ANNO QUINQUAGESIMO QUARTO

GEORGII III. REGIS.

CAP. CLXIX.

An Act for making certain Regulations respecting the Postage of Ship Letters, and of Letters in *Great Britain*. [30th *July* 1814.]

WHEREAS it is expedient to alter and enlarge the Powers of an Act passed in the Thirty-ninth Year of the Reign of His present Majesty, intituled *An Act for the more secure Conveyance of Ship Letters, and for granting to His Majesty certain Rates of Postage thereon*; and to grant other Rates of Postage in lieu of some of the Rates therein mentioned; be it therefore enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That from and after the Tenth Day of *October* One thousand eight hundred and fourteen, so much of the said recited Act as grants a Rate of Postage of Four-pence for every Single Letter, and so in Proportion for Packets, in Addition to any Inland Postage which may arise upon the Inland Conveyance of such Letters and Packets, for Letters and Packets brought by Ships and Vessels other than Packet Boats from Places within His Majesty's Dominions, and from Kingdoms and Countries beyond the Seas into *Great Britain*, shall be and the same is hereby repealed,

39 G. 3. c. 76.

From October 10, 1814, so much of recited Act as grants a Postage of 4d. &c. for Ship Letters repealed.

repealed, except ſo far as relates to the Rates impoſed by the ſaid Act, which may be then remaining unpaid.

Ship Letters to pay a Poſtage of 6d for a Single Letter, and in Proportion for Packets.

II. And be it further enacted, That it ſhall and may be lawful for His Majeſty's Poſtmaſter General, and his Deputy and Deputies by him thereunto authorized, to and for the Uſe of His Majeſty, His Heirs and Succeſſors, to demand, have, receive, and take for every Letter and Packet which ſhall be brought by Ships and Veſſels, other than Packet Boats, in the Manner in the ſaid recited Act mentioned from Places within His Majeſty's Dominions, and from Kingdoms and Countries beyond the Seas into *Great Britain*, the Sum of Sixpence for every Single Letter, and ſo in Proportion for Packets, in addition to any Inland or Internal Poſtage which may ariſe upon the Inland Conveyance of ſuch Letters and Packets.

Perſons bringing ſuch Letters to the Poſt Office and paying a certain Rate of Poſtage empowered to forward the ſame by any Veſſel, not being a Packet Boat.

III. And be it further enacted, That it ſhall and may be lawful for His Majeſty's Poſtmaſter General and his Deputies to receive Letters and Packets directed to Places within His Majeſty's Dominions, and to Kingdoms and Countries beyond the Seas, from any Perſon or Perſons who may bring the ſame to any Poſt Office in *Great Britain*, and who may be deſirous to forward ſuch Letters themſelves, and to affix upon each Letter or Packet ſuch Stamp, Mark of Poſtage, or Deſignation as the Poſtmaſter General in his Diſcretion ſhall think proper and order, and thereupon to demand and receive for the Uſe of His Majeſty, His Heirs and Succeſſors, a Rate of Poſtage of One-third Part of the Rates and Duties payable by Law for ſuch reſpective Letters and Packets if the ſame were conveyed by Packet Boats, and in Caſes where no Rate of Poſtage is already eſtabliſhed, then to demand, have, receive, and take for ſuch Letters and Packets, Rates as near as can be aſcertained equal to One-third Part of what is now paid for Letters ſent beyond the Seas, and upon Payment thereof to return ſuch Letters and Packets to the Perſon or Perſons bringing the ſame, and that it ſhall and may be lawful for ſuch Perſon and Perſons to forward ſuch Letters and Packets to the Places to which they may be directed by any Ships or Veſſels that he or they may think proper, not being Packet Boats, without incurring any Penalty therefore, and without Payment of any other Rate or Duty of Poſtage; any Law, Statute, Cuſtom or Uſage to the contrary notwithſtanding.

Poſtmaſter General may authorize Perſons to collect Letters and to forward the ſame by Veſſels other than Packet Boats, if Letters are brought to the Poſt Office and the Poſtage paid.

IV. And be it further enacted, That it ſhall and may be lawful for His Majeſty's Poſtmaſter General, by Writing under his Hand, and under Seal of the Office of Poſtmaſter General, to licenſe and authorize any Perſon or Perſons whatſoever to collect Letters and Packets in *Great Britain* directed to Places within His Majeſty's Dominions, and to Kingdoms and Countries beyond the Seas, for the Purpoſe of being forwarded according to their Directions by any Ships or Veſſels, other than Packet Boats, provided that ſuch Perſons ſo to be licenſed ſhall previous to forwarding the ſame bring ſuch Letters and Packets to the Poſt Office of the Town or Place to have a Stamp, Mark of Poſtage, or Deſignation put thereon, which

Stamp,

Stamp, Mark of Poſtage, or Deſignation, the Poſtmaſter General and his Deputies are hereby authorized and required to put thereon, and to demand, receive, and take, for the Uſe of His Majeſty, His Heirs and Succeſſors, the ſame Rates of Poſtage as are hereby made payable for Letters and Packets to be forwarded by Perſons bringing the ſame in Manner herein-before provided; and upon ſuch Payment being made to return ſuch Letters and Packets to the Perſons ſo to be licenſed, and that it ſhall and may be lawful for ſuch authorized Perſons to forward ſuch Letters and Packets by any Ships or Veſſels that he or they may think proper, not being Packet Boats, without incurring any Penalty therefore, and without Payment of any other Rate of Poſtage; any Law, Statute, or Uſage to the contrary notwithſtanding.

Maſters of Veſſels to deliver Letters to authorized Perſons, who, on receiving 3s. for every 50 of ſuch Letters, ſhall put them into a ſealed Bag and return them.

V. And be it further enacted, That it ſhall be lawful for any Perſon or Perſons authorized by the Poſtmaſter General in Places within His Majeſty's Dominions and Countries beyond the Seas to receive from the Maſters of Veſſels coming from thence into any Port in *Great Britain*, Letters and Packets which may be collected and brought by ſuch Maſters to them for the Purpoſe of being tranſmitted by the Authority of the Poſtmaſter General, and alſo to receive from ſuch Maſters with ſuch Letters at the Rate of Three Shillings for every Fifty Letters or Packets, and ſo in Proportion for a greater or leſſer Number; and ſuch Perſon or Perſons ſo authorized by the Poſtmaſter General ſhall make up in a Bag or Parcel all ſuch Letters ſo received, and incloſe therein a Certificate of the Number of Letters contained in the ſame, and an Impreſſion of the Seal which ſhall be uſed to ſeal ſuch Bag or Parcel, and the Date when the ſame ſhall be ſealed, and ſhall ſeal the Bag or Parcel with the Seal of which an Impreſſion ſhall have been ſo incloſed, and deliver the ſame Bag or Parcel to ſuch Maſters for the Purpoſe of being brought by them to the Port at which they ſhall arrive in *Great Britain*.

On delivering ſuch Bag at the Poſt Office, the Maſter of the Veſſel ſhall be repaid the 3s. and receive 2d. for every Letter.

VI. And, in order to encourage Maſters of Ships and Veſſels, not being Packet Boats, coming from Places within His Majeſty's Dominions and Places beyond the Seas; be it further enacted, That it ſhall be lawful for the Maſters of Veſſels to collect Letters and Packets in Places within His Majeſty's Dominions and Countries beyond the Seas, ſo as ſuch Letters ſhall be collected for the Purpoſe of being tranſmitted by the Authority of the Poſtmaſter General to *Great Britain*, and provided that ſuch Maſters ſhall deliver all ſuch Letters to ſome Perſon or Perſons authorized by the Poſtmaſter General to receive the ſame for the Purpoſes aforeſaid, and that the Maſters ſhall, upon delivering the ſame, pay unto the Perſon or Perſons ſo authorized the Sum of Three Shillings for every Fifty Letters, or ſo in Proportion for a greater or leſſer Number, and ſhall then receive the ſame back from ſuch Perſon or Perſons ſo authorized as aforeſaid, in a ſealed Bag or Parcel, and ſhall upon Delivery of ſuch Bag or Parcel ſo made up and ſealed in ſuch Manner as is herein-before mentioned in a perfect State at any Poſt Office in *Great Britain*, be repaid the Sum of Money which they ſhall have ſo advanced as aforeſaid, and

alſo Two-pence per Letter for every Letter which ſhall be contained in ſuch Bag or Parcel.

Penalty on opening the Bag, &c. 500l.

VII. Provided alſo, and be it further enacted, That if any Maſter of ſuch Ship or Veſſel ſhall open any Bag or Bags of Letters with which he ſhall have been entruſted, or ſhall take out of ſuch Bag any Letter or Letters whatſoever, or ſhall not duly deliver ſuch Bag with the Letters at the Place where he ſhall arrive, to the Perſon who may be authorized to receive the ſame without wilful or unavoidable Delay after his Arrival, every ſuch Maſter ſo offending ſhall forfeit and pay the Sum of Five hundred Pounds.

Penalty on ſending Letters not having the Poſt Office Mark.

VIII. And be it further enacted, That if any Perſon whatſoever ſhall ſend any Letter or Packet by any Ship or Veſſel of which he ſhall not be Owner, without having the Official Mark of the Poſtage having been paid thereon, or if any Maſter ſhall have on board or carry any Letter, not being the Letter of his Owners, without ſuch Official Mark thereon, every ſuch Perſon or Perſons ſo offending ſhall forfeit and pay the Sum of Five Pounds for every Letter or Packet ſo ſent or found on board, or carried as aforeſaid.

Officers of the Cuſtoms may ſearch Ships for Letters,

IX. And be it further enacted, That it ſhall and may be lawful to and for the Collector, Comptroller, or principal Officers of His Majeſty's Cuſtoms, at any Port or Place whatſoever, and they are hereby authorized and required to ſearch every Ship or Veſſel in any Port or Place for Letters or Packets which may be on board contrary to the Proviſions of this Act, and to ſeize and take all ſuch Letters and to forward the ſame to the Poſtmaſter General or his Deputy at the Port or Place, and that the Officer ſeizing and ſending the ſame ſhall be entitled to One Moiety of the Penalty which may be recovered for any ſuch Offence.

and may adminiſter Oath to Maſters of Veſſels.

X. And be it further enacted, That it ſhall and may be lawful for ſuch Collector, Comptroller, or Officer of the Cuſtoms, and he is hereby authorized and required to adminiſter an Oath to ſuch Maſter before he departs, that he has not any Letters which have not paid the Rates of Poſtage hereby impoſed on board his Ship or Veſſel, not being the Letters of the Owners of his ſaid Ship or Veſſel.

Declaration to be made of the Delivery of Letters before Veſſel breaks Bulk.

XI. And be it further enacted, That on the Arrival of any Ship in Port, the Maſter ſhall ſign a Declaration in Writing, in the Preſence of the Perſon authorized by the Poſtmaſter General at the Port or Place, who ſhall alſo ſign the ſame, that to the beſt of his Knowledge and Belief he has delivered according to the Proviſions of this Act, all the Letters or Bags or Parcels of Letters on board his Veſſel, and that until ſuch Declaration ſhall be ſigned the Officers of the Cuſtoms ſhall not permit ſuch Ship or Veſſel to break Bulk, and in caſe ſuch Maſter ſhall wilfully neglect to make ſuch Declaration he ſhall forfeit and pay the Sum of Fifty Pounds, One Moiety thereof to be paid to the Informer.

Penalty, 50l.

XII. And be it further enacted, That if any Collector, Comptroller, or principal Officer hereby required to prohibit any Ship or Veſſel breaking Bulk until the Requiſites of this Act ſhall be complied with, ſhall permit ſuch Ship or Veſſel to break Bulk, ſuch Collector, Comptroller, or Officer ſo permitting ſuch Ship or Veſſel to break Bulk, ſhall forfeit and pay the Sum of Twenty Pounds; One Moiety thereof to be paid to the Informer. Penalty on Officers neglecting Duty.

XIII. And be it further enacted, That One Moiety of the ſeveral pecuniary Penalties hereby impoſed ſhall be payable to the Uſe of His Majeſty, His Heirs and Succeſſors, and the other Moiety to any Perſon who ſhall and will inform and ſue for the ſame, to be recovered with full Coſts of Suit by Action of Debt, Bill, Plaint, or Information, in any of His Majeſty's Courts of Record in *Great Britain*, wherein no Eſſoign, Protection, Privilege, or Wager of Law ſhall be admitted. Penalties how to be applied.

XIV. And be it further enacted, That if any Perſon ſhall forge or counterfeit, or cauſe to be forged or counterfeited any Stamp, Mark of Poſtage, or Deſignation upon any Letter hereby authorized to be ſo ſtamped, marked, or deſignated, with Intent to avoid the Payment of the Rate of Poſtage hereby impoſed, each and every Perſon and Perſons ſo offending ſhall be deemed and taken to be guilty of a Miſdemeanor, to be puniſhed by Fine and Impriſonment, and ſuch Offence, if committed within *Great Britain*, ſhall and may be enquired of, tried, and adjudged, either within the City of *London*, or where the Offence ſhall be committed. Puniſhment of Perſons for forging the Poſt Office Mark.

XV. Provided always, and be it further enacted, That this Act ſhall not extend to reſtrain nor to prevent the *Eaſt India* Company, nor their Court of Directors, from ſending and receiving, and cauſing to be ſent and received to and from any of their Governments and Servants Abroad, all Packets, Letters, and Papers whatſoever, relating to the Affairs, Buſineſs, and Concerns of the ſaid Company, and of their ſeveral Governments Abroad, in the Manner heretofore accuſtomed by the ſaid Company and their Court of Directors, without Payment of any Poſtage or Duty, nor to ſubject any Perſon to any Penalty or Forfeiture in reſpect thereof. Not to extend to the Eaſt India Company.

XVI. And be it further enacted, That from and after the paſſing of this Act it ſhall and may be lawful for the Preſident of the Board of Commiſſioners for the Affairs of *India* for the Time being, to ſend and receive Letters and Packets by the Poſt free from the Duty of Poſtage within the United Kingdom, in the ſame Manner and under ſuch Reſtrictions as the Lord High Chancellor of *Great Britain* is, by an Act paſſed in the Forty-ſixth Year of the Reign of His preſent Majeſty, authorized to ſend and receive Letters and Packets free from Poſtage. Preſident of the Board of Commiſſioners for the Affairs of India to ſend and receive Letters free from Poſtage.

 XVII. And

Members to receive Petitions to Parliament free from Poſtage.

XVII. And be it further enacted, That it ſhall be lawful for every Member of either Houſe of Parliament, to receive by the Poſt any Petition addreſſed to either Houſe of Parliament free from the Duty of Poſtage, ſo as the ſame be ſent in a Cover open at the Sides, and that the ſame ſhall not exceed the Weight of Six Ounces.

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