

1880.  
—  
VICTORIA.

---

R E P O R T

UPON THE AFFAIRS OF THE

POST OFFICE AND TELEGRAPH  
DEPARTMENT

FOR THE YEAR

1879.

---

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

---

By Authority:  
JOHN FERRIS, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

# REPORT.

---

The following Report is issued in accordance with 29th Vict., No. 298, sect. 57, giving the required general information respecting the progress of the Post Office and Telegraph Department, the chief incidents connected with its administration, and details of the business transacted in its several branches during the year ended 31st December 1879.

No change was made in the postal law during last year.

The arrangement of the double staff in the Mail Branch of the General Post Office, established in October 1878, continues to work satisfactorily, and has to a very great extent facilitated the transmission and delivery of the public correspondence.

The new regulations relating to the employment of telegraph messengers, letter carriers, stampers, sorters, &c., approved by the Governor in Council to take effect from 1st July 1879, have given general satisfaction to the persons immediately concerned, and will, it is believed, be found conducive to the future efficient working of the Department.

The leading principle adopted is that all persons shall enter the subordinate grades, either as telegraph messengers or assistant letter carriers, at the minimum rate of pay; the messengers after reaching the maximum pay of that class being eligible for appointment as assistant operators or assistant clerks; or, if they have failed to qualify themselves for those positions, will be appointed letter carriers, when they will receive an annual increment of pay until they reach the maximum amount; they will then be eligible for promotion to the rank of sorters. Sorters to be selected solely from the senior letter carriers, the former practice of appointing youths as assistant sorters having been abandoned.

Every person newly entering the service is required to produce a medical certificate that he is free from infirmity of body or mind, and also a certificate from the Department of Public Instruction that he has been educated up to the required standard or pass an examination as to his educational attainments.

Various other amendments of the regulations previously in force were also adopted, and are being carried out with evident advantage to the service.

## REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

### *Revenue.*

The gross Postal Revenue for the years 1878 and 1879, including commission on Money Orders, &c., was—

1878	...	...	...	£191,515
1879	...	...	...	197,675

showing an increase of £6,160, or 3·21 per cent.

The gross Telegraph Revenue for the years 1878 and 1879 was—

1878	...	...	...	£60,287
1879	...	...	...	56,704

showing a decrease of £3,583, or 5·94 per cent.

The total Postal and Telegraph Revenue for 1879 amounted to £254,379, as against £251,802 for 1878, showing an increase of £2,577, or 1·02 per cent.

### Expenditure.

The gross Expenditure of the Department for the year 1879, including collections on account of other Governments and commission to licensed vendors of postage stamps, amounted to £351,854, as against £344,522 for the year 1878, showing an increase of £7,332, or 2·12 per cent.

REVENUE.		EXPENDITURE.	
		£	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 ... ..	197,675 2 0	Salaries and wages, occasional assistance, and overtime ... ..	169,133 14 10
Electric Telegraph collections, including amounts collected on account of other colonies and the Tasmanian Submarine Telegraph Company ... ..	56,704 12 1	Contingencies* ... ..	29,821 5 10
Deficit ... ..	97,474 6 2	Commission to licensed vendors of postage stamps ... ..	3,613 11 3
		Inland mail service ... ..	110,465 16 3
		Gratuities to masters of vessels ... ..	1,939 6 4
		Estimated amount of postal collections on account of other Governments ... ..	2,700 0 0
		Steam postal communication with Great Britain <i>via</i> Suez, San Francisco, and Torres Straits ... ..	32,311 5 9
		Electric Telegraph collections on account of Tasmanian Submarine Telegraph Company 1,288 7 10	£ s. d. 1,288 7 10
		Due by other colonies ... 1,236 16 10	51 11 0
		Cost of conveying telegrams during interruption of cable ... ..	1,817 9 0
	351,854 0 3		351,854 0 3

\* The sum of £23,599 11s. 3d. has also been expended on telegraph lines—formerly borne by the Public Works Department.

With reference to the above-mentioned deficit it may be stated that the value of telegrams sent on the Government service for which no payment was made amounted to £19,839. Credit is also due to the Department for the free transmission of all official correspondence, the postage on which it is estimated would amount to over £30,000. Out of the item for conveyance of inland mails £31,804 was paid to the Railway Department.

Among other duties performed by officers of the Department, besides those appertaining to the Post Office and Telegraph Branch of the Government Service, are those of Receiver and Paymaster, which are conducted by the Postmasters and Telegraph Managers at the following offices:—

Avoca	Casterton	Kyneton
Bright	Charlton	Talbot
Buln Buln	Colac	Wood's Point.
Castlemaine	Heathcote	

The officers in charge at the above-named places are paid by the Treasurer small allowances, ranging from £20 to £50 per annum, except in one instance, where nothing is received by the Postmaster for the extra duties.

The effect of this arrangement is a considerable saving of expense to the Government, as in most of the cases the services of third or fourth class officers were previously retained by the Treasury for the performance of the work; but, on the other hand, it entails on this Department additional cost, for which no consideration is received, as, in consequence of the time of the Postmasters being occupied in the transaction or oversight of duties foreign to their own department, extra assistance has in some instances to be employed and paid for by this Department to ensure the prompt despatch of the Post Office and Telegraph business.

It may likewise be observed that stores required for the transaction of Treasury business at the offices referred to is supplied by and is consequently paid for out of the votes of the Post Office Department.

## ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS.

### *Central Telegraph Office.*

The increased number of telegraph offices within the city has materially augmented the duties of the staff at the central office, and it has been found indispensably necessary that provision should be made for additional operators, in order to discharge the business efficiently.

The telegraphic business formerly conducted by means of mounted messengers between the Central Telegraph office and the Custom House and Hobson's Bay Railway station has been more satisfactorily provided for by direct wire circuits between those points. Telegrams are now forwarded by wire instead of messenger, and a saving, both in time and expense, has been thereby effected.

In the battery room, the circuits have been clearly traced out, marked, and labelled in such a manner as to obviate the difficulty and loss of time when wires are required to be identified. The service is laboring under very serious disadvantages through the inconvenience attending the present position of the battery room, which apartment should be on the ground floor; the batteries, I am informed, should never, properly speaking, have been placed on the upper floor of the building, and probably would not have been so placed had not the contingency of temporary office accommodation led to the adoption of this objectionable course.

The operating room has undergone a few trifling improvements such as were practicable under the existing imperfect and inadequate arrangements for conducting the business in the premises now occupied for that purpose. The disadvantages occasioned by the ill-adapted wooden buildings press heavily on the energies of the department, and add to the labors of the staff generally.

With the view of reducing these inconveniences as much as possible, care has been taken to place the various instruments in such positions as to present the greatest facilities for testing and localising occasional faults or defects in the circuits, and at the same time to have the many operators and others employed in the room more directly under the immediate observation of the manager or officer in charge.

Notwithstanding the changes and rearrangement of working details announced at page 4 of the last Departmental Report (1878), the arrangements are still necessarily imperfect from the causes already mentioned; and, until suitable provision may have been made for accommodating the business of the telegraph in a manner commensurate with the present magnitude and growing importance of that branch of the service, it cannot reasonably be anticipated that much further improvement will be attainable.

### *Intercolonial Press Rates.*

With a view to facilitate the transmission of intercolonial news for publication in the press, in November last it was suggested to the colonies of New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Queensland, that a uniform rate of One shilling and sixpence per hundred words (that is the present Victorian press rate) should be charged by each colony upon press messages passing over their lines to or from other colonies.

The negotiations have not been concluded, but there is every prospect of the arrangement being carried out as regards New South Wales and South Australia (except the Port Darwin line), when press telegrams to and from those colonies and Victoria will be forwarded at a uniform charge of three shillings per one hundred words.

The Governments of Western Australia and Queensland have, however, declined to reduce the tariff on their lines.

*Duplicate Cable.*

According to the preliminary agreement with the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company, dated 4th December 1878, entered into on behalf of the colonies of Victoria and New South Wales, the contract for the construction and maintenance of a duplicate cable from Penang to Singapore, thence direct to Banjoe-wangie, and thence to Port Darwin, for an annual subsidy of £32,400, was to be signed on or before the 1st July 1879, and the cable had to be laid within eight months of the date of signing the contract.

When, however, the contract was about to be signed the Imperial Government effected an arrangement with the company for the construction of a cable between Aden and Natal, the want of telegraphic communication with the latter place being severely felt, as the Zulu war was then in progress; and, at the request of the Home authorities, the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales consented to the cable that had been manufactured for the Australian line being used for the Natal line, the company agreeing on their part that the reduced rate for telegrams should come into force from the date of signing the contract (instead of from the date of the subsidy being payable as stated in the agreement), provided that the time for completion of the cable was extended to eight months from 1st July 1879.

A copy of the contract, as signed on the 6th May 1879, appears in Appendix O.

Under this contract it is provided that there shall be paid to the company for its own proportion of the charges on telegrams, the following rates, viz. :—

		<i>s. d.</i>	
Any Government message	...	2	10 per word
Any Press message	...	1	5 per word
Any other message	...	5	8 per word

This would make the total charge per word upon a message to England as follows :—

	Government Messages.		Press Messages.		Other Messages.	
	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Foreign Administrations	3	9	3	9	3	9
Eastern Extension Co.	2	10	1	5	5	8
Port Darwin Line	1	2	1	2	1	2
Victorian Line	0	1	0	1	0	1
Total	7	10	6	5	10	8

Previously all messages were charged 10s. 8d. per word.

In addition to the reduction of rates on Government and Press messages, the more immediate advantage secured by the duplicate cable is the maintenance of telegraphic communication with the United Kingdom, which on many occasions had been interrupted for considerable intervals, and the more rapid and correct transmission of messages. Before the cable was duplicated a special steamer was engaged to convey telegrams to and from Port Darwin and Batavia during interruptions to communication; the cost to Victoria of this service in 1879 was £1,817. The average time taken in the transmission of a message from London to Australia was twelve to twenty-four hours. A message now reaches its destination in from three to six hours, and telegrams have been sent to London and replies received therefrom on the same day.

The reduced rates on Government and Press messages are charged on telegrams for and from such colonies only as have expressed their willingness to contribute to the cable subsidy.

At the conference of delegates, held in Melbourne in May 1878, when representatives of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, and New

Zealand, were present, and the establishment of duplicate telegraphic communication was determined upon, it was agreed "that the cost of the subsidy be paid by the different Australasian colonies ratably in proportion to their respective populations."

At present the contributors are Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and New Zealand, the Government of the last-mentioned colony having consented to pay its proportion of the subsidy subject to the ratification of Parliament.

In last Report (page 14) it was mentioned that steps had been taken with the view of securing representation of the Australasian Governments at the International Telegraphic Convention to be held in London in 1879, and which took place in July of that year, when the Australian Colonies represented were Victoria, South Australia, and New Zealand, the Right Honorable Hugh C. E. Childers, M.P., Agent-General, acting on behalf of this colony; and he was, as previously stated, requested to cause consideration to be given to the following points:—

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.

The Conference, after twelve sittings, terminated its deliberations on the 28th July, and adopted new regulations (which have been approved by this Government), to take effect from 1st April 1880.

With regard to the first point it may be stated that, under the existing rules, five figures are allowed to pass for the price of one word, and ten letters are allowed to a word when used as a cipher; but the use of one cipher word or group of figures render the whole message chargeable with fifty per cent. additional fees for collation or repetition, and such collation or repetition is compulsory. Under the new rules three figures or three letters are allowed to be sent as a cipher word and repetition, and consequently the collating charge is not compulsory. It is, however, necessary that proper names should be used in their natural sense, or the words are chargeable with the cipher rate.

Code telegrams may be sent in any of the following languages:—English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, and Latin.

The second point has been conceded. The new rules provide that when it is found necessary to forward a message asking for repetition of a telegram that appears to contain errors, upon its being ascertained that the mistakes occurred in the transmission of the telegram, the cost of the message asking for a repetition is refunded to the sender upon application.

Point 3.—A rule has been introduced providing that, in case of any interruption on the lines, such interruption shall, in the first instance, be telegraphed to the Central Bureau of the Conference at Berne, and thence immediately notified to all the Governments connected with the Conference.

As to the fourth point, though nothing was accomplished at the Conference in this matter, yet, under the agreement entered into with the Cable Company, considerable reduction has been made in the charges for press and Government messages to and from Victoria, particulars of which will be found on page 12.

#### TELEGRAPH LINES.—ADDITIONAL WIRES, EXTENSIONS, ETC.

The extension to the Gippsland Lakes Entrance has been carried out, and the wires extended from Bairnsdale to Cunninghame *via* Bruthen.

The lines have also been extended from Bruthen to Omeo, from St. Arnaud to Donald, from Hamilton to Macarthur, from Casterton to Merino, and from Berwick to Beaconsfield.

An additional special wire has been run from Melbourne to Flinders in connection with the Tasmanian cable.

The wires have been transferred from the ordinary roads to the railway routes between Ballarat and Creswick, and between Maryborough and Dunolly.

A special wire has been erected between the Head Office and the Custom House, which has obviated the necessity for employing mounted messengers.

Repairs, more or less extensive, have been carried out, or are in progress, on the following lines:—Portland and Belfast, Geelong and Werribee, Ballarat and Geelong, Ballarat and Smythesdale, Dunolly and Inglewood, Frankston and Mordialloc, Melbourne and Echuca, Sale and Port Albert, Kilmore and Heathcote, Beechworth and Bright, Jamieson and Wood's Point, Camperdown and Warrnambool, and Hexham and Mortlake.

Interruptions to telegraphic communication, creating inconvenience and expense, not infrequently arises from causes which are quite beyond the power of the Department to prevent or control. The wilful breaking of the insulators by boys addicted to the prevalent habit of stone throwing has often produced stoppage of communication for several hours. Since, however, public attention has been called to the fact that such offenders are liable to imprisonment, or a fine of £10, the mischievous practice has to some extent abated.

In the district between Werribee and Geelong trouble was, however, occasioned in an unusual and peculiar manner. Some of the wires attached to poles on a line erected over the open plain, between those places, and which is nearly destitute of trees having been removed, new wires were put up in their places. In the course of this work the small tie wires used for fastening the old lines to the insulators had been thrown to the ground and left there. These pieces of wire were seized upon by the magpies, which are numerous in the neighbourhood, and utilized by them in the construction of their nests, which they built near the tops of the poles between the insulators; and, as in many cases the small wires were brought into contact with different lines, communication was interrupted until the obstructions were discovered and removed.

Notwithstanding that attention was specially called in the last Report, as on previous occasions, to the fact of the telegraph being so extensively, and it is believed often needlessly, used for official business, and that the Ministers presiding over the different branches of the service were directly communicated with on the subject, it appears that the number of telegrams transmitted free as "On Her Majesty's Service" has still further increased.

Upon reference to Appendix C it will be found that such messages numbered in 1879, 284,317, which represented in value the sum of £19,839, or more than one-third of the total receipts for private messages, and the increase of free Government telegrams over those transmitted in 1878 was 48,058, value, £3,318.

It cannot be doubted that a large portion of the business which formed the subject of the 284,317 free telegrams referred to could have been equally well dealt with by letter, and that the sending of this large number of Government messages occupied the wires and the time of operators and messengers to the prejudice of the prompt despatch and delivery of private telegrams, also adding unnecessarily to the expenditure of the Department, without bringing in any equivalent return. It appears therefore to be imperatively necessary, both in the interests of the public who use the telegraph, and on economical grounds, that this almost unlimited use of the wires should be checked.

STATEMENT of Expenditure for Telegraph Lines, Stations, &c., for 1879.

Particulars.	Amount.			Total Amount.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Total Expenditure for Lines, Stations, &c., up to 31st December 1878	...	...	...	544,721	11	5
EXPENDITURE DURING 1879.						
Main Extension of Lines, &c., to 31st December	...	...	...	23,609	11	2
New Buildings and Repairs to existing Buildings	...	...	...	23,425	6	11
				47,034	18	1
CURRENT EXPENDITURE DURING 1879.						
Rent of Temporary Offices	...	...	...	£591,756	9	6
				£2,943	19	8

## Local and Intercolonial Business.

STATEMENT showing the Victorian and Intercolonial Business for the Years 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878 and 1879.

	1869.			1870.			1871.			1872.		
	Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.	
* Between Victorian Stations ..	194,291	24,154 7 8		263,232	22,921 18 9		420,580	27,274 14 4		206,617	21,244 10 3	
From—												
Victoria to New South Wales ..	12,542	5,840 1 3		15,735	5,540 5 9		23,493	5,547 8 3		22,143	6,023 8 3	
New South Wales to Victoria ..	13,540	5,750 2 5		14,003	5,288 13 8		21,163	5,288 17 7		23,233	6,702 9 0	
Victoria to Queensland ..	938	586 8 11		1,080	540 1 6		1,607	643 4 0		2,540	1,016 10 10	
Queensland to Victoria ..	1,118	958 15 0		1,214	787 1 8		1,970	784 5 10		2,632	1,207 12 8	
Victoria to South Australia ..	7,181	2,559 7 6		9,322	2,285 14 8		14,890	3,171 19 2		13,231	2,310 10 11	
South Australia to Victoria ..	6,185	2,167 11 0		7,842	1,892 5 3		12,063	1,591 10 3		10,853	2,095 15 10	
Victoria to Tasmania ..	2,187	1,028 15 1		4,485	1,744 9 8		3,791	1,204 11 4		3,650	1,947 12 0	
Tasmania to Victoria ..	2,313	1,100 15 0		4,825	1,940 10 0		4,959	1,303 15 2		3,543	1,165 8 7	

	1873.			1874.			1875.			1876.		
	Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.	
* Between Victorian Stations ..	331,463	32,780 16 5		502,523	30,945 2 1		633,335	33,150 10 9		590,928	36,223 9 8	
From—												
Victoria to New South Wales ..	35,844	7,685 13 11		48,624	7,024 3 8		67,515	8,010 10 3		64,306	9,207 1 0	
New South Wales to Victoria ..	37,125	7,834 5 10		51,273	7,739 6 4		62,318	8,791 18 4		71,081	9,005 4 8	
Victoria to Queensland ..	3,752	1,384 14 7		5,782	1,141 10 7		7,415	1,467 14 3		8,687	1,754 14 8	
Queensland to Victoria ..	3,279	1,167 4 8		7,121	1,787 7 0		9,587	2,232 14 7		10,238	2,538 15 2	
Victoria to South Australia ..	17,288	2,391 7 10		17,021	2,294 5 4		19,297	3,018 2 2		21,792	3,594 13 5	
South Australia to Victoria ..	12,541	2,769 14 3		19,314	2,217 7 0		21,409	3,169 4 10		24,161	3,686 3 4	
Victoria to Tasmania ..	5,445	1,270 8 8		5,663	1,359 7 11		6,292	1,378 10 8		7,041	1,437 11 5	
Tasmania to Victoria ..	4,455	1,523 5 0		4,956	1,732 5 11		4,692	1,673 19 0		5,093	1,847 15 0	

	1877.			1878.			1879.		
	Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.		Number of Private Messages.	Revenue.	
* Between Victorian Stations ..	616,896	39,144 1 9		641,231	40,860 4 10		598,717	37,453 15 10	
From—									
Victoria to New South Wales ..	70,610	10,661 17 3		78,609	11,222 9 2		72,039	11,312 9 5	
New South Wales to Victoria ..	78,528	10,921 8 2		85,157	11,227 19 10		88,023	11,311 16 11	
Victoria to Queensland ..	10,545	2,147 2 11		9,745	2,035 0 9		8,724	1,752 19 5	
Queensland to Victoria ..	12,113	2,997 10 11		12,227	2,723 13 3		12,981	2,447 4 10	
Victoria to South Australia ..	24,727	4,071 3 8		28,255	3,781 8 3		29,496	4,246 1 11	
South Australia to Victoria ..	27,294	4,989 17 8		31,015	5,128 8 7		30,683	5,629 12 11	
Victoria to Tasmania ..	6,773	1,381 0 6		8,985	1,473 15 7		7,998	1,329 19 9	
Tasmania to Victoria ..	5,777	1,627 5 10		6,845	3,132 16 0		6,121	1,284 5 5	
Victoria to Western Australia ..	373	73 19 4		3,119	836 16 3		1,916	480 10 1	
Western Australia to Victoria ..	465	102 10 3		3,748	722 17 5		2,756	602 7 7	

\* Exclusive of the number and value of messages O.L.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 3s. for 10 words came into operation 1st August 1870.  
 Tasmania .. .. Reduced (cable) rate from 3s. to 4s. for 10 words came into operation 1st January 1870.

STATEMENT showing the Extension of Telegraph Lines in the Australasian Colonies during 1879, also Lines in Progress, &amp;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 ...	229	425½	44	93	23	47	3,155½	5,730½	33	1	261
New South Wales ...	439½	665½	...	...	498	498	7,517½	12,426	37	...	273
South Australia ...	206	248	...	...	850	1,010	4,393½	5,934½	12	...	149
Queensland ...	373½	714	...	...	...	...	5,970	7,991½	19	5	161
Tasmania ...	6½	6½	...	...	17	17	730	929	1	...	60
New Zealand ...	109	409	...	...	61	201	3,543	8,444	16	...	195
Western Australia ...	4	8	...	...	...	...	1,560½	1,572½	1	...	27

## STATEMENT showing Australasian Telegraphic Business transacted with Europe and the East during the Year 1879.

Colonies.	Received.		Transmitted.		Total.	
	Number of Messages.	Value.	Number of Messages.	Value.	Number of Messages.	Value.
		£ s. d.		£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Victoria ... ..	4,194	36,966 9 1	3,174	28,369 0 11	7,368	65,235 10 0
South Australia ... ..	1,687	11,207 18 0	1,324	7,740 4 7	3,211	18,948 2 7
New South Wales ... ..	3,081	18,470 16 0	2,961	22,364 18 5	6,042	40,835 14 5
Queensland ... ..	343	2,113 19 4	347	2,222 6 7	690	4,336 5 11
Tasmania ... ..	153	693 19 10	97	561 3 2	250	1,255 3 0
New Zealand ... ..	1,628	12,881 12 1	1,541	12,758 17 6	3,169	25,640 9 7
Western Australia ... ..	160	745 8 11	138	743 8 1	298	1,488 17 0
Totals ... ..	11,446	82,980 3 3	9,582	74,759 19 3	21,028	157,740 2 6

## STATEMENT showing the Telegraphic Interruptions which have taken place in the Submarine Cables during the Year 1879.

Cable.	Period of Interruption.			Where Interrupted.
	From	To	No. of Days.	
	1878.	1879.	Dys. hrs.	
India and Australia ... ..	Dec. 29 ...	Jan. 8 ...	10 0	Between Batavia and Singapore.
" " ... ..	1879. March 26...	March 27...	0 19	West of Sourabaya.
" " ... ..	May 29 ...	May 30 ...	0 21	Near Port Darwin.
" " ... ..	June 29 ...	June 30 ...	1 9	Between Batavia and Singapore.
" " ... ..	July 4 ...	July 24 ...	20 0	Between Port Darwin and Banjoewangie.
" " ... ..	Sept. 15 ...	Sept. 22 ...	7 0	Between Batavia and Singapore.

Note.—No interruption took place in the submarine cable between Victoria and Tasmania during 1879.

## RETURN showing Net Revenue from 1st January to 31st December 1879.

Cash receipts paid into Treasury, from 1st January to 31st December 1879 ...	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Less amount due to other colonies on account of intercolonial business for same period :—	56,704 12 1	
Bass Cable Company ... ..	1,288 7 10	55,416 4 3
Amount due by other colonies on account of intercolonial business for same period :—		
New South Wales ... ..	503 6 5	
South Australia ... ..	720 19 1	
Tasmania ... ..	12 11 4	
		1,286 16 10
		£56,653 1 1

## STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT.

During the year 1879, 15 officers were dismissed or dispensed with, 10 retired in consequence of their having attained the age of sixty years, 23 resigned, and 6 died.

Six additional Letter Carriers have been appointed to the suburban districts, as follows :—One for East Melbourne, one for Carlton, one for Flemington, one for Brunswick, one for Fitzroy, and one for Kew.

The following is a statement showing the strength and distribution of the permanent and temporary staff of the Department:—

Office.	Postmasters and Telegraph Managers.	Officers, Clerks, and Operators.	Sorters.	Instrument Filers.	Letter-carriers and Messengers.	Line-operators and Signallers.	Printer's Assistants.	Mailmaster and Postmen.	Office-keepers and Messengers.	Gas Engineer, Carpenter, &c.	Factors, Filers, Clerks, and Super-numeraries.	Female Assistants.	Total.	Remarks.
Melbourne ...	160	113	5	69	11	14	5	47	15	92	64	595		
Alexandra ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	2	
Ararat ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	6	6	
Avoca ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	3	3	
Avenel ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	2	
Bacchus Marsh ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	2	
Bairnsdale ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	2	
Balla ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	2	
Ballaarat ...	7	6	...	13	2	...	...	9	1	...	...	2	39	6 supernumeraries occasionally employed
Ballaarat East ...	1	1	...	4	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	2	7	
Beaufort ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Beechworth ...	1	1	2	...	2	1	...	3	...	...	...	...	9	
Belfast ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	5	
Bemalla ...	1	1	...	...	...	1	...	3	...	...	...	...	4	
Berwick ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Birregurra ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Bridgewater (on Loddon) ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Bright ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Brighton ...	1	1	...	3	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	6	
Brunswick ...	1	1	...	3	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	6	
Buln Buln ...	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	3	
Buninyong ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	3	
Camperdown ...	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	4	
Cape Otway ...	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	
Cape Schanck ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
Caramut ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Carisbrook ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
Carlton ...	1	1	7	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	2	...	12	
Casterton ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	3	
Castlemaine ...	1	1	2	4	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	11	
Charlton ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	3	
Chiltern ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Clunes ...	1	1	1	...	1	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	5	
Colac ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	4	
Coleraine ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	3	
Collingwood ...	1	1	1	6	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	13	
Creswick ...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	5	
Cunningham ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
Dandenong ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Daylesford ...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	4	
Donald ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	3	
Dromana ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
Dunkeld ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
Dunolly ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	4	
Durham Ox ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
Eaglehawk ...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	3	
Eldorado ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
Elmore ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	1	
Emerald Hill ...	1	1	7	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	3	...	15	
Echuca ...	1	3	3	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	11	
Fitzroy ...	1	1	4	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	9	
Fitzroy North ...	1	1	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	4	
Flemington ...	1	1	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	5	
Footscray ...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	3	
Fryerstown ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Geelong ...	10	3	...	8	1	...	...	6	...	1	...	...	20	
Geornong ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Gordons ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Hamilton ...	1	3	1	4	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	11	
Harrow ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Hawthorn ...	1	1	...	3	...	...	...	4	...	...	2	...	10	
Heathcote ...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	4	
Hexham ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Horsham ...	1	2	1	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	7	
Hotham ...	1	1	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	
Inglewood ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	1	...	4	
Jamieson ...	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Kangaroo Flat ...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
Kerang ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Kew ...	1	1	...	4	...	...	...	2	...	...	1	...	8	
Kilmore ...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	4	
Koroit ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Kyneton ...	1	2	1	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	6	
Learmonth ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Linton ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Longwood ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Majors ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	3	
Maldon ...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Malmesbury ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	3	
Mansfield ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Maryborough ...	1	1	1	1	1	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	7	
Meredith ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
Merino ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Nes ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Mornington ...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	

\* 25 of these supernumeraries are employed only a portion of each month; and 39 are employed as laborers in the telegraph lines.

## STATEMENT showing the Strength and Distribution of the Staff of the Department, &amp;c.—continued.

Office.	Postmasters and Telegraph Managers.	Officers, Clerks, and Operators.	Barkers.	Instrument Fitters.	Letter carriers and Stampers.	Line carriers and Signallers.	Printer's Assistants.	Mailmaker and Bookbinders.	Office Messengers and Messengers.	Gas Engineers, Carpenters, &c.	Printers, Pullers, Carriers, and Superintendants.	Female Assistants.	Total.	Remarks.
Mortlake	1								1				2	
Mt. Blackwood	1								1				2	
Mt. Egerton	1								1				2	
Myrtleford	1								1				2	
Nagambie	1								1				2	
New Gisborne	1								1				2	
Newstead	1								1				2	
Omeo	1								1				2	
Penshurst	1								1				2	
Port Albert	1								1				2	
Portland	1	1			1	1			4				7	
Prahran	1				5	1			4				12	
Queenscliff	1				1				3			1	5	
Richmond	1				7				3		1		14	
Rocheester	1								3				3	
Rosedale	1								1				2	
Rushworth	1								1				2	
Rutherglen	1								1				2	
St. Arnaud	1	1			1				3				6	
St. Kilda	1				10				4			1	16	
St. Kilda West	1								2			1	4	
Sale	1	1			1	1			3				7	
Sandhurst	1	4	5		11	1			8				30	
Sandridge	1				3				1			1	6	
Sandridge West	1								2				3	
Sebastopol	1				1				1				3	
Seymour	1								1				2	
Shepparton	1												1	
Smythesdale	1								1				2	
Sorrento	1								1				2	
South Yarra	1				6								7	
Stavell	1		2		1	1			6			1	12	
Stockyard Creek	1											1	2	
Streatham	1								1				2	
Stratford	1								1				2	
Swan Hill	1								1				2	
Talbot	1		1		1				1				4	
Taradale	1				1				1				3	
Tarnagulla	1				1								2	
Terang	1				1								2	
Toorak	1				2								3	
Traralgon	1								1				2	
Wahdallah	1								1				2	
Wahgunyah	1								1				2	
Walballa	1								1				2	
Wangaratta	1	1							2				4	
Warrnambool	1	4			1				5				11	
Wedderburn	1				1								2	
Williamstown	1				4				4				9	
Wilson's Promontory	1								1				2	
Winchelsea	1												1	
Wodonga	1								2				3	
Woodend	1								1				2	
Wood's Point	1				1				1				3	
Yackandandah	1								1				2	
Market street...												2		
	125	210	139	5	229	26	14	5	252	15	94	93	1,210	

## RETURN of the Officers, &amp;c., of the Melbourne Establishment Absent from Duty on account of Illness during the Year 1879.

Branch.	Officers, &c.		Number of Days Absent.	Remarks.
	Number Employed.	Number Absent.		
Correspondence branch ...	13	2	3	
Accounts branch ...	14	4	11	
Mail branch ...	141	81	801	One officer absent 77 days, one 47 days, one 44 days, and eleven during 295 days.
Money Order and Savings Bank branch	21	12	156	Four officers absent during 111 days.
Stamp branch ...	7	...	...	
Dead Letter branch ...	6	3	46	One officer absent during 41 days.
Stores and Printing branch ...	59	18	77	Two officers absent during 33 days.
Electric Telegraph branch ...	75	37	258	Four officers absent during 118 days.

The following particulars are not included in the above return:—

Out of a staff of sixty-four female assistants employed in the head office, forty-two were absent on the whole during 277 days, out of which number five persons were absent 174 days.

Out of sixty-four letter carriers, twenty-seven were absent during 120 days, out of which number three were absent 67 days.

Out of sixty-five messengers, twenty-two were absent during 67 days, out of which number two were absent 26 days.

## BUILDINGS.—GENERAL POST OFFICE.

The inadequacy of the present accommodation in the General Post Office building to transact the constantly increasing business has of late been so much felt that, in view of the fact that additional space would shortly become an inevitable necessity, an agreement was entered into with the owner of the adjoining property, fronting Post Office place, for the lease of the ground for a period of seven years, from 1st October 1879, at £950 per annum, with power to renew for a further period of seven years, and with right of purchase at £14,000 at expiration of either of those periods. Subsequently the three-storied brick building at the corner of Angel lane was also leased at £300 per annum, with right of purchase at £6,000 under similar conditions to those above stated.

The Government in 1876 purchased the land, 63 feet x 61 feet, immediately behind that before mentioned, for £4,750. As possession is thus secured of the whole of this valuable block, which is regarded as indispensable to the Department, a proposal is under consideration to erect temporary buildings for Electric Telegraph, Money Order and Savings Bank offices, Battery room, &c., having an entrance from Bourke street, to be used pending the completion of the General Post Office building according to the original design, these temporary erections being then available for stores and other necessary offices.

The General Post Office building has been thoroughly cleansed, repaired, and painted internally.

## OTHER BUILDINGS.

New buildings at Bright, Charlton, Chewton, Clunes, Dandenong, Flinders, and Sandridge West have been erected.

A branch Post and Telegraph Office has been erected on a portion of the reserve at the junction of Elizabeth street north and Victoria street occupied by the Department as a storeyard.

Branch Telegraph Offices have also been fitted up at Flinders-street and St. Kilda Railway Stations.

The wooden building recently used at Stuartmill has been removed to, and re-erected at, Donald, and a battery and store room added.

A new building is in progress at Richmond.

At Benalla land has been purchased, on which it is intended to build a new post and telegraph office.

Alterations and repairs have been effected at Mortlake, Walhalla, &c.

Premises have been rented during the year at the following places:—Ballarat East, Brunswick, Carlton, Cunningham (Lakes Entrance), Durham Ox, Eastern Market, Fitzroy North, Flemington, Kew, Macarthur, Merino, Moe, Mooroopna, Myrtleford, Omeo, Shepparton, Traralgon, and Wedderburn.

A new pattern of iron receiving pillar has been adopted, which, besides being neater and more suited to the purposes, costs little more than a third of the price of the old description.

New letter pillars have been erected during the year at Caulfield, Chewton (2), Daylesford, Flemington; Gippsland Station, Flinders street; Hobson's Bay Station (2), Kew, Prahran, St. Kilda, St. Kilda and Brighton Road, St. Kilda Road.

The postal receptacles in Melbourne and suburbs now number 186.

## NEW POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICES.

Sixty-five new Post Offices were opened in 1879 at the places named below:—

Arundel	Cudgewa	Kileunda	Moonlight Flat	Tarwin
Baddaginnie	Dooboobetic	Killawarra	Musk Creek	Tawonga
Blampied	Elliminyt	Koondrook	Narraport	Tomnhawk
Bolinda	Ellinbank	Korongvale	Narracan West	Toonalook
Calivil	Fernhill	Koroop	Nulla Nulla	Trafalgar
Capel's Crossing	Gerangamete	Lockhart	Nulla Warra	Tyrendarra
Cape Schanck	Glenloth	Lubeck (Railway Station)	Perry Bridge	Ulupna
Caralulup	Goorambat	Marnoo	Quambatook	Ulupna West
Carapooce (Railway Station)	Gooroomadda	Marungi	Rodborough	Waggarandall
Childers	Granya	Metung	St. Kilda West	Wanalta
Chintin	Henley	Mincha West	Scott's Creek	Warrall
Cooncoer Bridge	Hoddle's Creek	Mirboo	Strathmerton	Wooasang
Coromby	Jung Jung (Railway Station)	Mitchell's Hill	Tarranginnie	Yalca

The Post Offices at Cove, Lower Alma, and Swift's Creek have been closed.

The names of the following offices have been changed:—Ulupna West to "Yielima"; Charlton to "Chute"; Charlton East to "Charlton"; Echunga to "Weeweerup"; Mundoona to "Bunbartha"; Morwell to "Morwell Bridge"; and Morwell Railway Station to "Morwell."

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

Ballarat East	Cobden	Fitzroy North	Gordons	Shepparton
Berwick	Donald	Flemington	Healesville	
Burwood	Elizabeth st. North	Golden Square	Market street	

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

Ballarat East	Cohuna	Goldsbrough	Myrtleford	Warragal
Briargolong	Drouin	Lorne	Nathalia	Werracknebeal
Burwood	Elizabeth st. North	Macedon	St. Kilda West	Wooroonooke
Chetwynd	Golden Square	Morwell	Yallaroo	Yarrawonga

The Money Order Offices at Noorat, Lake Mundi, and Cohuna have 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:—

Ballarat East	Donald	Merino	Omeo	Whittlesea
Beaconsfield	Drouin	Morwell	Shepparton	Yan Yean
Cunninghame	Fitzroy North	Myrtleford	Vaughan	Yea

Branch telegraph offices have also been opened at the Hobson's Bay Railway Station, Flinders street, Elizabeth street North, the Eastern Market, St. Kilda Railway Station, and at Sandridge West (Railway Pier).

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

Buangor	Drysdale	Horsham	Lubeck	Wahgunyah
Dandenong	Glenorchy	Jung Jung	St. Arnaud	Warrenhelp

The Telegraph Office at Stuartmill has been closed.

The number of Post Offices on the 31st December 1879 was 1,069.

### POSTAGE STAMPS, ETC.

One hundred and thirty-seven new postage stamp licenses were issued and sixty-one revoked during the year, making the total number at the close of the year 977, being an increase on 1878 of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

No new stamp was issued during the year.

The following statement shows the denomination, number, and value of Postage Stamps manufactured and issued at the General Post Office during the year 1879:—

Manufactured.			Issued.		
Denomination.	Number.	Value.	Denomination.	Number.	Value.
		£ s. d.			£ s. d.
Halfpenny ... ..	3,148,000	10,725 0 0	Halfpenny ... ..	5,546,412	11,555 0 6
One penny ... ..	4,620,000	19,250 0 0	Halfpenny stamped newspaper wrappers	4,080	8 10 0
One penny post cards ...	870,246	3,626 0 6	One penny ... ..	5,199,839	21,665 19 11
One penny stamped newspaper wrappers	24,000	100 0 0	One penny post cards ...	851,214	3,546 14 6
One penny stamped envelopes	20,771	86 10 11	One penny stamped newspaper wrappers	25,051	104 7 7
One penny-farthing stamped envelopes	692	3 12 1	One penny stamped envelopes	20,785	86 12 1
Twopenny ... ..	14,573,380	121,444 0 0	One penny-farthing stamped envelopes	692	3 12 1
Twopenny stamped envelopes	59,397	494 2 10	Twopenny ... ..	14,516,086	120,967 7 8
Twopenny-farthing stamped envelopes	3,388	31 15 3	Twopenny stamped envelopes	57,884	482 7 4
Fourpenny ... ..	216,000	3,600 0 0	Twopenny-farthing stamped envelopes	2,896	27 3 0
Sixpenny ... ..	714,000	17,850 0 0	Threepenny ... ..	66,827	835 6 9
Eightpenny ... ..	120,000	4,000 0 0	Fourpenny ... ..	210,154	3,502 11 4
One shilling ... ..	50,000	3,000 0 0	Sixpenny ... ..	582,146	14,533 13 0
Two shilling ... ..	24,000	2,400 0 0	Eightpenny ... ..	128,864	4,295 9 4
Five shilling ... ..	5,975	1,493 15 0	One shilling stamped telegraph forms	214	10 14 0
			One shilling ... ..	75,051	3,752 11 0
			Two shilling ... ..	16,883	1,688 6 0
			Five shilling ... ..	6,461	1,615 5 0
Totals ... ..	26,459,649	188,104 16 7	Totals ... ..	27,311,539	188,701 11 1