

# Uses and Misuses of Switzerland's Postal Reply Cards in the International Mails to 1906

This postal history exhibit shows uses and misuses of Switzerland's first double reply-paid postal cards in the international mails during the early years of the Universal Postal Union. Available for use were only cards with the early "cross and numeral" design issued from 1874 to 1906. Both recipients and mail clerks found the reply half with its prepaid return to be an enigma. Eleven scarce overpaid or underpaid examples are evidence of this initial wide-spread confusion.

## Organization

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Acceptable use	pp. 6-9	Return postage due	pp. 15-16
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## Background

Marking the period of this exhibit were special UPU rules (in boxes) governing the usage of reply cards.

1879: Swiss mutual agreement with nine UPU members to accept reply-paid cards.

1886: UPU acceptance of reply-paid cards that any member issued on voluntary basis.

1892: UPU obligatory requirement that all members issue reply-paid cards.

## Correct Use

### Pre-UPU Acceptance Period

Initially only the ten signatories of the UPU Special Convention on Reply-Paid Postal Cards in 1879 agreed to return the reply halves of one another's double cards. Besides Switzerland they were Argentina, Belgium (below), German Empire, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Romania and The Netherlands.



By mutual agreement Belgium returned this 1879 reply half of Switzerland's first international double card in 1882. This was four years before the UPU required all its members to return the reply, even those that did not issue reply cards themselves. Rate each way 10c.