POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS.

THE first Australasian post-office was established by Governor Macquarie in the year 1810, Mr. Isaac Nichols being appointed Postmaster. The office was in High-street (now known as George-street), Sydney, at the residence of Mr. Nichols, who was, "in consideration of the trouble and expense attendant upon this duty," allowed to charge on delivery to the addressee 8d. for every English or foreign letter of whatever weight, and for every parcel weighing not more than 20 lb., 1s. 6d., and exceeding that weight, 3s. The charge on Colonial letters was 4d., irrespective of weight; and soldiers' letters, or those addressed to their wives, were charged 1d. Very little improvement in regard to postal matters took place for some years.

In 1825 an Act was passed by Sir Thomas Brisbane, with the advice of the Council, "to regulate the postage of letters in New South Wales," giving power for the establishment of post-offices, and to fix the rates of postage. It was not, however, until 1828 that the provisions of the Act were put into full force. The rates of postage appear to have depended upon the distance and the difficulty of transmission. The lowest single inland rate was 3d., and the highest 12d., the postage on a letter increasing according to its weight, which was fixed for a single letter at $\frac{1}{4}$-ounce. Letters between New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were charged 3d. each (ship rate), and newspapers 1d. Other ship letters were charged 4d. single rate, and 6d. for any weight in excess. The privilege of franking was allowed to the Governor and a number of the chief public officials, and letters to and from convicts passed free under certain regulations.

In 1831 a twopenny post was established in Sydney; and in 1835, under Sir Richard Bourke, the Act of 1825 was repealed and another Act was passed, fixing the charge on a single letter at 4d. for 15 miles, 5d. for 20 miles, 6d. for 30 miles, and so on up to 1s. for 300 miles. In 1837 a post-office was established in Melbourne, and a fortnightly mail was established between that city and Sydney. Stamps were introduced in the same year in the shape of stamped covers or envelopes, which are believed to have been the first postage-stamps ever issued. By 1838 there were 40 post-offices in the colony of New South Wales, which at that time, of course, included the territory now known

as Victoria and Queensland; and in the Sydney office about 15 persons were employed. The revenue of the Department for the year was £8,390, and the expenditure £10,347 ; while payments were made by the New South Wales Government to the post office at Korraika, in New Zealand, which was not created a separate colony until 1841. In 1847 an overland mail between Sydney and Adelaide was established. Stamps in their present form were issued in 1849, and the postage rates were fixed at 1d. per ½ oz. for town and 2d. for country letters, at which they remain in most of the colonies to-day.

Regular steam mail communication with Great Britain was first established in 1852. Until that time the Australian colonies had to depend upon the irregular arrival and despatch of sailing vessels for the carriage of mails; but in the year mentioned the steamships Australia, Chusan, and Great Britain were despatched from England, making the voyage in 60 days, and causing a strong desire in the minds of the colonists for a more frequent and steady system of steam communication with the Old World. The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 hindered for a while the accomplishment of this object; but in 1856 a line of steamers was again laid on, and the service was carried on by the Peninsular and Oriental Company and the Royal Mail Company for some years, but without giving so much satisfaction to the public as might have been expected.

As far back as 1854 a proposal was made for the establishment of a line of mail packets *via* Panama, and negotiations on the subject were carried on for several years between the British Government and the Governments of New South Wales and New Zealand. The result was that in 1866 the service was started, and continued in operation until the end of 1868, when it was terminated through the failure of the company by which it had been carried out. In the following year New South Wales, in conjunction with New Zealand, inaugurated a mail service *via* San Francisco, which, with a few interruptions and under various conditions, has been continued up to the present time.

The establishment of a mail route *via* America had the effect of stimulating the steamship-owners who were engaged in the service *via* Suez, and from that time there was a marked improvement in the steamers employed, as well as in the punctuality and speed with which the mails were delivered. The Peninsular and Oriental Company have carried mails for the colonies almost from the inception of the ocean steam service, with very few interruptions. Towards the end of 1878 the Orient Company commenced carrying mails between Australia and the United Kingdom, and have continued to do so ever since. In the year 1883 the fine steamers of the Messageries Maritimes of France entered the service, followed in 1887 by the North German Lloyd's, so that there are now sometimes two or even three mails received and despatched every week, and a voyage to Europe, which was formerly a formidable undertaking, involving great loss of time and much discomfort, is regarded as a mere pleasure trip to fill up a holiday.

In the year 1893 another mail service was established, by a line of steamers running from Sydney to Vancouver Island, in British Columbia. This line seems likely to open up a valuable trade between the Australian colonies and British North America. There is also a line of steamers running between Brisbane and London, but the colonies other than Queensland make little use of these vessels.

GROWTH OF POSTAL BUSINESS.

The growth of postal business in each of the colonies during the thirty-nine years from 1861 to 1899 is shown below. It will be seen that the number of letters for all Australasia in 1861 was less than is now transacted by any individual colony, Tasmania and Western Australia excepted. The true total for Australasia is, of course, not to be found by adding the figures of the several colonies together, as inter-colonial letters are counted both in the colony from which they are despatched and in that in which they are received for delivery. A second total is therefore given from which this excess has been excluded :—

State.	Post Offices.		Letters and Post-cards.		Newspapers.		Packets.	
	1861.	1899.	1861.	1899.	1861.	1899.	1861.	1899.
New South Wales....	340	2,152	4,369,463	76,726,700	3,384,245	46,806,600	105,338	13,986,600
Victoria	369	1,593	6,109,929	77,796,600	4,277,179	23,614,200	....	10,957,900
Queensland	24	1,239	515,211	21,181,300	427,489	11,633,300	3,555	5,779,000
South Australia	160	692	1,540,472	19,765,400	1,089,424	8,937,000	....	1,531,400
Western Australia ..	..	168	193,317	12,973,600	137,476	6,237,000	....	3,016,000
Tasmania	100	355	835,873	10,036,600	895,656	6,293,000	....	1,811,300
Commonwealth ..	..	6,199	13,564,265	218,480,200	10,211,469	103,571,100	....	37,082,200
Commonwealth (excluding Inter-State excess)	..	..	12,844,300	199,333,100	9,603,000	91,577,000	....	33,814,800
New Zealand	..	1,620	1,236,768	40,127,400	1,428,351	15,717,400	....	17,883,200
Australasia........	..	7,819	14,801,033	258,607,600	11,639,820	119,288,500	....	54,965,400
Australasia (excluding intercolonial excess)	..	..	14,061,000	238,253,200	10,941,400	106,165,400	....	51,500,800

A corresponding table to that already given, showing the number of letters, newspapers, and packets per head of population, is appended :—

State.	Letters and Post-cards.		Newspapers.		Packets.	
	1861.	1899.	1861.	1899.	1861.	1899.
New South Wales	12	57	10	35	1	10
Victoria	11	67	8	20	......	9
Queensland	17	44	14	24	1	12
South Australia	13	54	9	24	......	4
Western Australia	12	76	9	37	......	18
Tasmania	9	56	10	35	......	10
Commonwealth......	11	54	8	25	......	9
New Zealand	14	54	16	21	......	24
Australasia*	11	54	9	24	......	12

* Intercolonial excess excluded.

Western Australia takes the lead in the transmission of letters and newspapers, and is only surpassed by New Zealand in the matter of packets; while Victoria in letters and postcards, and New South Wales and Tasmania in newspapers come second. A comparison of the average number of letters and postcards per head of population in Australasia with similar figures for the principal countries of the world is afforded by the table given below. It will be seen that on a population basis the correspondence of Australasia exceeds that of any of the countries named, with the exception of the United Kingdom :—

Country.	Letters and Post-cards per head.	Country.	Letters and Post-cards per head.
United Kingdom.......	67	France	27
Australasia	54	Norway	23
Switzerland..............	47	Hungary.................	14
Germany.............	42	Portugal.................	13
Sweden...................	41	Italy	8
Denmark	39	Spain.....................	6
Austria	37	Roumania...............	5
Canada...................	31	Chili	5
Belgium	30	Greece	4
Argentine Republic ...	28	Russia	4
Netherlands	28		

Rates of Postage.

The inland letter postage is 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. on town and 2d. on country letters in all the colonies except Victoria and South Australia, where the charge is 2d. per oz. and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. respectively on all letters posted for delivery within the colony. In Victoria the minimum charge was in 1890 reduced to 1d. ; but the loss was too great, and in 1892 the rate was again raised to 2d., at which it still remains. In New South Wales the city and suburban rate of 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. has been extended to nearly sixty of the principal country towns. The inter-colonial rate is uniformly 2d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in Australasia. It has been determined in New Zealand to introduce a universal penny postage on 1st January, 1901.

The most liberal inland newspaper rates are to be found in New South Wales, Western Australia, and Tasmania, where newspapers printed within the colony are transmitted free if posted within one week of publication, although in New South Wales the maximum weight allowed free postage is 10 oz. It is, therefore, only natural that those colonies, as shown in the table given on page 705, should exceed their neighbours in the average number of newspapers carried per head of population. In Victoria and New Zealand the charge is $\frac{1}{2}$d. each, and in South Australia and Queensland $\frac{1}{2}$d. per 10 oz. The intercolonial postage on newspapers is $\frac{1}{2}$d. per 10 oz. in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia, and 1d. each in New Zealand, to all colonies except Queensland, to which province the charge is $\frac{1}{2}$d. for every 2 oz. In Tasmania newspapers posted to Western Australia and New Zealand are carried free if posted within seven days of publication ; to Queensland the charge is $\frac{1}{2}$d. for every 2 oz. ; and to the other colonies, $\frac{1}{2}$d. each. In Queensland the uniform charge to the other provinces is $\frac{1}{2}$d. per 2 oz.

Registered Letters.

The number of registered letters and packets passing through the post-offices of the Australasian colonies has largely increased of late years. In New South Wales the number of such letters in 1899 was 830,576. This number has been exceeded in previous years, for instance in 1892, when the number was 1,075,241, but this total was largely made up of correspondence relating to so-called "con-sultations," or lottery sweeps connected with horse-racing, which were established in Sydney, and to support which large sums of money were sent to that city from all parts of Australasia, as well as from other countries. Probably not less than 600,000 of the total for New South Wales in 1892 were associated with these lotteries. The Government of that colony dealt with the evil in an amending

Postal Bill in 1893, and this illicit branch of the postal traffic was removed to Queensland, where the number of registered letters at once greatly increased, and numbered 541,148 in 1895. But in 1896 the Parliament of Queensland passed an Act making these lotteries illegal, and the evil was transferred to Hobart, the registrations in the northern colony in 1899 numbering only 235,155. In South Australia 584,532 registered letters were dealt with during the year. In Western Australia 218,254 registered letters and packets were passed through the head office; while in New Zealand the registered articles dealt with numbered 489,137. For Victoria and Tasmania no particulars of registrations are available.

PARCELS POSTS.

Excepting Western Australia, where there was no inland service, there were inland, intercolonial, and international parcels posts in operation in 1899; but statistics of the services on a uniform basis are not obtainable. During the year 654,474 parcels, weighing 2,392,593 lb., and having a value of £418,092, passed through the post-office of New South Wales, the postage collected amounting to £42,091; in Victoria 192,716 parcels, yielding a revenue of £9,737, were dealt with; in Queensland the number of parcels which passed through the post-office was 233,009, weighing 1,001,544 lb., and the revenue derived from the service amounted to £16,080; in South Australia 39,655 parcels weighing 100,857 lb. were forwarded and the revenue received was £2,620; in Western Australia 31,795 parcels, the declared value of which was £41,364, and which yielded a revenue of £887, were dealt with; in Tasmania 11,640 inland and 2,845 ship parcels were posted during the year, while 15,665 packets and parcels, valued at £19,666, were received from the United Kingdom and the other colonies; and in New Zealand the parcels dealt with numbered 223,350, weighing 765,836 lb., of which 30,207, weighing 99,438 lb., and valued at £70,094, were received from places outside the colony; and 9,576, weighing 23,188 lb., and valued at £10,806, were despatched from the colony.

MONEY ORDERS AND POSTAL NOTES.

In all the colonies there are money order and postal note systems in operation, and in all the colonies except Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia post-office savings banks. In Queensland there is a Government Savings Bank, but it is not placed under the administration of the Postmaster-General. The Victorian Post Office Savings Bank was amalgamated with the Commissioners' Savings Bank in September, 1897. Particulars of the working of these services will be found in the chapter dealing with Private Finance.

POSTAL FACILITIES.

The following table shows the number of inhabitants and the area in square miles to each post-office for the year 1899. It will be seen that the most sparsely populated colonies have the greatest number of post-offices in comparison with their population, but in order to judge of the relative extension of postal facilities the area of country to each office must also be taken into account :—

State.	Number of Inhabitants to each Post Office.	Number of Square Miles of Territory to each Office.
New South Wales	625	144
Victoria	729	55
Queensland	385	540
South Australia	532	1,306
Western Australia...................	1,009	5,809
Tasmania	506	74
Commonwealth	597	480
New Zealand	463	64
Australasia	569	394

OCEAN MAIL SERVICES.

The Federal Ocean Mail Service, which is carried on by the Orient and Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Companies, is subsidised by the United Kingdom and all the Australasian colonies, with the exception of New Zealand. New contracts were entered into on the 1st February, 1898, for a period of seven years. The total amount of the subsidy is £170,000, of which £98,000 is payable by the Imperial authorities and £72,000 by the colonies in proportion to their population. The sea transit rates collected from other countries and colonies making use of the service are credited to the Imperial and Colonial Governments in proportion to the amount of their contribution towards the subsidy. The following table shows the amount of the subsidy payable by each of the colonies during 1899, on the basis of the population at the end of the preceding year. In addition to the subsidy, there are other charges in connection with the service, such as transit rates in France and Italy and in Australia. After adding these, and deducting the postages collected in the colonies, and the proportion of sea transit rates payable by other countries using the service, the net cost to New South Wales in 1899 was £5,936, and to Victoria £378, as shown in

the table given below. For the other colonies, the net cost of the service is not obtainable. New Zealand, although not a contracting party, yet avails itself of the Federal Service for the carriage of mail matter, and its net loss during the year amounted to £1,552 :—

	Subsidy, 1899.	Net Cost, 1899.
United Kingdom	£98,000	......
Australasia—		
New South Wales............... £25,955	......	£5,936
Victoria 22,696	......	378
Queensland........................ 9,603	......	......
South Australia.................. 7,095	......	......
Western Australia 3,236	......	......
Tasmania 3,415	......	......
	£72,000	......
Total	£170,000	......

The mail service has been performed with great regularity and expedition. The average time occupied by the outward and homeward services in 1899 was as follows :—

	Orient.	P. and O.
London to Sydney	$33\frac{5}{13}$ days.	$32\frac{5}{16}$ days.
Sydney to London	$32\frac{23}{26}$,,	$32\frac{6}{13}$,,

On several occasions the mails from London have been delivered in Sydney in 32 days.

In addition to the Federal Ocean Mail Service *via* Suez, New South Wales and New Zealand until November, 1890, subsidised the Union Steamship Company, in conjunction with the Pacific Steamship Company, for a four-weekly service *via* San Francisco, to the amount of £37,000, of which New South Wales paid £25,750, and New Zealand £11,250. Under the new contract which was entered into, the amount of the subsidy was largely reduced, the contribution being based on the weight of mail matter carried, and New South Wales made an annual payment of £4,000 to the New Zealand Government, subject to appropriation by Parliament. Various extensions of the contract have been made, and at present the New Zealand Government guarantees a minimum payment of £7,500. During the year 1899 the net cost of the service to New Zealand was £10,745; to New South Wales, £1,985; and to Victoria, £331. The average time occupied in carrying the mails by the San Francisco route during the same year was as follows :—

London to Sydney...	$36\frac{1}{13}$ days.
Sydney to London...	$36\frac{1}{13}$,,

During 1893 a calendar monthly service between Sydney and Vancouver was established by the Canadian-Australian Royal Mail Line,

the colony of New South Wales granting an annual subsidy of £10,000, and the Canadian Dominion one of £25,000. This action was taken more in the interests of trade between the great British colonies in Australasia and America than in those of the postal service. The Government of New Zealand guaranteed a minimum payment of £7,500 annually to this line in consideration of Wellington being made a port of call. But on the expiry of this contract on the 31st March, 1899, a fresh agreement to hold for four years was made by the Shipping Company with the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland by which Brisbane was substituted for Wellington as a port of call, on condition that Queensland paid a subsidy of £7,500. New Zealand, therefore, does not now subscribe to the Vancouver service. During 1899 the net cost of the Vancouver service to New South Wales was £7,345 ; and to Victoria, £708. The average time occupied by the mails in transit from Sydney to London was 37⅖ days.

The Queensland line of steamers, sailing from Brisbane *via* Torres Straits, carry mails ·for the Queensland Government, payment being made according to weight. This route is from four to ten days longer than those previously mentioned. Queensland, under a former contract, paid the company an annual subsidy of £55,000. This arrangement ceased in January, 1890, and under a new contract the colony agreed to pay the company an annual subsidy of £19,800 for a four-weekly, or £32,500 for a fortnightly service. The latter service was commenced on 1st July, 1890, the monthly service having lasted nearly six months ; but in November, 1891, the contractors, on account of the heavy losses under the fortnightly system, were allowed to revert to the four-weekly service, the subsidy being reduced to the smaller amount mentioned above, viz., £19,800. When the contract expired, an agreement was arrived at for the institution of a subsidised service for purely commercial purposes. This arrangement lasted but a short time, when the subsidy was abandoned by the shipping company, who preferred to run their steamers without restriction. Payment is now only made in accordance with the weight of the mails carried. The amount of mail matter despatched from the other colonies by the Torres Straits route is very small.

Besides those mentioned, the other steamship companies trading with the Australasian colonies carry mails, notably the Messageries Maritimes Company and the North German Lloyd's, sailing from Sydney ; and the Shaw, Saville, and Albion Company, and the New Zealand Shipping Company, sailing from Lyttelton, *via* Magellan Straits. The companies are paid by the colonies in proportion to the weight of mail matter carried, but the Messageries Maritimes Company and the North German Lloyd's are in receipt of large subsidies from the French and German Governments respectively.

The postage to the United Kingdom was reduced in January, 1891, from 6d. per ½ ounce *via* Italy and 4d. *via* the long sea route to the

uniform rate of 2½d. In 1891 the colonies were represented at the Congress of the Universal Postal Union held in Vienna, and on July 4 a convention was signed on their behalf, by which they joined the Union from the 1st October of that year. From that date the rate of postage to all British colonies and possessions and foreign countries included in the Union was reduced to 2½d.

A common scale of postage on newspapers to the United Kingdom and foreign countries has been adopted by the Australasian colonies, the rate being 1d. for the first 4 ounces, and ½d. for every additional 2 ounces.

TELEGRAPHS.

The electric telegraph was introduced into these colonies almost at the time of the earliest railway construction. The first telegraph messages were sent in New South Wales in 1851. In Victoria the telegraph line from Melbourne to Williamstown was opened in 1854. The first line in South Australia, from Adelaide to Port Adelaide, was opened in 1856 ; and the first Tasmanian line was completed in 1857. In New Zealand the first telegraph office was opened in 1862 ; and the line from Brisbane to Rockhampton, the first in Queensland, was opened in 1864. Telegraphic communication was established between Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide in 1858. The first telegraph in Western Australia was opened in 1869, and communication between that colony and all the others of the group was completed in 1877.

All the colonies show very rapid progress in regard to telegraphic matters during the period from 1871 to 1881. In the case of Queensland this increase was largely a result of the construction of the line to the Gulf of Carpentaria ; and in the case of South Australia, to the construction of the lines to Port Darwin and to Eucla, on the boundary of Western Australia. The following table shows the length of telegraphic lines in each colony at the last four census periods, as well as for the year 1899, as far as the returns are available :—

State.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1899.
New South Wales ...	1,616	*4,674	8,515	11,697	13,663
Victoria	......	*2,295	3,350	6,840	6,747
Queensland	169	2,525	6,280	9,996	10,202
South Australia	597	1,183	4,946	5,640	5,691
Western Australia ...	......	*550	1,585	2,921	5,941
Tasmania	......	*291	928	2,082	2,000
Commonwealth...	......	11,518	25,604	39,176	44,244
New Zealand............	......	2,015	3,824	5,349	6,910
Australasia	......	13,533	29,428	44,525	51,154

° In 1873.

The next table gives similar particulars, but the figures represent miles of wire instead of miles of line :—

State.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1899.
New South Wales.....	1,981	5,579	14,278	24,780	38,718
Victoria	......	3,472	6,626	13,989	15,125
Queensland	169	2,614	8,585	17,646	18,969
South Australia	915	1,718	7,228	12,707†	13,596
Western Australia ...	....	*750	1,593	3,546	8,749
Tasmania	......	241	1,157	3,178	3,252
Commonwealth ..	......	14,374	39,467	75,846	98,409
New Zealand............	......	3,287	9,653	13,235	19,228
Australasia	......	17,661	49,120	89,081	117,637

<center>* In 1873.   † Including telephone wires.</center>

The number of telegrams passing along the wires of each colony and the revenue received by the Telegraph Departments during the year 1899 were as appended.   In the total for Australasia a correction has been made for intercolonial telegrams recorded in both the despatching and the receiving colony :—

State.	Number of Telegrams.	Revenue received.
		£
New South Wales	3,112,063	168,758
Victoria	2,320,298	107,988
Queensland	1,541,096	85,500
South Australia	1,237,008	116,135
Western Australia	1,136,513	81,365
Tasmania	379,377	17,932
Commonwealth	9,726,355	577,678
Do (Inter-State excess excluded).	8,124,000	....
New Zealand	3,589,777	119,642
Australasia	13,316,132	697,320
Do (Intercolonial excess excluded).	11,653,800	....

In the whole of Australasia there were on 31st December, 1899, 3,831 telegraph stations, of which 945 were in New South Wales, 805

in Victoria, 456 in Queensland, 280 in South Australia, 155 in Western Australia, 275 in Tasmania, and 915 in New Zealand.

In no country in the world has the development of telegraphic communication been so rapid as in Australasia, and in none has it been taken advantage of by the public to anything like the same extent. Taking Australasia as a whole, there are only four countries that possess a greater extent of telegraph lines, and only seven in which a larger number of messages is actually sent. In no other country, however, except the United Kingdom, does the number of messages bear anything approaching the same ratio to the population. The following table illustrates these remarks :—

Country.	Length of Telegraph Lines.	Messages.	Messages per head of population.
	miles.	No.	No.
United Kingdom	43,803	87,043,652	2·3
France	62,952	44,515,175	1·2
Belgium	3,961	6,119,111	0·9
Netherlands*	3,671	4,957,691	1·0
Germany	90,760	44,885,733	0·8
Denmark	3,623	1,953,100	0·9
Sweden	5,442	2,294,809	0·4
Norway	7,481	2,049,458	0·9
Austria-Hungary	44,858	21,328,258	0·5
Switzerland..	4,436	3,820,320	1·2
Italy...........................	26,085	8,701,414	0·3
Spain	17,883	5,433,362	0·3
Portugal	4,584	3,095,477	0·6
Russia	90,383	16,371,288	0·2
Roumania	4,290	2,586,534	0·4
United States†	189,856	61,398,157	1·0
Canada..........................	32,538	4,449,765	0·8
Cape Colony	7,224	2,321,082	1·5
Argentine Republic	25,345	4,953,887	1·3
Commonwealth of Australia	44,244	8,124,000	2·2
Australasia	51,154	11,653,000	2·6

* Government lines only.　　† Western Union Company only.

From the above table it appears that in Australasia during the year over two and a half messages were sent over the telegraph for each inhabitant. In the United Kingdom the number was two and three-tenths for each inhabitant; and in the United States of America about one message to every inhabitant. The return for the United States, however, includes only the lines of the Western Union Company, which owns the principal part of the telegraph system of that country. The other countries shown in the table sent messages ranging from one and a half per inhabitant in the case of Cape Colony, to one-fifth per inhabitant in the case of Russia.

CABLE SERVICES.

Australasia is in telegraphic communication with Europe and the rest of the world by means of three cables connecting with the various Asiatic continental lines. The first of these cables, which were all laid by the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, Limited, was opened in October, 1872, joining Port Darwin to Banjoewangie, in Java, whence communication is provided with Europe by way of Batavia, Singapore, Madras, and Bombay. In 1879 a duplicate cable was laid down, the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania agreeing to pay the company a subsidy of £32,400 per annum for a period of 20 years, the amount to be apportioned between the colonies on the basis of population. At Port Darwin the cables connect with an overland wire, which extends to Adelaide, a distance of 1,971 miles, and to construct which cost the South Australian Government about half a million sterling. The total length of line between Adelaide and London is 12,570 miles, of which 9,146 miles are submarine cable, and 3,424 miles overland wire. The third cable was laid in 1888 from Broome, in Roebuck Bay, Western Australia, to Banjoewangie. The length of line by this route from Perth to London is 12,296 miles, 10,811 being cable and 1,485 land wire. The eastern colonies are connected with Broome by a line running from Adelaide, via Port Augusta, Eucla, and Albany, to Perth.

The cable joining Tasmania to the continent of Australia was laid in 1869, the length being about 170 miles. It starts from the township of Flinders, near Cape Schanck, in Victoria, and terminates at Low Head, at the mouth of the Tamar, in Tasmania. This line is subsidised to the extent of £4,200 yearly by the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania, the contributions being based on the population figures.

New Zealand was joined to the continent by a cable laid in 1876, the length being about 1,191 miles. The line has its Australian terminus within sight of the spot where Captain Cook landed on the shores of Botany Bay, and within a stone's throw of the monument of La Perouse. The New Zealand terminus of the cable is at Wakapuaka, near Nelson, on the Middle or South Island, whence another cable, 109 miles in length, is laid to Wanganui, in the North Island, with an alternate line from White's Bay across Cook Strait to Wellington. For the first ten years after its opening, the New Zealand cable was subsidised by the Governments of New South Wales and New Zealand, their annual contributions being £2,500 and £7,500 respectively. Under agreement, dating from the 1st January, 1893, the Company which laid the cable was guaranteed £26,258 per annum in return for the reduction of the cable rates from 8s. 6d. for the first ten words and 10d. for every additional word to 2s. and 3d. respectively, the Company to bear one-fourth of any loss. On the 1st May, 1885, an amended agreement

came into operation under which the guarantee was reduced to £20,000, and the Company ceased to share in any loss. This agreement expired on the 30th April, 1900, and the Company in proposing a renewal claimed that the guarantee should be increased to £26,000. This was absolutely declined by New Zealand, and the Company then determined on a uniform word rate of 3d., and abolished the minimum charge of 2s. for the first ten words. This was agreed to pending the laying of the Pacific Cable.

A cable connecting New Caledonia with Queensland at Bundaberg was opened in October, 1893. It was constructed by a French company, and is guaranteed by the French Government to the extent of £8,000, and by the colonies of New South Wales and Queensland to the amount of £2,000 each annually for a period of thirty years, in return for which the Governments of these colonies are entitled to use the cable for the transmission of official messages up to the amount of the guarantee.

During the year 1890 the colonies opened negotiations with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company for a reduction in the cable rates to Europe, which at that time were 9s. 4d. per word for ordinary messages and 2s. 8d. per word for press messages sent from New South Wales ; and at a conference of the postal and telegraphic authorities a proposal to reduce the tariff to 4s. per word for ordinary messages and 1s. 10d. per word for press messages was agreed to, the colonies contributing to the subsidy undertaking to make good half the loss which the company would sustain by this reduction in the schedule of charges, and New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand at the same time agreeing to pay to South Australia a proportion of the loss to the revenue of that colony which the lower charges would cause in the working of the overland wires. The amended tariff came into force in May, 1891, and the amount to be guaranteed to the company for the portion of the year during which the contract was in existence was £158,491. The sum earned by the company for the same period was £120,141, so that the deficiency on the eight months' business was £38,350, one-half of which was made good by the contributing colonies according to population. But this sum, combined with the amount of the subsidy, was more than the colonies were prepared to bear, and on the 1st January, 1893, the rates were fixed at 4s. 11d. per word from Sydney to London for ordinary messages, and 1s. 10d. for press messages. Even at these charges there was a loss to be borne, the total amount payable to the cable company being £21,778 in 1893 (as compared with £27,520 in 1892), and £6,191 in 1894 ; and to the South Australian Government £7,675 in 1893 (as compared with £10,415 in 1892), £822 in 1894, and £1,125 in 1895. Since the years mentioned the amounts guaranteed— £227,000 to the cable company, and £37,552 to the South Australian Government—have been met by the revenue, and the colonies have therefore not been called upon to contribute. Queensland later joined the other colonies in the guarantee.

The agreement between the Australian Governments and the Company expired on 30th April, 1900. In July, 1899, the Company offered to lay a cable to Australia, *via* the Cape of Good Hope, to reduce the tariff per word from 4s. 11d. to 4s. at once, and later to 2s. 6d. under a sliding scale, if the colonies would agree to certain stipulations. South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania accepted the terms offered and now enjoy the reduced rates. The other colonies refused, but notified the Company that they also would accept if certain alterations were made in the agreement, these alterations being intended to safeguard the Pacific cable, to which these colonies were definitely committed. As the Company has not yet made the required alterations, the matter is still in abeyance.

The following table shows the amount paid by each colony towards cable subsidies and guarantees during the year 1899. The proportions are based on the 1891 census populations. The Port Darwin-Banjoewangie payment was for ten months only, as the subsidy agreement terminated on the 31st October, 1899 :—

State.	Port Darwin-Banjoewangie Subsidy.	Victoria-Tasmania Subsidy.	New South Wales-New Zealand Guarantee.	Queensland-New Caledonia Guarantee.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales	11,169 8 3	1,493 17 8	237 11 3	2,000 0 0	14,900 17 2
Victoria	10,112 16 5	1,504 13 3	239 5 7	....	11,856 15 3
Queensland	....	519 9 6	82 12 2	2,000 0 0	2,602 1 8
South Australia	3,100 11 0	422 15 7	67 4 8	....	3,590 12 0
Western Australia	1,187 7 4	65 13 8	30 15 6	....	1,283 16 6
Tasmania	1,429 16 3	193 10 4	10 8 11	....	1,633 15 6
New Zealand............	....	....	529 1 11	....	529 1 11
Total	27,000 0 0	4,200 0 0	1,197 0 0	4,000 0 0	36,397 0 0

The desirability of constructing a Pacific cable, which shall touch only British territory on its way from Australia to America, is acknowledged by the Governments of most of the Australasian colonies as well as by those of the United Kingdom and Canada, and an informal Conference was held in London in July, 1898, of representatives of Great Britain, Canada, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and New Zealand, when it was suggested that Great Britain should pay one-third of the cost of laying such a cable, Canada two-ninths, and the Australian colonies the remaining four-ninths. This proposal was eventually adopted, and in July, 1899, a meeting was held in London by the representatives of the countries interested, and it was

agreed that the cable should be laid and that the capital necessary to construct and manage it should be raised and controlled by a Board of Commissioners selected by the contributing Governments. A tender of £1,975,000 for laying the cable has been accepted by the committee acting on behalf of the Governments concerned, the work to be completed within eighteen months.

TELEPHONES.

In connection with the telegraph departments of the various colonies, telephone exchanges have been established in the capitals and other important centres of population. In order to popularise the use of the instrument, the charges in some of the colonies have within the last few years been reduced, and the result is seen in a satisfactory extension of this means of communication. Information regarding telephones in the different colonies during 1899, as far as can be ascertained, will be found in the following table :—

State.	Exchanges.	Telephones.	Length of Telephone Wires.	Revenue.
	No.	No.	miles.	£
New South Wales	38	10,119	......°	60,429
Victoria	15	4,409	13,591	47,919
Queensland.........	11	2,157	3,108	12,574
South Australia..	10	1,320	3,304	18,171
Western Australia	10	2,115	2,869	20,705
Tasmania............	5	1,010	815	4,285
Commonwealth	89	21,130	......	164,083
New Zealand	40	7,150	6,343	43,303
Australasia	129	28,280	......	207,386

° Not ascertained.

In the Australasian colonies the rates for telephones at places of business range from £5 to £10 for the minimum length of wire—generally one mile, the colonies with a half-mile radius being New Zealand and Queensland—and the charge is higher in the city than in the country. In New South Wales and Victoria the city and suburban rates are £9 per annum, and the country rates, £8. In South Australia the city rate is higher, being £10 ; but in the suburbs and country the rates range from £6 to £8. Queensland, for a radius of half-a-mile, has a uniform rate of £6, which is also the charge made in Tasmania, for a one mile radius, in Hobart, Launceston, and Zeehan, while for the suburbs and country districts the rate is a matter of arrangement. In New

Zealand a distinction is drawn between exchanges continuously open and those not continuously open, the charges being respectively £7 and £5 ; while in Western Australia, in the towns of Perth, Fremantle, and Guildford, the rate is £7, and £10 where the exchange has less than 100 subscribers. The charges for telephones at private residences is, of course, less than for places of business. In New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand, the rate is uniformly £5 ; and in Queensland, £6. In South Australia the charge is £6 for the city, and from £6 to £8 in the suburbs and country ; in Tasmania, it is £4 10s. in Hobart, Launceston, and Zeehan, and a matter of arrangement in the suburbs and country ; while in Western Australia, at Perth, Fremantle, and Guildford, the charge is £5, and £6 where the exchange has less than 100 subscribers.

POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC FINANCES.

The following table shows the revenue and expenditure of the Postal and Telegraph Departments of the colonies during 1899 :—

State.	Revenue.				Expenditure.
	Posts.	Telegraphs.	Telephones.	Total.	
	£	£	£	£	£
New South Wales	560,471	168,758	60,429	789,658	758,606
Victoria	451,050	107,988	47,919	606,957	554,588
Queensland	200,726	85,500	12,575	298,801	347,713
South Australia	134,709	116,135	18,171	269,015	207,340
Western Australia........	101,892	81,365	20,705	203,962	230,700
Tasmania	78,055	17,932	4,285	100,272	78,095
Commonwealth	1,526,903	577,678	164,084	2,268,665	2,177,042
New Zealand...............	325,301	119,642	43,303	488,246	390,448
Australasia	1,852,204	697,320	207,387	2,756,911	2,567,490

With the exception of New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand, the revenues set down are only approximate, as the receipts for postage are merged with those for stamp duty under the general heading of fees. In the other colonies postage stamps are also used for the purpose of stamping acknowledgments for the receipt of money. During 1899 the New South Wales Post Office made an allowance of £24,000 on this account. In the expenditure shown in the table, interest on the outlay on post-office buildings and telegraph lines and maintenance of buildings is not taken into account. If allowance be made for these, as far as is possible from the very imperfect returns concerning the expenditure on

post offices in each colony, the total expenditure and the deficiency in revenue would be as follow :—

State.	Expenditure, inclusive of Interest and Maintenance.	Deficiency in Revenue.
	£	£
New South Wales	869,912	80,254
Victoria.....................	653,461	46,504
Queensland	421,049	122,248
South Australia	275,300	6,285
Western Australia	255,025	51,063
Tasmania	86,125	*14,147
Commonwealth...	2,560,872	292,207
New Zealand	460,785	°27,461
Australasia	3,021,657	264,746

* Excess of Revenue.