

1879.  
—  
VICTORIA.

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R E P O R T

UPON THE AFFAIRS OF THE

POST OFFICE AND TELEGRAPH  
DEPARTMENT

FOR THE YEAR

1878.

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PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND

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By Authority:

JOHN FERRIS, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

# REPORT.

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In accordance with the 57th section of the Act 29 Victoria No. 298, the following Report upon the Post Office and Telegraph Department for 1878 is submitted :—

## GENERAL PROGRESS.

The general progress of the Department may be indicated by a brief summary of the extended facilities afforded to the public, and the increase of business in both the Postal and Telegraph divisions of the service, as undermentioned.

During the year, 64 additional Post Offices and 30 additional Telegraph Offices (including those on the Railway circuit) were opened; 858 miles of new Mail lines were established; and 183 miles of new Telegraph lines erected. Eleven new Money Order Offices and six new Savings Banks were opened. The total number of letters amounted to 22,324,931, as compared with 20,910,958 in 1877, or an increase of  $6\frac{2}{3}$  per cent. The total number of telegrams reached 1,003,654, as against 919,985 in 1877, or an increase of  $9\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. The gross revenue amounted to £251,802 17s. 11d., as compared with £240,627 7s. 8d. in 1877, or an increase of £11,175 10s. 3d., equal to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

Some material changes have been made in the internal working of the General Post Office, which have been attended with very satisfactory results.

For several years the desirableness of establishing a double staff in the Mail branch had been under consideration, but no definite step had been taken to bring such an arrangement into practical operation. Under the former system many of the officers were employed from 5.30 a.m. until 7 p.m., with an occasional interval during the day; and on account of the long hours they were called upon to work, they had to be paid overtime allowances, while at the same time it was found that in many cases the health of the men suffered to a serious extent, as shown by the length of the daily sick list. Moreover, it appeared that the system of paying overtime operated injuriously in various other ways, as it is believed on some occasions to have supplied a motive for dilatoriness in the performance of duties that should be discharged with the utmost promptitude and expedition, and also prevented suitable persons from obtaining the employment that would otherwise be available for them. It was therefore determined, in October last, to establish at once a double staff, one half coming on duty at 4 a.m. and the other not until 9 a.m., the officers taking early and late duty alternately every other month. By this course the mails which arrived at the General Post Office overnight, and which previously could not be sorted in time for re-transmission by the early morning trains, were all completely sorted, and correspondence for the different mail lines despatched onward to destination without delay.

Arrangements were also adopted for effecting an early morning clearance of the city receiving pillars, so that any letters posted during the night would reach the General Post Office in time for the first delivery in Melbourne and suburbs, and for despatch by the early mails to the country, admitting, for example, of a letter posted in any part of Melbourne, say at midnight, being delivered at Ballarat or Sandhurst before noon on the following day. The same facilities were also extended to Collingwood, Fitzroy, Carlton, and Hotham; and early mails were in like manner despatched from the post offices at Sandridge, Emerald Hill, St. Kilda, Prahran, South Yarra, Toorak, and Richmond, to reach the head office by 5 a.m.

The necessity for ensuring an earlier delivery of letters in the suburbs also received attention, and, to effect this object, instead of bringing the letter carriers from the different outlying districts into the General Post Office to sort their letters, &c., and to be sent again to the localities in which they were employed, the correspondence

for each district was forwarded to the local post offices, where the letter carriers were required to attend, whence they started upon their first delivery not later than 8 a.m. ; and in many instances persons were by these means able to receive their correspondence before leaving home for their places of business in the city.

In the Central Electric Telegraph Office it has been found practicable to introduce many important changes, of which the following may be accepted as a brief summary :—

1. Re-arrangement of all leading circuits, wires, lightning arresters, batteries, &c., in such a manner as to materially facilitate the "working" of the office, and to promote more readily the discharge of their duties by the telegraphists employed.
2. Re-grouping of receiving and transmitting instruments. These are now arranged according to their respective circuits within such convenient distance of each other as to secure immediate access from one circuit to another, and thus to advance the work in hand by enabling in some instances a single operator to attend to two or more instruments during certain portions of the day. To each instrument has also been affixed a distinguishing number, and on a card below the number is shown a diagram of all the circuits, including branches, with which the instrument communicates.
3. Equalization of the duties of the double staff, which is now so arranged that the work is performed more satisfactorily than hitherto, while no material increase has been made in the period of attendance, which, unless under special circumstances, does not in any case exceed eight hours.
4. The system of "night signalling" previously in practice has been so modified and improved that under the new arrangement the Melbourne office can be signalled by any country station on the main circuits, and messages passed at any hour of the day or night, Sundays included. This was previously unattainable unless in exceptional cases, and will afford increased means of security in the event of unforeseen disasters either by sea or land.
5. Increased supervision by the officer in charge over every member of the staff and over every detail of the duties in their many ramifications, more particularly the mode of dealing with telegrams between the moment of their receipt at the instrument and their reception by the persons for whom the telegrams may be intended. On the latter point it is believed that a marked improvement has been effected over previous practice.
6. By certain alterations in the interior of the office both branches of the telegraphists' staff, as well as the females employed in the despatch branch, will in future discharge their duties in a single extended apartment having an uninterrupted area, a course similar to that prevailing in the London office. This provides not only a better means for supervision, but the advantage of enabling the officer in charge to interchange telegraphists readily at any of the instruments, as may occasionally be necessary, and to increase the means for a more rapid delivery of telegrams.

In effecting the foregoing modifications the office and its appurtenances have practically undergone a complete reorganization in every branch, with many prospective advantages to the public as well as to the administration of the department.

Instructions have been given for messages to be received at and forwarded from the undermentioned "Night Stations," viz. :—Melbourne, Ballarat, Beechworth, Castlemaine, Echuca, Geelong, Hamilton, Sale, Sandhurst, Stawell, and Warrnambool. The minimum fee for ordinary telegrams transmitted between the above stations after the usual office hours has been reduced from Five shillings to Two shillings up to midnight, and Three shillings after midnight. Press messages were formerly charged Two shillings for one hundred words, and Ninepence for every additional fifty words transmitted between 7.30 p.m. and 11 p.m. ; the same charge is now made on such messages up to midnight.

The number of "Sunday Stations" (that is, stations which transmit and receive telegrams at 9.30 p.m. on Sundays) has been increased from sixteen to twenty-four.

They are Melbourne, Ararat, Ballarat, Beechworth, Belfast, Benalla, Camperdown, Castlemaine, Colac, Dunolly, Echuca, Geelong, Hamilton, Horsham, Inglewood, Maryborough, Portland, Queenscliff, St. Arnaud, Sale, Sandhurst, Stawell, Swan Hill, and Warrnambool. The minimum fee for private telegrams has been reduced from Five shillings to Two shillings, and press messages of 100 words and under are now charged Two shillings, and each additional fifty words or under Ninepence. The fee was formerly Five shillings for 118 words and under, and One halfpenny for each additional word.

The Fire Brigade Station in Little Collins street, Melbourne, has been placed in telegraphic communication with the Central Telegraph Office, and the persons in charge of the various suburban Post and Telegraph Offices have been instructed when they receive information of a fire in their district to immediately telegraph particulars to Melbourne, which will be at once sent by wire to the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Office. As an illustration of the practical advantage of this arrangement, it has been reported that on a recent occasion a fire took place at Flemington, of which not the slightest indication could be seen at the Melbourne look-out; but through the fact being telegraphed by wire (at 2 a.m.), the City Brigade was on the spot in time to prevent the complete destruction of the property, which would otherwise have been inevitable.

The foregoing, among other alterations made to subserve the public interests, necessitated the employment of an additional number of persons in the Mail branch of the General Post Office; but instead of appointing persons new to the service as sorters, the senior letter carriers who were found to be eligible and deserving were advanced to that rank, their places being supplied by assistant letter carriers coming in at the bottom of the list; an increased number of female assistants being also engaged for duties they were capable of efficiently discharging. These arrangements, which have contributed very greatly to the general convenience, were successfully completed without any increase of expenditure.

It may indeed be stated that the additional outlay incurred in effecting the above-mentioned changes—extending Telegraph lines (183 miles), new Mail lines (858 miles), opening new Telegraph Offices (30), new Post Offices (64), providing a double staff in the Mail branch, and showing as far as practicable every reasonable liberality in fixing the remuneration of persons employed in the humbler grades of the service—has been more than met by reducing the claims for overtime and exercising a careful check upon all other items of expenditure, the result being that it is anticipated a saving of not less than £8,000 will be effected out of the amount voted for working expenses of the Department during the financial year.

#### PROPOSED CHANGES IN POSTAL LAW.

Repeated representations have been made by bookselling firms and others interested in the circulation of periodical literature respecting the impolicy of the present rates charged for transmission of magazines and newspapers beyond the borders of Victoria, with a view to obtain a reduction of the postage on magazines and newspapers for the neighboring colonies to the rates now charged on the same class of publications transmitted within Victoria. This, together with some other suggested amendments of the Postal Law, will receive early consideration.

During the last session a resolution of the Legislative Assembly was adopted for the reduction of the postage rate on inland letters to one penny, such reduction to take place from the 1st January 1880; but having regard to the other concessions proposed, which will involve a material loss of revenue, to the anticipated reduction in the amount contributed by the Imperial Government toward the Australian Postal Service, and to the increased expenditure rendered necessary by the new regulations about to be introduced with a view to improve the position of the letter carriers and other subordinate officers of the Department, it will, upon reconsideration, probably be deemed impracticable to carry the above resolution into effect, as it would entail a loss during the first year of probably not less than £49,000, or about one-fourth of the entire postal revenue of the colony.

The system of Government Life Insurances and Annuities established in connection with the Post Office Department of the United Kingdom in 1865 having been found to be productive of beneficial results, both in a social and economic point of view, it has been considered desirable to introduce a similar measure for the special

benefit of the working classes in Victoria, who it may reasonably be expected will readily avail themselves of the facilities so afforded, with the security of a Government guarantee, for making some provision against death or the infirmities of age.

Under the Imperial Act the minimum amount of a Life Insurance Policy is fixed at £20, and the maximum at £100. Immediate and Deferred Annuities for sums not exceeding £50 can be purchased upon payment of a fixed sum or periodical instalments.

The circumstances of the colony, however, warrant the establishment of the system upon a more extended basis, and it is proposed to issue policies and grant annuities to the extent of at least double the maximum amounts mentioned above. A Bill will accordingly be prepared giving effect to this proposition, which it is believed will prove most acceptable to a large portion of the community.

## REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

### Revenue.

The gross Postal Revenue for the years 1877 and 1878, including commission on Money Orders and excluding fractions, was—

1877	...	...	£183,198
1878	...	...	191,515

showing an increase of £8,317, or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

The gross Telegraph Revenue for the years 1877 and 1878 was—

1877	...	...	£57,429
1878	...	...	60,287

showing an increase of £2,858, or 5 per cent.

The total Postal and Telegraph Revenue for 1878 amounted to £251,802, as against £240,627 for 1877, showing an increase of £11,175, or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

### Expenditure.

The gross expenditure of the Department for the year 1878, including collections on account of other Governments and commission to licensed vendors of postage stamps, amounted to £344,522, as against £336,095 for the year 1877, showing an increase of £8,427, or about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

REVENUE.		EXPENDITURE.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Revenue, including postage fees on registered letters, commission on money orders, commission allowed to licensed vendors; also collections on account of other Governments	191,515 5 1	Salaries and wages, occasional assistance, and overtime	162,396 2 6
Electric Telegraph collections, including amounts collected on account of other colonies and the Tasmania Submarine Telegraph Company	60,287 12 10	Contingencies*	30,644 2 3
Deficit	92,719 10 11	Commission to licensed vendors of postage stamps	3,499 9 7
		Mail service (inland), including landing and shipping mails	108,780 4 5
		Gratuities to masters of vessels	1,986 4 1
		Estimated amount of postal collections on account of other Governments	2,800 0 0
		Steam postal communication with Great Britain <i>via</i> Suez, San Francisco, and Torres Straits†	33,931 5 5
		Electric Telegraph collections on account of Tasmanian Submarine Telegraph Company	1,107 19 7
		On account of New South Wales	129 15 1
			1,237 15 8
		Due by other colonies	752 15 1
			485 0 7
	344,522 8 10		344,522 8 10

\* The sum of £10,129 0s. 10d. has also been expended on telegraph lines—formerly borne by the Public Works vote.  
† As nearly as can be ascertained; accounts not all received.

The deficit in 1877 was £95,467; the deficit in above return for 1878 is £92,719 showing a saving of £2,748.

If, however, account be taken of the business performed by the Post and Telegraph Office for the other departments of the public service, for which no payment whatever is made, the above deficit would be very materially reduced. The exemption of all correspondence on Her Majesty's Service from postage and postal fees is estimated during the year to be equivalent at the least to £30,000. As stated at page 31 the value of the telegrams sent on the Government service was ascertained to be £16,523. The postage stamps are wholly manufactured and prepared for issue

STATEMENT showing the Average Number of Days occupied in the Transmission of the Mails between the United Kingdom and Australia by the Suez, Torres Straits, and California Routes respectively during the Year 1878.

Contracting Colony.	Australian Terminus.	Route.	Outward.			Homeward.		
			Average Number of Days occupied per Voyage.			Average Number of Days occupied per Voyage.		
			Via Brindisi.	Via Southampton.	Via San Francisco.	Via Brindisi.	Via Southampton.	Via San Francisco.
Victoria ...	Melbourne	Suez ...	Days hrs. min.	Days hrs. min.	...	Days hrs. min.	Days hrs. min.	Days hrs. min.
Queensland...	Brisbane	Torres Straits	50 23 4	59 7 44	...	53 3 41	60 7 23	...
New South Wales }	Sydney ...	California ...	...	...	46 5 8	...	...	45 7 23

STATEMENT showing the Time occupied in the Voyage by the undermentioned Steamships of the Orient Line between Plymouth and Melbourne, *via* the Cape of Good Hope, during the Year 1878.

Name of Steamer.	Date of Departure from Plymouth.	Date of Arrival in Melbourne.	Duration of Voyage.
Lusitania ...	December 8, 1877	January 21, 1878	Days 44
Chimborazo ...	January 25, 1878	March 12, "	46
Garonic ...	March 8, "	April 24, "	47
Cuzco ...	April 20, "	June 17, "	58
Aconcagua ...	May 20, "	July 5, "	46
Lusitania ...	July 1, "	August 17, "	47
Garonic ...	August 1, "	September 16, "	46
Chimborazo ...	September 2, "	October 18, "	46
Cuzco ...	September 30, "	November 15, "	46
Aconcagua ...	October 28, "	December 12, "	45

NOTE.—The average time occupied per voyage was 47 days 2 hours and 24 minutes.

STATEMENT showing the Time occupied in the Voyage by the undermentioned Steamships between Plymouth and Melbourne, *via* the Cape of Good Hope, during the Year 1878.

Name of Steamer.	Date of Departure from Plymouth.	Date of Arrival in Melbourne.	Duration of Voyage.
Kent ...	November 17, 1877	January 3, 1878	Days 47
Whampoa ...	November 26, "	January 14, "	49
Somersetshire ...	January 3, 1878	February 27, "	55
Durham ...	February 16, "	April 11, "	54
Northumberland ...	March 30, "	May 23, "	54
Kent ...	May 17, "	July 8, "	52
Somersetshire ...	June 21, "	August 14, "	54
Whampoa ...	August 3, "	September 21, "	49
Durham ...	August 8, "	September 28, "	51
Hankow ...	September 18, "	November 5, "	48
Northumberland ...	September 20, "	November 11, "	52
Kent ...	November 7, "	December 28, "	51

NOTE.—The average time occupied per voyage was 51 days 8 hours.

## ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS.

### *Duplication of the Telegraph Cable.*

Consequent upon a resolution adopted at the Conference of delegates from the several Australasian colonies held in Sydney in January 1877, negotiations were opened with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company respecting duplication of the cable, which resulted (as stated in last year's report) in a proposal being submitted by the company to lay a second cable from Singapore direct to Banjoewangie, avoiding the Java lines, and thence direct to Port Darwin, in consideration of an annual subsidy of £32,400.

No conclusion was, however, arrived at respecting this proposal, but arrangements were made for holding a further Conference, which took place in Melbourne during May 1878, when delegates from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania, met the Chief Secretary and Postmaster-General of Victoria, and, after discussing the whole question of the duplication of the telegraph lines between Australia and Europe and the different routes suggested, the following resolutions were agreed to :—

- “ That in the opinion of this Conference provision should be made as early as practicable for ensuring greater certainty of telegraphic communication between Great Britain and the Australian colonies and New Zealand.”
- “ That the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria be empowered to enter into an agreement and contract with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company for a second cable from Singapore direct to Banjoewangie, avoiding the Java land lines, and thence direct to Port Darwin, for an annual subsidy of not exceeding £32,400.”
- “ That such subsidy shall be payable for a period of not more than twenty years, and that in consideration thereof the said company—
- “ (1.) Shall, throughout the whole of the period during which such subsidy shall be payable, maintain in full working order such second cable, and also its present lines of cable between Singapore and Batavia, and Banjoewangie and Port Darwin.
  - “ (2.) Shall, before such subsidy shall become payable, lay a second cable between Singapore and Penang, and thereafter shall maintain the same, and its present lines of cable between Singapore and Penang, Penang and Madras, Madras and Rangoon, in full working order.”
- “ That the Eastern Extension Company should, without any additional subsidy, other than already agreed to for the duplication of the line from Singapore to Port Darwin, reduce their charge for governmental messages between England and Port Darwin to the extent of 50 per cent., and their charges for press messages to the extent of 75 per cent., on the present rates.”
- “ That provision be made in the contract with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company for the purchase, by the combined colonies, of the duplicate cable, on equitable terms, at any time during the currency of the subsidy.”
- “ That in calculating the amount of subsidy to be paid to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, the actual cost of the duplicate cable shall be the basis.”
- “ That the cost of the subsidy be paid by the different Australasian colonies ratably in proportion to their respective populations.
- “ That, in the first instance, the populations of the several colonies, as officially estimated on 31st December 1876, shall be the basis of the proportionate allotment of cost to each.
- “ That such contributions shall be readjusted on the basis of the populations of the several colonies as shown by the next general census, and thereafter once every five years.”
- “ That whilst the Conference has not made any provision for the duplication, at the present time, of the continental line of telegraph from Port Darwin, the Representatives of the different Colonies expressly reserve for confederate action a future decision on this important point, and empower the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria, before entering into and making any contract with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company for the construction of the second cable between Port Darwin and Singapore, to receive an engagement from South Australia to co-operate with the other Australian colonies in constructing and maintaining a new line of Telegraph from Port Darwin, to be connected with the telegraphic system of Queensland. Provided that, in the event of such line being decided upon, South Australia shall not be called upon to contribute thereto.”

In accordance with the resolution passed at the Conference, the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales signed a preliminary agreement (*see* Appendix O) with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company for the construction and maintenance of the cable as described for an annual subsidy of £32,400.

The portion of the annual subsidy for the second cable to be paid by Victoria amounts to about £11,000.

The Government of South Australia has notified its willingness to construct and maintain, at the request of the Governments interested, the new Telegraph line from Port Darwin, as mentioned in the last resolution.

#### *Cipher Rates.*

Some correspondence has taken place respecting the recent enforcement of the rule of the St. Petersburg convention, which requires payment of cipher rates on telegrams containing groups of figures, a rule which had not hitherto been strictly observed, and the instructions to insist upon this charge occasioned considerable dissatisfaction to members of the mercantile community, who, not anticipating any alteration of the practice, had arranged for the use of codes by their home correspondents. A representation upon the subject was made to the agent of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, who communicated with the Director-General in London, but without obtaining any modification of the rule in question.

Steps have, however, been taken to secure, if possible, representation of the Australian Governments at a Telegraph Convention to be held in London in June; and the Agent-General has been requested to cause consideration to be given to the following points affecting the telegraphic business of the colonies:—

1. Absolute uniformity of practice throughout all connecting lines between England and Australia in relation to codification of telegrams, and especially the cipher code.
2. Correction of errors in transmission by repeating telegrams, free of charge to the receiver.
3. Prompt notification to the terminals of any cause of intermediate interruption on sea or land lines, and the probable duration of such cause for delay in telegrams.
4. Reduction in tariff rates on *through* telegrams, on the basis of a lower proportionable rate over intermediate land and sea lines.

#### *Telephones.*

The branch establishments of several business places in Melbourne and the suburbs are now connected with their head offices by means of telephones. The great drawback to the utility of these instruments when first introduced was the difficulty of calling the attention of the person desired to be spoken to. This has been overcome by the attachment of signal bells to the wire, and the use of telephones for business purposes has proved to be a great convenience.

The greatest length of wire on which telephones are at present regularly employed is about five miles.

#### *Telegraph Lines, Additional Wires, Extensions, etc.*

One of the most frequent causes of interruption to telegraphic communication within the colony is the destruction of the porcelain insulators affixed to the telegraph poles, and which appear to afford a favorite target for the stone-throwing dexterity of larrikins and others. To such an extent has this wilful damage of public property been carried that probably not fewer than 5,000 insulators have been thus deliberately broken during the last year, involving a very considerable expense to replace them.

In many cases the damage is known to be caused by woodcarters and children attending public schools, and it has accordingly been found necessary to notify by placard in the various districts that, under the 44th, 45th, and 46th sections of the Act 37 Vict. No. 455, any person who shall unlawfully or maliciously injure or attempt to injure anything whatsoever, being part of or used in or about any electric telegraph, shall be liable to imprisonment or a fine of Ten pounds; also, if any person be found so offending, any other person may, with or without warrant, apprehend such offender.

The large and increasing number of telegrams sent free, as "On Her Majesty's Service," calls for special remark. The returns show that 236,259 of such messages were transmitted during the past year, the cash value of which is £16,523, being nearly equal to one-fourth of the amount of the total revenue derived from telegraphic business. The number of Government messages transmitted in 1877 was 190,549, consequently there has been an increase of nearly twenty-four per cent.

There can be no doubt that the telegraph is in many cases unnecessarily used by Government officers when the business could equally well be transacted by letter; and not infrequently the messages relate to matters that can scarcely be considered official business. Moreover, but little care seems to be exercised to compress or curtail these messages into the concise language that should be employed for telegraphic communications.

It is pointed out that the extraordinary number of Government messages take up a great deal of the time of the officers of the Department, and occupy the wires to such an extent as to delay the delivery of private telegrams, which are often of an important and pressing nature; and it is hoped now that attention is again called to the matter that officers will in future be careful only to use the telegraph when absolutely necessary, and then to put their messages in the briefest possible form.

The charge for private wires and telegraph instruments rented by mercantile firms and others has been reduced to the following rates, viz. :—

Rent of wire per mile ... ..	£5
Rent of instruments, each ... ..	£5

A total length of about fifty miles of wire is rented by twenty-four establishments.

The Government of New South Wales has been invited to concur in an arrangement for receiving and transmitting press telegrams between Victoria and New South Wales up to 11 p.m. at the present ordinary rate, instead of double charges being collected after 8 p.m. as at present.

Communication has been extended from Flemington to Newmarket, from Geelong to the Racecourse, from Fryerstown to Vaughan, and from the Custom House, Melbourne to the Powder Magazine at Footscray.

The following extensions are in progress, surveys have been effected, or tenders have been invited for the work :—Preston to Yan Yean and Whittlesea, Tallarook to Yea, St. Arnaud to Donald, Casterton to Merino.

Along the routes of railways, wires have been erected between Bunyip and Morwell, Winchelsea and Birregurra, Clunes and Creswick, and between Wangaratta and Beechworth (partly on iron poles). The poles on the Williamstown line are being replaced with arm poles, which have also superseded those hitherto in use at Castlemaine, Geelong, Maryborough, Sandhurst, and Warrnambool.

Small deviations have been effected at Avoca and Dromana.

Repairs to the following lines, more or less extensive, have been effected or are in progress, viz. :—Between Hamilton and Mortlake, Brighton and Frankston, Alexandra and Wood's Point, Melbourne and Echuca, Melbourne and Ballarat, Melbourne and Wodonga, Geelong and Queenscliff, Rosedale and Walhalla, Seymour and Rushworth, Casterton and the South Australian border, and to the Castlemaine, Beechworth, Cape Otway, and Port Albert lines.

As a safeguard against bush fires, the wooden poles over a considerable extent of country have been coated with a composition of silicate of soda and cement, and it is expected that by this precaution a considerable proportion of interruptions, and consequent expenditure, will be avoided.

STATEMENT of Expenditure for Telegraph Lines, Stations, etc., for 1878.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Total Expenditure for Lines, Stations, &c., up to 31st December 1877 ... ..				505,343	17	0
EXPENDITURE DURING 1878.						
Main Extension of Lines, &c., to 31st December ... ..	10,139	0	10			
New Buildings and Repairs to existing Buildings ... ..	29,338	13	7			
				39,477	14	5
CURRENT EXPENDITURE DURING 1878.						
Rent of Temporary Offices ... ..				4544,731	11	5
				42,791	9	8

## Local and Intercolonial Business.

STATEMENT showing the Victorian and Intercolonial Business for the Years 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, and 1878.

	1869.			1870.			1871.			1872.			1873.		
	Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.	
* Between Victorian Stations ..	194,561	£ 24,134	s. 7	303,332	£ 22,991	s. 18	430,290	£ 27,274	s. 14	506,617	£ 31,544	s. 15	521,489	£ 32,780	s. 16
From—															
Victoria to New South Wales ..	12,943	5,640	1 3	15,735	5,643	5 9	23,493	5,547	8 3	23,148	6,623	8 3	26,844	7,693	13 11
New South Wales to Victoria ..	13,540	5,730	2 5	14,203	5,398	13 8	21,165	5,095	17 7	25,353	6,769	0 8	27,195	7,834	5 10
Victoria to Queensland ..	934	598	8 11	1,080	540	1 6	1,607	643	4 0	2,540	1,016	10 10	2,762	1,184	14 7
Queensland to Victoria ..	1,113	698	16 9	1,514	757	1 8	1,970	788	5 10	2,629	1,307	12 8	3,379	1,637	4 8
Victoria to South Australia ..	7,101	2,829	7 6	5,332	2,280	14 8	14,349	2,171	19 2	12,571	2,215	10 11	17,208	2,291	3 10
South Australia to Victoria ..	6,163	2,157	11 8	7,742	1,892	5 3	12,563	1,797	10 3	10,813	2,095	15 10	19,541	2,749	14 3
Victoria to Tasmania ..	2,187	1,078	15 1	4,485	1,754	9 8	5,791	1,504	11 4	5,099	1,647	12 0	5,445	1,973	8 8
Tasmania to Victoria ..	2,313	1,108	16 0	4,825	1,940	10 0	4,505	1,392	15 2	3,943	1,181	8 7	4,455	1,523	2 0

  

	1874.			1875.			1876.			1877.			1878.		
	Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.	
* Between Victorian Stations ..	599,658	£ 30,945	s. 2	533,335	£ 33,129	s. 10	560,928	£ 36,283	s. 9	616,996	£ 39,144	s. 1	641,383	£ 40,860	s. 4
From—															
Victoria to New South Wales ..	48,624	7,024	3 8	57,515	8,016	10 3	64,360	5,807	1 0	70,410	10,681	17 3	76,599	11,323	9 2
New South Wales to Victoria ..	51,375	7,750	6 4	62,318	8,792	18 4	71,021	9,066	4 8	78,938	10,931	8 2	85,157	11,597	19 10
Victoria to Queensland ..	5,762	1,141	18 7	7,415	1,687	14 8	8,817	1,794	14 8	10,245	2,147	9 11	6,745	2,002	0 9
Queensland to Victoria ..	7,121	1,757	7 6	9,557	2,355	14 7	10,936	2,555	15 2	15,113	3,507	10 11	17,827	2,723	13 3
Victoria to South Australia ..	11,001	5,264	9 4	13,987	3,018	2 5	21,792	3,694	13 5	24,237	4,871	3 6	28,265	3,761	8 3
South Australia to Victoria ..	18,214	2,617	7 6	21,409	3,102	8 10	24,161	3,689	3 4	27,024	4,589	17 8	31,016	5,135	8 7
Victoria to Tasmania ..	5,885	1,350	7 11	6,292	1,378	10 3	7,041	1,437	11 5	6,773	1,281	0 6	8,988	1,673	15 7
Tasmania to Victoria ..	4,696	1,732	3 11	4,892	1,673	19 0	5,990	1,847	15 0	5,717	1,897	9 10	6,543	3,135	16 0
Victoria to Western Australia ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	275	73	19 4	2,310	836	16 3
Western Australia to Victoria ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	455	102	10 3	2,745	732	17 5

\* Exclusive of the number and value of messages O.H.M.S.

Note.—Victoria .. .. Reduced rate of 1s. for 10 words came into operation 1st January 1870.  
 New South Wales .. .. Reduced rate from 2s. to 2s. for 10 words came into operation 1st November 1873.  
 Queensland .. .. Reduced rate from 6s. to 3s. for 10 words came into operation 1st November 1873.  
 South Australia .. .. Reduced rate from 6s. to 2s. for 10 words came into operation 1st August 1876.  
 Tasmania .. .. Reduced (cable) rate from 5s. to 4s. for 10 words came into operation 1st January 1876.

STATEMENT showing the Extension of Telegraph Lines in the Australasian Colonies during 1878, also Lines in Progress, &c.

Colony.	Lines Erected.		Lines Dismantled.		Lines in Progress at end of Year.		Total Number of Miles at end of Year.		Number of Stations Opened.	Number of Stations Closed.	Total Number of Stations at end of Year.
	No. of Miles of Line.	No. of Miles of Wire.	No. of Miles of Line.	No. of Miles of Wire.	No. of Miles of Line.	No. of Miles of Wire.	No. of Miles of Line.	No. of Miles of Wire.			
Victoria ..	183½	360	98	156	44½	44½	2,970½	5,403½	29	2	233
New South Wales ..	1,078	1,999	..	..	149	149	4,078	11,760	35	..	236
South Australia ..	156½	532½	..	..	764½	764½	4,217½	5,680½	7	..	131
Queensland ..	308½	326½	..	..	322	667½	5,410	7,125	15	1	144
Tasmania * ..	147	147	..	..	31	31	692	910	13	..	59
New Zealand † ..	175	272	..	..	..	90	3,434	8,035	28	..	182
Western Australia ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,568½	1,572	..	..	26

\* The particulars furnished do not include the main line railway circuit, consisting of 133 miles of line and wire and 12 stations.

† The particulars furnished to the returns from New Zealand are for the financial year ended 30th June 1878.

STATEMENT showing Australasian Business transacted with Europe and the East for the Year 1878.

Colonies.	Received.				Transmitted.				Total.	
	Number of Messages.		Value.		Number of Messages.		Value.		Number of Messages.	Value.
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
Victoria ..	3,383	35,670	13 4	2,596	26,499	9 8	5,979	52,170	3 0	
South Australia ..	1,685	10,316	19 10	1,190	8,499	3 9	2,875	18,816	3 7	
New South Wales ..	2,598	18,047	1 5	2,546	20,899	12 4	5,144	38,946	13 9	
Queensland ..	321	2,478	5 1	392	2,985	0 0	713	5,465	5 1	
Tasmania ..	84	542	16 5	83	701	9 9	167	1,244	6 2	
New Zealand ..	1,105	9,192	16 1	1,177	9,359	11 7	2,282	18,552	7 8	
Western Australia ..	107	501	13 3	97	551	9 5	204	1,053	2 8	
Totals ..	9,283	76,750	5 5	8,081	69,495	16 6	17,364	136,246	1 11	

STATEMENT showing the Telegraphic Interruptions which have taken place in the Submarine Cables during the Year 1878.

Cable.	Period of Interruption.			Where Interrupted.
	From	To	No. of Days.	
India and Australia ... ..	Jan. 1 ...	Jan. 13 ...	13	Between Rangoon and Penang.
" " ... ..	March 23...	April 7 ...	16	" " " "
" " ... ..	Oct. 1 ...	Oct. 4 ...	4	" Singapore and Penang.
" " ... ..	Nov. 30 ...	Dec. 1 ...	2	" " " "
" " ... ..	Dec. 14 ...	Dec. 15 ...	2	" " " "
" " ... ..	Jan. 22 ...	Feb. 14 ...	24	" " and Batavia.
" " ... ..	May 1 ...	May 9 ...	9	" " " "
" " ... ..	May 16 ...	May 16 ...	1	" " " "
" " ... ..	Oct. 18 ...	Oct. 18 ...	1	" " " "
" " ... ..	Oct. 27 ...	Oct. 31 ...	5	" " " "
" " ... ..	Nov. 1 ...	Nov. 1 ...	1	" " " "
" " ... ..	Dec. 28 ...	Dec. 31 ...	4	" " " "
" " ... ..	Sept. 26 ...	Oct. 5 ...	10	" Banjoewangie and Port Darwin.
Tasmania and Victoria ...	May 11 ...	May 16 ...	6	2 miles from Flinders.
" " ... ..	June 12 ...	June 22 ...	11	" " " "

RETURN showing Net Revenue from 1st January to 31st December 1878.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Cash receipts paid into Treasury, from 1st January to 31st December 1878	60,287	12	10			
Less amount due to other colonies on account of intercolonial business for same period :-						
Bass Cable Company ... ..	£1,107	19	7			
New South Wales ... ..	129	16	1			
				1,237	15	8
Amount due by other colonies on account of intercolonial business for same period :-						
South Australia ... ..	£374	5	3			
Tasmania ... ..	299	11	0			
Queensland ... ..	138	18	10			
				752	15	1
						59,049 17 2
						752 15 1
						£59,302 12 3

CHANGES IN THE STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT.

Mr. W. Turner resumed duty, after an absence of seven months on leave to visit England, on the 1st April, but being attacked with sudden and serious illness on the 29th August following, Mr. T. W. Jackson, the Assistant Secretary, was appointed to take temporary charge of the Department. On the 17th December, Mr. Turner retired from the service upon a superannuation allowance under the provisions of the Civil Service Act, and Mr. Jackson was appointed by the Governor in Council to succeed him as Deputy Postmaster-General and General Superintendent of Electric Telegraphs.

Captain Bance, R.N., Inspector of Postal and Telegraph Service, having for some time suffered from ill-health, retired from the service with a superannuation allowance on the 25th April.

Mr. Smibert, the Cashier, was promoted to the position of Chief Clerk, and Mr. Longcroft, of the Accounts branch, to the office of Cashier.

The practice of employing female assistants was further extended during the year, and there are now 80 females employed in the department, exclusive of 43 in charge of post and telegraph offices in the country.

On the 14th October 1878 the formation of a double staff for the Mail branch, which had been contemplated for some years past, was commenced, and has been found conducive to the more efficient working of the branch, and also to the convenience of the public.

The practice of employing officers after their recognised hours of duty, and paying them for overtime, has consequently been discontinued, except on special occasions.

During the year the services of 13 officers were dispensed with, 16 retired, 26 resigned, and 7 died.

The appointment of a medical officer for special duty in connection with the Post and Telegraph Department, which now numbers in the Melbourne office alone a staff of 564 persons, has become almost a necessity.

For many years past medical gentlemen have been attached not only to the General Post Office in London, but also to the post offices in the chief provincial towns

of England, an arrangement which is reported to have proved most successful. Their duties are stated to be as follow :—

“ To examine all candidates for appointment.

“ To attend, either at the office or at their own homes, all servants whose pay does not exceed £150 per annum, and even to those whose pay exceeds that amount, to give advice during an epidemic.

“ To visit, on the requisition of the postmaster, any one absenting himself from duty on the plea of illness.

“ To certify as to the unfitness or otherwise for further duty of all applicants for superannuation.

“ To attend especially to the sanitary condition of the post office.”

The great benefit that would accrue to the Department from the appointment of a gentleman to perform somewhat similar duties to those mentioned above will be at once apparent. Absences on account of illnesses caused by improper conduct would be detected, malingering would be checked, and, by the medical officer exercising a general supervision over the various post and telegraph buildings in regard to their sanitary and hygienic improvement, the health of the officers would be conserved ; and without doubt a large portion of the amount at present expended for the employment of extra hands to take the places of those absent on account of illness would be saved.

It has, therefore, been decided to make provision on the Estimates of next financial year for appointment of a medical officer for the Post Office and Telegraph Department, who will act as referee in all questions affecting the health of the various officers employed.

The present regulations relating to the appointment, promotion, etc., of telegraph messengers, letter carriers, sorters, and others have not been found to work satisfactorily, and new regulations are therefore in course of preparation, based upon the principle of all persons employed in the unclassified grades of the service entering at the minimum rate of pay and gradually working their way upwards, thus providing for telegraph messengers the prospect of advancement either to the grade of telegraph operators, if they evince the requisite capacity, or, otherwise upon their attaining the proper age, to the post of letter carriers, and these only, according to length of service and merit, being considered eligible for promotion to the rank of sorters.

The rates of pay will also be revised with a view to place this class of public servants in a position more commensurate with the responsible and often arduous duties they are called upon to perform.

STATEMENT showing the Strength and Distribution of the Permanent and Temporary Staff of the Department.

Office.	Postmistress and Telegraph Managers.	Officers, Clerks, and Operatives.	Sorters.	Instrument Filers.	Letter carriers and Messengers.	File carriers and sorters.	Printers, Ac., and Assistants.	Messenger and Postmen.	Office-boys and Messengers.	Gas Engineer, Carpenters, Night-watchmen, and Cleaners.	Superannuates and Assistants.	Female Assistants.	Total.	Remarks.
Melbourne ...	155	94	6	75	11	13	8	43	10	98†	52	564	5 supernumeraries employed on arrival of European mail	
Alexandra ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Arauc ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Avoos ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Avesel ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Baculus Marsh* ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Bairnsdale ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Baitan* ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Bellarat ...	1	6	4	...	19	1	...	9	9	...	...	3	45	11 supernumeraries employed on arrival of European mail
Beaufort ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	9	
Beechworth ...	1	1	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	9	
Belfast ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	6	
Benalla ...	1	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	
Berwick* ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	
Bierregarra* ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Bright ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Brighton* ...	1	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	
Bulu Bulu ...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	
Buninyong* ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Camperdown ...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	
Cape Otway ...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Cape Schanck* ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Caramut ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Carisbrook ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	
Ceriton ...	1	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	
Costeron ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	3	
Castlemaine ...	1	1	1	...	5	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	11	
Chiltern* ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Clunes ...	1	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Colne ...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Coleraine* ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Collingwood ...	1	1	1	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12	
Creswick ...	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Dandenong ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	

\* Postmistress paid out of Contingencies.

† These supernumeraries are only employed a portion of each month ; and 15 are employed as laborers on the telegraph lines.

RETURN of the Officers, &c., of the Melbourne Establishment Absent from Duty on account of Illness during the Year 1878.

Branch.	Officers, &c.		Number of Days Absent.	Remarks.
	Number Employed.	Number Absent.		
Correspondence branch ... ..	11	7	15	
Accounts branch ... ..	11	8	73	One officer absent 29 days, and one 18 days.
Mail branch ... ..	78	47	412	One officer absent 80 days, one 30 days, and seven during 137 days.
Money Order and Savings Bank branch	25	9	45	One officer absent 12 days.
Stamp branch ... ..	7	3	28	One officer absent 26 days.
Hand Letter branch ... ..	5	3	13	
Stores and Printing branch ... ..	56	14	174	One officer absent 156 days.
Electric Telegraph branch ... ..	78	39	373	One officer absent 111 days, one 50 days, one 45 days, and six during 85 days.

Out of thirty letter carriers, seventeen were absent during 713 days. Of this number one was absent 199 days, one 101 days, one 30 days, and four during 219 days; six were absent during 6-04 days.

Out of sixty telegraph messengers, seven were absent during 42 days, one of whom was absent during 29 days.

Out of twenty-eight female assistants employed in the Telegraph Office, nine were absent during 150 days, three of whom were absent during 103 days.

#### BUILDINGS.—GENERAL POST OFFICE.

The want of additional accommodation for carrying on the constantly increasing work of the Head Office is felt more and more pressingly every year, and arrangements for improving the organization and management of the various branches of the Department are greatly impeded by the non-completion of the General Post Office building. The rental of a building in which to conduct temporarily the business of the Central Telegraph Office will shortly become a matter of imperative necessity, and the adoption of measures for providing adequate and permanent accommodation for both divisions of the service will doubtless receive the earliest possible attention. In the meantime some improvement has been effected in connection with the Telegraph branch, by enlarging the despatch and messengers' rooms, and also the battery room, and cleansing the premises generally.

A much needed alteration is about to be made forthwith in the removal of the present inconvenient delivery windows, and the substitution of a lobby and counter, at which applicants for letters, etc., can, without difficulty or the risk of misunderstanding, speak to the officers attending, who will also be protected from the cold draughts which have formerly, in many cases, proved a source of discomfort and ill-health.

A new bill room has also been erected for the Mail branch, and carpenters' and engineers' workshops provided in connection with the Stores branch.

#### OTHER BUILDINGS.

The new buildings at Hamilton, Maryborough, Penhurst, and Prahran have been completed and occupied.

The buildings in course of erection at Alexandra and Echuca will be ready for occupation at the beginning of the year, and at Clunes and Horsham about October next.

Additions, alterations, and repairs, more or less extensive, have been effected at Beaufort, Camperdown, Hawthorn, Heathcote, Kilmore, Koroit, Kyneton, Maldon, St. Arnaud, St. Kilda, Sale, Sandridge, and Stawell.

Premises have been rented at Charlton East, Clunes (temporarily), Gordon, and Mount Egerton.

Iron receiving pillars have been erected at Melbourne, Carlton, Fitzroy, Emerald Hill, Portland, and Sandhurst.

#### NEW POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICES, ETC.

Sixty-four new Post Offices were opened in 1878 at the places named below :—

Archdale	Chinaman's Creek	Kangaroo	Loddon Vale	Strathbogie
Bahgalah	Clear Lake	Katamatite	Macorna	Swanwater
Bald Rock	Codrington	Kialla East	Milloo	Tantaraboo
Beaconsfield	Costerfield South	Kooroc	Nathalia	Tarrayoukyan
Beenak	Deep Creek	Kororoit Creek	Ninyennook	Toolamba North
Bonegilla	Dookie	Korweinguboorra	Northwood	Top Creek
Box Forest	Eastbrook	Kyabram	Numurkah	Truganina
Bueben	Gunnawarra	Kyabram East	Picola	Tringowel
Bungelake North	Garup	Lake Charm	Pootilla	Waterloo
Burramine West	Girgarre East	Lake Marmal	Poowong	Wickliffe Road (Railway Station)
Burreroo	Hanson South	Lang Lang	Puckapanyal	Williamstown North
Canary Island	Hawkington	Lardner	Salisbury West	Woodlands
Charlotte Plains	Janiember East	Leichardt	Springmount	

The Post Offices at Deptford, Gong Gong, Gooley's Creek, Italian Gully, and Koctong have been closed.

The names of the following offices have been changed :—Broken Creek to "Devenish;" Dargo Flat to "Dargo;" Devenish to "Major Plains;" Drouin to "Jindivick;" Drouin Junction to "Drouin;" Jindivick to "Drouin West;" Katandra to "Dunbulbalane;" Kewell West to "Murra Warra;" Khull's Range to "Katandra;" Ulupna West to "Yielima;" and Wyuna to "St. Germain's."

A Travelling Post Office has been opened on the Railway line between Ararat and Stawell; and Travelling Post Offices have also been established on the Gippsland line in connection with the Up and Down morning trains.

Post Office Savings Banks have been opened at the following places :—

Balmoral	Charlton East	Ringwood	Sorrento
Bulu Bulu	Euroa		

Money Order Offices in connection with Post Offices have been established at the undermentioned places :—

Bethanga	Flemington	Lake Mundi	Timor
Cope Cope	Glenorchy	Maroona	Wandiligong
Euroa	Heyfield	Pakenham	

The Money Order Office opened in connection with the Receiving House at Mount Blackwood has been closed.

Telegraphic communication has been extended to the localities named below, the duties in connection therewith being conducted at the respective Post Offices at those places :—

Charlton East	Guildford	Toongabbie	Vaughan
Cudgee	Mount Egerton		

Telegraph Offices in connection with the Railway Circuit have been opened at the following places :—

Ararat	Colac	Inglewood	Sale
Avoca	Condah	Lara	Springs
Bealiba	Dunolly	Moe	Traralgon
Beechworth	Essendon	Murtoa	Warrigal
Berwick	Glenthompson	Oakleigh	Williamstown Junction
Clunes	Hamilton	Portland	Winchelsea

The Telegraph Office at Keilor Road has been closed.

The number of Post Offices on the 31st December 1878 was 1,007.

The postal receptacles in Melbourne and suburbs now number 183.

In consequence of the increase of business, and in order to expedite the letter delivery, it has been found necessary to appoint seven additional Letter Carriers as follows :—One for Melbourne, one for North Fitzroy, one for St. Kilda, one for Richmond, one for Toorak, one for South Yarra, and one for East Melbourne.

Two Letter Carriers have been appointed for Kew, where two deliveries are now effected daily.

The weekly half-holiday granted to the Letter Carriers in Melbourne and the suburbs having been found to work satisfactorily without occasioning any serious public inconvenience, the boon has been conceded to the Letter Carriers in the country districts. In the majority of cases the half-holiday is, as in Melbourne, allowed on Saturday; but, to meet local requirements, in some places it is observed on another day. In Castlemaine, Kyneton, and Sandhurst the half-holiday is given on Wednesday, and in Brighton on Thursday.

It may be mentioned that persons desirous of receiving correspondence which, but for the half-holiday, would be delivered by carrier, can obtain it upon application at the Post Office.

Now that the first morning delivery by carrier in Melbourne and the suburbs is effected at an earlier hour than heretofore, it would often prevent the detention of correspondence if letter-boxes were attached to the doors of places of business not open by the time of the letter-carriers' first attendance; it is therefore recommended that such boxes should be more generally provided, care being taken that the aperture or slip is so fixed as to prevent the contents of the box being removable from without through imperfect construction.

#### POSTAGE STAMPS.

Envelopes with the one penny (1d.) stamp embossed were issued on the 1st March. No new stamp has been issued during the year.

One hundred and forty-eight new postage-stamp licenses have been issued, and forty-six revoked, making the total number at the close of the year 901, being an increase on 1877 of 14 $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent.

The following statement shows the denomination, number, and value of Postage Stamps manufactured and issued at the General Post Office during the year 1878 :—

Manufactured.			Issued.		
Denomination.	Number.	Value.	Denomination.	Number.	Value.
		£ s. d.			£ s. d.
Halfpenny stamps ...	5,973,600	12,445 0 0	Halfpenny stamps...	5,432,282	11,317 5 1
One penny stamps ...	5,616,000	23,400 0 0	One penny stamps ...	5,116,112	21,317 2 8
One penny post cards ...	799,794	3,332 9 6	One penny post cards ...	782,100	3,258 15 0
One penny stamped newspaper wrappers	15,776	65 14 8	One penny stamped newspaper wrappers	21,401	89 3 5
One penny stamped envelopes	37,535	156 7 11	One penny stamped envelopes	35,524	148 0 4
Twopenny stamps ...	14,046,960	117,058 0 0	Twopenny stamps...	13,951,427	116,261 17 10
Twopenny stamped envelopes	71,516	595 19 4	Twopenny stamped envelopes	71,516	595 19 4
Twopence-farthing stamped envelopes	7,224	67 14 6	Twopence-farthing stamped envelopes	4,140	38 16 3
Threepenny stamps ...	120,000	1,500 0 0	Threepenny stamps ...	72,037	900 9 3
Sixpenny stamps ...	738,000	18,450 0 0	Fourpenny stamps ...	202,735	3,378 18 4
Eightpenny stamps ...	180,000	6,000 0 0	Sixpenny stamps ...	584,061	14,691 10 6
One shilling stamps ...	60,000	3,000 0 0	Eightpenny stamps ...	128,606	4,286 17 4
Two shilling stamps ...	12,000	1,200 0 0	One shilling stamps ...	77,648	3,882 8 0
Five shilling stamps ...	6,000	1,500 0 0	One shilling stamped telegraph forms	283	14 3 0
			Two shilling stamps ...	17,007	1,700 14 0
			Five shilling stamps ...	5,928	1,482 0 0
Totals ...	27,684,405	188,771 5 11	Totals ...	26,502,807	183,274 0 4

### FEE AND FREIGHT STAMPS.

Besides the postage stamps mentioned above, stamps for the payment of Court fees and freight stamps for the Railway Department, as shown in the following returns, have also been manufactured in the General Post Office during the year. Fee and freight stamps are sold by licensed vendors, who are allowed a commission of sixpence in the £ on the former, and ninepence in the £ on the latter :—

STATEMENT showing the Denomination, Number, and Value of Railway Freight Stamps Manufactured and Issued at the General Post Office during the Year 1878.

Manufactured.			Issued.		
Denomination.	Number.	Value.	Denomination.	Number.	Value.
		£ s. d.			£ s. d.
One penny stamps ...	150,000	625 0 0	One penny stamps ...	72,601	302 10 1
Twopenny stamps ...	90,000	750 0 0	Twopenny stamps...	18,047	150 7 10
Threepenny stamps ...	150,000	1,875 0 0	Threepenny stamps ...	106,455	1,330 13 9
Sixpenny stamps ...	30,000	750 0 0	Sixpenny stamps ...	7,480	187 0 0
Ninepenny stamps ...	120,000	4,500 0 0	Ninepenny stamps ...	170,233	6,383 14 9
			One shilling and Sixpenny stamps	69,358	5,301 17 0
			Two shillings and Threepenny stamps	3,545	398 16 3
			Three shilling stamps ...	11,542	1,731 6 0
			Four shillings and Sixpenny stamps	3,466	779 17 0
			Six shilling stamps ...	219	65 14 0
Totals ...	540,000	8,500 0 0	Totals ...	462,946	16,531 16 8

STATEMENT showing the Denomination, Number, and Value of Fee Stamps Manufactured and Issued at the General Post Office during the Year 1878.

Manufactured.			Issued.		
Denomination.	Number.	Value.	Denomination.	Number.	Value.
		£ s. d.			£ s. d.
One shilling stamps ...	120,000	6,000 0 0	Halfpenny stamps ...	64	0 2 8
Two shilling stamps ...	30,000	3,000 0 0	One penny stamps ...	2,492	10 7 8
Two shillings and Sixpenny stamps	30,000	3,750 0 0	Fourpenny stamps ...	1,842	30 14 0
Five shilling stamps ...	39,240	9,810 0 0	Sixpenny stamps ...	13,993	349 16 6
Ten shilling stamps ...	15,000	7,500 0 0	One shilling stamps ...	118,572	5,928 12 0
One pound stamps ...	18,000	18,000 0 0	Two shilling stamps ...	32,669	3,266 18 0
Five pound stamps...	360	1,800 0 0	Two shillings and Sixpenny stamps	44,096	5,512 0 0
			Five shilling stamps ...	19,860	4,965 0 0
			Ten shilling stamps ...	29,421	14,710 10 0
			One pound stamps ...	15,326	15,326 0 0
			Five pound stamps ...	354	1,770 0 0
Totals ...	252,600	49,860 0 0	Totals ...	278,689	51,870 0 10