

PERCY SLOPER'S PERFORMANCE

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A fascinating document came to light when **Stephen Steere** carried out research in the Post Office archives. This was a performance report on Percy Sloper in his role as Sub Postmaster of King William Street, Post Office. Like his father before him the relationship with the Post Office was always a bit prickly in that regular Post Office work clearly got in the way of him running the perforating business. However although he was making good money from the poundage on the half million pounds of stamps he was supplying each year as can be seen from the extracts below he wasn't above asking for a pay rise.

October 8th 1902 - *Secretary (was) asked whether (the) question of salary might be proceeded with. He replied that "...there would seem to be no ground for increasing salary. But in any case the Secretary would not be disposed to consider the question of allowing any further remuneration to the Sub Postmaster, so long as he fails to provide even reasonable accommodation for the public at a Post Office in the important position of King William Street. Only two or at the most three persons can be accommodated at the counter at one time, and it has been represented that the Office is discreditable to the Department and that as many as a dozen people are sometimes seen waiting in the passage or out in the street endeavouring to get inside in order to transact their business. The Secretary has grave doubts indeed whether things should be allowed to continue"*

The Post Office sounds a bit like the offices we have today – some things never change. He let the matter of his salary lie for a couple of years, but clearly he hadn't forgotten as can be seen below.

April 5th 1905 - *It was decided that in the circumstances, no increase in salary and the secretary asked whether the Sub Postmaster had any intention of doing anything to improve the accommodation. The Sub Postmaster, on being written to asked what additional remuneration would be given if an improvement was effected. He was told that the Secretary required to know what he would do for the existing salary and he then replied that he was **unable to do anything**.*

I guess he didn't get the pay rise!