

Tasmanian Government Railways Parcel and Newspaper Stamps

Newspaper Stamps

From the beginning of November 1891 Tasmanian newspapers sent by rail were carried free but from 1 November 1902 freight on newspapers was to be prepaid by the use of Newspaper Stamps obtainable from stations Hobart, Launceston, Devonport, Burnie, Zeehan, Regatta Point and Strahan.

The following rates applied:

| | |
|---|--|
| Single newspapers not exceeding 10 ozs. were charged ½d per copy. | |
| Packages of newspapers not exceeding 1½ lbs | One penny |
| Ditto above 1½ lbs and not exceeding 3 lbs | Two pence |
| Ditto above 3 lbs and not exceeding 7 lbs | Three pence |
| Ditto above 7 lbs | Quarter parcels rates—with a minimum 3d. |

1920 Newspaper Stamps

The latest date for the use of the title Tasmanian Government Railways seen on stationery or other printed matter is November 1922 and the earliest use of the title Government Railways of Tasmania is February 1923. It is therefore unlikely these stamps appeared before 1923.

1942 Newspaper Stamps

These are usually stated as having been issued in 1938 but as the Transport Commission or Transport Department was not formed until 1 July 1939 they could not have existed before this latter date.

Parcel Tickets or Stamps

It has long been claimed that the Tasmanian Government Railways introduced parcel stamps in 1902 as a result of the ban by the Federal Government on the delivery of mail to Tattersall's lotteries. At this time the use of stamps for parcels traffic was well established, and while carrying Tattersall's mail by rail as parcels circumvented the prohibition, the stamps were not introduced expressly for this purpose.

These were first introduced in May 1886.

A circular issued by the TGR Accountant on 20 May 1886 notified railway staff of their introduction.

A supply of the above which are of two values viz. 3d and 6d in sheets containing 12 can be obtained upon application to the undersigned. Parcel tickets are not to be accepted unless they bear the stamp of this office.

Stamps are to be obliterated by dating immediately on receipt of parcels by the Booking Clerk.

W H Lovett,
Accountant

Their introduction was also advertised in the Launceston Examiner of 20 May 1886.

See <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article39515631> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article39515636>

A similar advertisement also appeared in The Mercury on the same day.

Initially these stamps were only available for stations between Launceston and Formby (later renamed Devonport). This limited availability was still shown in the 1890 rates book, even though they had been available on the Launceston-Scottsdale line in 1889.

The Rates Manual issued in 1891, following the Government takeover of the Main Line between Hobart and Launceston in October 1890, extended their use to all stations.

A 1d stamp was introduced in November 1892 for use by the Tasmanian Dairy Association for the payment on the return of empty milk and cream cans.

There is no evidence that the use of parcel stamps was ever discontinued and they remained in this rather crude format until superseded by the Garratt issues.

The 6d issue stated to be 1904 has a Government Printer job number suggesting a printing date of around 1915.

Garratt and Later Issues

Linking these stamps to the North-East Dundas Tramway is totally erroneous. The locomotive used is an artistic representation of the L and M classes introduced on the main TGR system in 1912.

Only the following denominations were available in the first issue: 3d, 4d, 6d, 9d, 1/-, 1/6, 2/-.

Much more research is needed on the subsequent issues, also on clarifying the carriage of pigeons etc, which have led to much incorrect information being published, some of it unfortunately originating from official sources.

PART 3.—LOCAL RATES.

WESTERN LINE.

PARCEL TICKETS.

For the convenience of customers forwarding parcels by rail, Parcel Tickets, or adhesive stamps will be issued on application to Station-masters.

Parcel Tickets available for any station between Launceston and Formby will be issued as follows :—

| | <i>s.</i> | <i>d.</i> |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| For parcels not exceeding 3 lbs. ... | 0 | 3 to any station |
| For parcels not exceeding 7 lbs. ... | 0 | 6 up to 25 miles |
| For parcels not exceeding 7 lbs. ... | 0 | 9 up to 50 miles |
| For parcels not exceeding 7 lbs. ... | 1 | 0 up to 75 miles |
| For parcels not exceeding 7 lbs. ... | 1 | 3 over 75 miles |

No less quantity than 12 tickets will be sold.

Stamped parcels may be handed into the parcel offices at any Railway Station during the hours the station is open, if fully addressed, without a consignment note, at the risk of the sender.

If forwarded at Railway risk, consignment note and receipt must be used.

Manual of Rates and Regulations for Passenger, Parcels, and Goods Traffic, 1890

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|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| For parcels not exceeding 3 lbs. ... | 0 | 3 to any station |
| For parcels not exceeding 7 lbs. ... | 0 | 6 up to 80 miles |
| For parcels not exceeding 7 lbs. ... | 0 | 9 up to 150 miles |
| For parcels not exceeding 7 lbs. ... | 1 | 0 up to 200 miles |
| For parcels not exceeding 7 lbs. ... | 1 | 3 over 200 miles |

No less quantity than 12 tickets will be sold.

Stamped parcels may be handed into the parcel offices at any Railway Station during the hours the station is open, if fully addressed, without a consignment note, at the risk of the sender.

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Greg Johnston

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