale of fees fixed by such regulations.

Regulations.

(2) The limit of insured value of any letter, box or packet and of compensation for loss thereof, abstraction therefrom or damage thereto shall not exceed two thousand dollars.

15. It shall be lawful for the Minister to direct payment from the Treasury of Belize of any compensation due under and by virtue of the regulations made under and in accordance with the provisions of section 14 of this Act, or of any compensation now due or which may hereafter become due under the regulations for the transmission of insured letters by post made by the Minister.

Payment of compensation.

16. The Government may enter into agreements for the insurance of packages carried by parcel post between Belize and the United Kingdom, or any Commonwealth country, British colony, possession or protectorate, or any foreign country.

Power to enter into agreements.

17.-(1) The Minister may from time to time make regulations in accordance with any such agreement for the establishment, maintenance and working of a system of insurance of parcels sent by post upon and according to the conditions and scale of fees fixed by such regulations.

Power to make regulations.

(2) The limit of insured value of any parcel and of compensation for the loss thereof shall not exceed two thousand dollars.

(3) All such regulations shall be published in the *Gazette* and thereafter shall have the force of law.

Payment of compensation.

18. It shall be lawful for the Minister to direct payment from the Treasury of Belize of any compensation due under and by virtue of the regulations made under and in accordance with the provisions of section 17 of this Act.

Compensation for loss or damage in parcel post.

19.—(1) The Minister may order the payment of compensation for the loss of or damage to any parcel transmitted by parcel post between Belize and a Commonwealth or foreign country.

(2) Such compensation shall not exceed a sum decided upon by the Minister by regulations from time to time.

Stamps.

20. The Minister shall, from time to time, cause to be provided proper and sufficient postage stamps for expressing and denoting the rates or duties of postage, and such stamps shall be kept in the custody of the Financial Secretary, who shall, on the requisition of the Postmaster General, issue to him such stamps as may be required.

Prepayment by stamps.

21. The prepayment of all postages and fees shall be by postage stamps affixed to the letter or article posted by the person posting the same.

Letters prepaid, unpaid, short paid.

22. All letters or other articles from any country which have been prepaid according to any arrangement between Belize and any such country, shall pass through the post offices of Belize free from any further or other postage or charge thereon, and on letters or other articles to or from any such country, whether wholly unpaid or insufficiently paid, there shall be charged such addition to the ordinary rate of postage as may have been agreed upon as aforesaid.

Government correspondence exempted from inland postage.

23. Letters transmitted by post, either to or from the Minister, shall be exempt from inland postage, and the Minister may, from time to time, authorise the transmission, free of inland postage, of the correspondence of public business of any public department or public officer.

Persons exempted from duties of postage.

24. The following persons shall be entitled to have their letters free from postage,

- (a) owners, charterers, or consignees of inward bound vessels; and

- (b) owners, consignees or shippers of goods on board any inward bound vessel, however,
- (i) letters brought by any one vessel to any one such person shall not collectively exceed six ounces in weight, and the owner, charterer or consignee shall be described as such on the address or superscription;
 - (ii) in the case of owners, shippers or consignees of goods, it also appears by the ship's manifest that they have goods on board the vessel;
 - (iii) if the master of the vessel shall deliver any such letter into the post office it shall cease to be privileged, and shall be liable to the full rate of postage.

25. All duties of postage imposed by the authority of this Act may be sued for and recovered in a summary manner before any district court.

Postage duties, how recovered.

PART III

Duties and Liabilities of Masters of Vessels and Post Office Offences and Penalties etc.

26.—(1) The Postmaster General shall, subject to any regulations made by the Minister, pay to masters of vessels in respect of postal packets or any description thereof conveyed by them on behalf of the Post Office such gratuities as may be fixed by the said regulations.

Gratuities to masters for conveyance of mails.

(2) The master of any vessel or boat about to depart from any place in Belize for any other place within or without Belize who,

Penalty, master refusing to receive mail.

- (a) refuses to receive any mail bag tendered to him by an officer of the Post Office for conveyance by any such vessel; or

- (b) wilfully neglects duly to convey any such bag received by him for conveyance, or to take due care of any such bag in his charge,

shall for every such offence forfeit two hundred dollars.

Delivery by master at destination.

27.—(1) Every master of a vessel, not being a post office packet, arriving in Belize shall without delay cause all letters on board his vessel, not exempted under section 24 of this Act, to be collected and enclosed in some bag or other envelope, and he shall deliver the same or cause it to be delivered at the Post Office at the place where the vessel reports.

(2) The master shall sign a declaration before the Postmaster of such place, or other person authorised by him, and such declaration may be in the form of the Second Schedule.

(3) The Comptroller of Customs shall not admit any vessel to entry without first receiving from the master a certificate from an officer of the Post Office that the declaration as required by this section has been duly made.

Declaration. Certain offences by master. Penalties.

28.—(1) Every master of a vessel who,

- (a) refuses or wilfully neglects to make the declaration referred to in section 27 of this Act; or
- (b) breaks bulk, or makes entry before all letters on board, not exempted from postage, are sent to the Post Office,

shall forfeit fifty dollars.

(2) Every person on board any ship liable to the performance of quarantine, who on demand neglects or refuses to deliver to the person appointed to superintend the quarantine of all such letters in his possession, shall forfeit one hundred dollars.

Quarantine letters.

29. The person appointed to superintend such quarantine is hereby authorised and required to receive and collect such letters and, due care and precaution having been exercised in respect of them, to deliver them to the Post Office.

30.—(1) Every person, being either the master of a vessel inward bound or one of the officers, or one of the crew, or a passenger thereof, who knowingly has any letter not exempted from postage in his possession after the master has sent the ship's letters to the Post Office shall forfeit in respect of every letter ten dollars.

Penalty for master, etc., knowingly carrying letter not exempted from postage.

(2) A letter in the baggage or on the body of any such person or otherwise in his custody, shall be deemed to be in his possession.

(3) Every such person who detains any such letter, after demand made either by an officer of Customs or other person authorised by the Postmaster General to demand ship letters, shall, for every letter, forfeit twenty dollars.

31. Any officer of Customs may search any vessel for letters which may be on board contrary to law, and may seize all such letters, and forward them to the nearest Post Office, and the Customs Officer who so seizes and sends them shall be entitled to a sum not exceeding a moiety of the fine recovered in respect of any such offence.

Power of customs officer to search for and seize letters.

32.—(1) Every master of a vessel who,

- (a) opens a mail bag or postal packet with which he is entrusted for conveyance;
- (b) takes out of a mail bag or postal packet with which he is entrusted for conveyance a letter or any other thing; or
- (c) fails to deliver a mail bag or postal packet with the contents at the Post Office on his arrival without wilful or avoidable delay after his arrival, shall forfeit two hundred dollars.

Penalty for master opening mail bag, etc.

(2) Every person who breaks the seal of, or in any manner wilfully opens, any letter entrusted to him by the master of a vessel to bring ashore shall forfeit two hundred dollars.

33.—(1) Every person who,

Penalties for performing stated service otherwise than through post.

- (a) conveys, otherwise than by post, any letter required by law to be conveyed by post;
- (b) performs, otherwise than by post, any services incidental to conveying letters from place to place, whether by receiving or by taking up, or by collecting, or by ordering, or by despatching, or carrying or re-carrying, or by delivering a letter required to be conveyed by post;
- (c) sends, or causes to be sent, a letter required to be conveyed by post, otherwise than by post, or either tenders or delivers a letter so required to be conveyed, in order that it may be sent otherwise than by the post; or
- (d) makes a collection of excepted letters for the purpose of conveying or sending them otherwise than by post,

shall, for every letter, forfeit ten dollars.

(2) Every person who is in the practice of,

- (a) conveying, otherwise than by post, letters required to be conveyed by post;
- (b) performing, otherwise than by post, any services incidental to conveying letters from place to place, whether by receiving or by taking up, or by collecting or by ordering, or by despatching or by carrying or re-carrying, or by delivering a letter required to be conveyed by post;
- (c) sending, or causing to be sent, a letter required to be conveyed by post otherwise than by post, or either tendering or delivering a letter so required to be conveyed, in order that it may be sent otherwise than by post; or
- (d) making a collection of excepted letters for the purpose of conveying or sending them otherwise than by post,

shall, for every week during which the practice continues, forfeit one hundred dollars.

(3) In this section, “post” includes all post communications by land or by water, except by outward bound vessels, not being post office packets, and the above fines shall be incurred whether the letter is sent singly or with anything else or such incidental service is performed in respect to a letter either sent or to be sent, singly or together with some other letter or thing.

(4) In any proceeding for the recovery of any such fines, the onus shall lie upon the party proceeded against to prove that the act in respect of which the fines are alleged to have been incurred was done in conformity with the law.

34. Every person employed by or under the Post Office who, contrary to his duty,

Post Office employee opening or delaying delivery of packet, etc.

- (a) opens, procures or suffers to be opened a postal packet; or
- (b) wilfully detains, delays, or procures, or suffers to be detained or delayed a postal packet,

commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

35. Every person employed by or under the Post Office who steals, secretes or destroys a postal packet commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years, and if the postal packet contains any chattel, money or valuable security, he shall be liable to a term of imprisonment not exceeding fourteen years.

Stealing, etc., of postal packet. 33 of 1980.

36. Every person who steals from or out of a postal packet any chattel, money or valuable security commits an offence, and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for any term not exceeding fourteen years.

Stealing out of packet.

Stealing or unlawfully taking away packet, etc. Stopping mail with intent, etc.
33 of 1980.

37.—(1) Every person who,

- (a) steals or unlawfully takes away a mail bag, or postal packet from a mail bag, or postal packet from a Post Office or from an officer of the Post Office or from a mail; or
- (b) stops a mail with intent to steal or search it,

commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding fourteen years.

(2) Every person who unlawfully opens a mail bag commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

Stealing from postal packet.

38. Every person who,

- (a) steals or unlawfully takes away a mail bag sent by a post office or any letter out of such a bag commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding fourteen years;
- (b) unlawfully opens such a bag commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

Handling mail bag or postal packet.
33 of 1980.

39. Every person who handles any mail bag or postal packet, or any chattel, money or valuable security, knowing it to be feloniously stolen, taken, or secreted, and to be sent or intended to be sent by the post, commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding fourteen years.

Fraudulent retention or secretion of mail bag or postal packet.

40. Every person who,

- (a) fraudulently retains or wilfully secretes, keeps or detains; or
- (b) being required by an officer of the Post Office to deliver up, neglects or refuses to deliver up,

a mail bag or postal packet which ought to have been delivered to any other person, or a mail bag or postal packet which has been missent, whether it is found by the person secreting, keeping, detaining or neglecting or refusing to deliver up the same, or by any other person, commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

41. Every person who, not being an officer of the Post Office, wilfully and maliciously, with intent to injure any other person, opens or causes to be opened any postal packet which ought to have been delivered to that other person, or does any act or thing whereby the due delivery of the letter to that other person is prevented or impeded, commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

Criminal diversion of letters from addressee.

42. Every person who solicits or endeavours to procure any other person to commit an offence punishable under this Act commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

Accessories before the fact.

43. If a person who is charged with any of the offences described in sections 34 to 42 of this Act, consents to be dealt with summarily in accordance with section 51 of the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act, Cap. 98, and pleads guilty to, or is found guilty of, the offence charged, the court may sentence him to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, or to both such fine and term of imprisonment.

Offences triable summarily with consent of accused person.

44. Every person employed by or under the Post Office to convey or deliver a mail bag or postal packet, who,

Certain offences such as endangering bag, etc. Penalty.

(a) whilst so employed, or whilst the same is in his custody, care or possession, leaves a mail bag or postal packet, or is guilty of any act of drunkenness, or of carelessness, negligence, or other misconduct, whereby the safety of that mail bag or postal packet is endangered;

- (b) collects or receives, or conveys or delivers a letter otherwise than in the ordinary course of post; or
- (c) loiters on the road or passage, or wilfully mispends his time so as to retard or delay the progress or arrival of a mail bag or postal packet,

commits an offence and shall forfeit five hundred dollars.

45. Every person who, with intent to evade any duty of postage, falsely superscribes a letter as being the owner, or the charterer, or a consignee of a vessel conveying the same, or as the owner, or the shipper, or the consignee of goods shipped in such vessel, commits an offence and shall forfeit five hundred dollars.

46.—(1) Where the Postmaster General has reasonable grounds to suspect that any postal packet, parcel or other postal matter contains any controlled drug or any dangerous goods, it shall be lawful for him, by letter sent to the person mentioned therein as the sender or addressee at the address given therein, to notify his intention to open such postal packet, parcel or other postal matter and in the presence of the sender, or where no such person appears before him within a period of fourteen days, in the absence of any such person and in the presence of a police officer of or above the rank of sergeant or a justice of the peace, to open such postal packet, parcel or other postal matter, for the purposes of satisfying himself of the contents thereof,

Provided that where any such postal packet, parcel or other postal matter does not contain any controlled drugs or dangerous goods, that postal packet, parcel or other postal matter shall be securely fastened and forwarded to its destination with the words “opened by Postmaster General of Belize” marked on it.

(2) Every person who knowingly posts, sends or delivers, in order to be sent by post, any postal packet, parcel or other postal matter which contains any controlled drug or dangerous goods commits an offence and be liable on conviction therefor, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Act,

- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three years but which may

Falsely representing to be owner or consignee.

Sending, etc., controlled drugs and dangerous goods by post.
12 of 1984.

extend to ten years, and in addition, shall be ordered to pay a fine which shall not be less than ten thousand dollars but which may extend to one hundred thousand dollars or three times the street value of the controlled drug or dangerous goods (where there is evidence of such value), whichever is the greater; or

- (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to fourteen years and, in addition, shall be ordered to pay a fine which shall not be less than fifty thousand dollars but which may extend to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars or three times the street value of the controlled drug or dangerous goods (where there is evidence of such value), whichever is the greater.

(3) Any person who is proved to be the sender or deliverer of any postal packet, parcel or other postal matter containing any controlled drug or dangerous goods shall be presumed knowingly to have posted, sent or delivered in order to be sent by post such postal packet, parcel or other postal matter.

(4) Any controlled drug or dangerous goods found in the search shall, in addition to any punishment that may be imposed on the offender, be liable to be forfeited.

(5) For the purpose of this section,

- (a) the expression “controlled drug” means any substance or product for the time being specified in Part I, II or III of the Second Schedule to the Misuse of Drugs Act, Cap. 103;
- (b) the expression “dangerous goods” means any goods deemed to be specially dangerous within the meaning of the Dangerous Goods Act, Cap. 134.

Knowingly sending, etc., dangerous or offensive matter.

47. Every person who knowingly posts, sends, tenders or delivers, in order to be sent by post, any postal packet, parcel or other postal matter which either,

- (a) encloses any explosive or other dangerous material or substance, or any glass or glass bottle which may be likely to injure the contents of the mail, or any article which may be likely to injure the contents of the mail or any property of the Post Office or the Government or the person of any officer of the Post Office; or
- (b) has, on such a postal packet, parcel or other postal matter, or on the cover thereof, any words, marks or designs of an indecent, obscene, libellous or grossly offensive character,

commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction therefor to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars, or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months, or to both such fine and term of imprisonment.

Issuing postal order or postal money order fraudulently, etc.

48. Any person employed by or under the Post Office who,

- (a) issues any postal order or postal money order with a fraudulent intent;
- (b) re-issues any postal order or postal money order previously paid; or
- (b) wilfully pays any postal order or postal money order to any person other than the person to whom such postal order or postal money order should be paid,

commits an offence and shall be liable to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year, or to both such fine and term of imprisonment.

Penalties, how recovered.

49. Every fine or forfeiture under this Act may be recovered on summary conviction.

PART IV

Miscellaneous

50.—(1) The Minister may make regulations relating to all or any of the following matters,

Minister to make regulations.

- (a) the duties of Postmaster General;
- (b) the hours or times of attendance at the General Post Office, and the conduct of all business in such office;
- (c) the establishment and general management of branch Post Offices;
- (d) the remuneration to be paid to the officers of the Post Office, and the regulation of their duties;
- (e) the time of the receipt and delivery of letters, and the mode of their transmission;
- (f) the keeping of accounts by the Postmaster General, and the payment by him to the Government of Belize of the moneys collected by him;
- (g) the keeping of accounts by the officers of the Post Office or otherwise, and the payment of the moneys collected or payable by such officers under this Act;
- (h) the description of postal packets that may be transmitted by inland post, where the same is not provided for by this Act;
- (i) the rates of postage to be charged in Belize on letters, post-cards, newspapers, book-packets, patterns and other articles transmitted by the post between places within Belize or between Belize and places abroad, or brought by a private ship;

- (j) the provision, custody, issue, sale, and use of postage stamps, reply coupons, labels and the like;
- (k) the conditions, whether by optional or compulsory prepayment, upon which the Postmaster General is bound to forward postal packets posted in Belize to places outside Belize;
- (l) the rates of postage, inclusive of the rates fixed by the Government, to be charged and collected upon postal packets passing between Belize and places abroad or brought by a private ship;
- (m) all matters relating to the receipt of postal packets from or the delivery of postal packets to the mail agents of any Foreign Government;
- (n) the registration of postal packets and the fees chargeable for such registration;
- (o) the issue of orders for money from the Post Office in Belize payable at any duly authorised Post Office in the United Kingdom or any other colony or country, and the payment of orders for money made payable in Belize and the commission to be charged in respect thereof;
- (p) the issue and payment of British postal orders;
- (q) the issue of postal orders within Belize as may be deemed advisable and for the payment thereof and to regulate the limit of the amounts of such orders and the commission to be charged thereon;
- (r) the issue and payment of money orders and postal orders at conversion rates conforming as nearly as possible to the current market rates of exchange of money, and in case of money orders and postal orders issued outside of and payable in Belize to fix the

- conversion rate at the market rate either on the date of issue or on the date of presentation for payment;
- (s) the insurance of postal packets and parcels;
 - (t) the establishment of street pillar boxes in Belize City and other parts of Belize;
 - (u) the sale of postage stamps outside the Post Offices;
 - (v) the furnishing of stamp dies and other implements; and
 - (w) generally all matters respecting the direction, control and management of the Post Office where such matters are not provided for or not fully provided for by this Act.

(2) None of such regulations in any of the matters which may affect the interest of the Government shall be at variance with any instructions received by the Minister from the Government or the laws and regulations of the International Postal Union.

51. In any case where an offence is committed in respect of a mail bag, a postal packet, a chattel, money, or valuable security sent by the post, it shall be lawful to lay, in the information against the offender, the property in the Postmaster General, and it shall not be necessary in the information to allege, or to prove upon the trial or otherwise, that the mail bag, or any such postal packet, or valuable security was of any value, and in any information to be preferred against any person employed under the Post Office, it shall be sufficient to state that such person was employed under the Post Office of Belize at the time of the committing of such offence, without stating further the nature or particulars of his employment.

Property may be laid in Postmaster General.

52. The publication in the *Gazette* of any regulations, warrant or order made in pursuance or under the authority of this Act, shall be sufficient evidence of such regulation, warrant or order.

Publication in *Gazette*.

FIRST SCHEDULE

POST OFFICE ACT

Declaration by Post Office Official

[Section 5]

I _____, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I will not wittingly or willingly open or delay, or cause or permit to be opened or delayed, contrary to my duty, any letter or anything sent by the post which comes into my hands or custody by reason of my employment relating to the Post Office, except by the consent of the person or persons to whom the same is directed, or by an express warrant in writing under the hand of the Minister, for that purpose, or except in such cases when the party or parties to whom such letter, or anything sent by the post, is directed, and who is or are chargeable with the payment of the postage thereof, refuses or neglects to pay the postage, and except such letters or anything sent by the post, as returned for want of true direction, or when the party or parties to whom the same is directed cannot be found, and that I will not in any way embezzle any such letter or anything sent by the post as aforesaid, and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously intending to fulfil and obey the same.

DECLARED this _____ day of _____, 20 _____.

Before me _____, J. P.

SECOND SCHEDULE

POST OFFICE ACT
Declaration by Master
[Section 27 (2)]

I, A. B., master of the *(state the name of vessel)*, arrived from *(state place)*, do solemnly declare that I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, delivered, or caused to be delivered to the Post Office, every letter, bag, package or parcel of letters that were on board the said vessel, except such letters as are exempted by law.
