

there was no safe means of communication with Virginia, New England, Jamaica, Barbados and other colonies in America; and he directed the governor to establish a post office within Barbados and the Caribbee Islands.

The post office was to be under the control of the postmaster general of England, to whom the accounts should be sent; and the rates of postage were to be the same as those fixed for England by the act of 1660. Nothing seems to have been done at this time towards establishing a post office in either Virginia or New England.

So far as the interests and convenience of the people of New England were concerned, these in no way suffered from the lack of attention on the part of the home government. The coffee house on the one side, and the tavern on the other, with the vessels passing between as often as business warranted, answered every reasonable demand.

In Virginia it would not appear that the legislature at this period took any steps towards providing a place of deposit and delivery, such as Fairbank's, for letters passing between the colonists and their correspondents beyond the sea. But the want of this convenience caused little restriction on the exchange of letters by means of the trading vessels which visited Jamestown.

New York contained the only other considerable group of settlers at this time. It was a recent acquisition, having passed into the hands of the English in 1664. The Dutch, the former possessors, had arrangements for the exchange of letters with Amsterdam, not dissimilar from those in force in New England. In 1652 the Dutch West India Company informed their director general in New Amsterdam, that having observed that "private parties give their letters to this or that sailor or free merchant, which letters to their great disadvantage are often lost through neglect, remaining forgotten in the boxes or because one or the other removes to another place," they had a box hung up at their place of meeting in which letters might be deposited for despatch by the first vessel sailing; and they directed that the same step might be taken in New Netherland.¹

Seven years later, finding that the people of New Netherland persisted in disregarding the measures taken for the safety of their letters, the company repeated their order, and reinforced it by a fine of one hundred Carolus guilders for each infraction.²

For some years after 1664, the trade between England and its new possession was of small proportions, and the opportunities

¹ *New York Colonial Documents*, XIV. 186.

² *Ibid.*, p. 446.