

POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS.

THE first Australasian post-office was established by Governor Macquarie in the year 1810, Mr. Isaac Nichols being appointed Post-master. 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In 1831 a twopenny post was established in Sydney; and in 1835, under Sir Richard Bourke, the Act of 1825 was repealed and another Act was passed, fixing the charge on a single letter at 4d.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 state 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 Kororareka, 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. for town and 2d. for country letters, at which they remain in most of the states 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

states and British North America. There is also a line of steamers running between Brisbane and London, but the states other than Queensland make little use of these vessels.

Under the provisions of the 51st clause of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, the control of the Post and Telegraph services became vested in the Commonwealth, and by proclamation these services were taken over on the 1st March, 1901. The systems of administration, and the rates levied in force in each state at the date of union were however continued until the Commonwealth Postal Act was brought into operation on the 1st November, 1902, thus securing uniformity in all the states.

GROWTH OF POSTAL BUSINESS.

The growth of postal business in each of the states during the forty-one years from 1861 to 1901 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 state, Tasmania excepted. The true total for Australasia is, of course, not to be found by adding the figures of the several states together, as interstate letters are counted both in the state 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.	1901.	1861.	1901.	1861.	1901.	1861.	1901.
New South Wales...	340	2,208	4,369,463	82,783,467	3,384,245	52,317,650	105,333	15,216,387
Victoria	360	1,637	6,100,929	83,005,029	4,277,179	27,125,251	....	13,481,076
Queensland	24	1,234	515,211	23,260,126	427,489	12,804,902	3,555	7,629,348
South Australia	160	713	1,540,472	21,818,724	1,089,424	9,921,641	....	1,343,622
Western Australia ..	..	187	193,317	17,450,878	137,476	7,975,208	....	4,421,673
Tasmania	100	376	835,873	11,173,493	895,656	7,440,146	....	2,238,632
Commonwealth ..	..	6,355	13,564,265	239,560,717	10,211,469	117,554,798	....	44,331,637
Commonwealth (excluding Inter-State excess) .....	..	..	12,844,300	220,593,000	9,603,000	103,000,000	....	39,775,000
New Zealand ..	..	1,739	1,236,768	54,080,937	1,428,351	18,973,632	....	18,536,008
Australasia .....	..	8,094	14,801,033	293,650,654	11,639,820	136,558,430	....	62,867,645
Australasia (excluding intercolonial excess) .....	..	..	14,061,000	273,582,000	10,941,400	121,000,000	....	57,818,000

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.	1901.	1861.	1901.	1861.	1901.
New South Wales	12	60	10	38	1	11
Victoria	11	69	8	22	.....	11
Queensland	17	46	14	25	1	15
South Australia	13	60	9	27	.....	4
Western Australia	12	93	9	42	.....	23
Tasmania	9	64	10	42	.....	13
Commonwealth.....	11	63	8	31	.....	11
New Zealand	14	69	16	24	.....	24
Australasia*	11	59	9	26	.....	13

* Interstate excess excluded.

Western Australia takes the lead in the transmission of letters and equals Tasmania in newspapers, and is only surpassed by New Zealand in the matter of packets; while Victoria in letters and postcards, and New South Wales 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.....	66	France	28
Australasia	59	Norway	25
Switzerland.....	40	Hungary.....	17
Germany.....	51	Portugal.....	12
Sweden.....	51	Italy	10
Denmark	39	Spain.....	7
Austria	40	Roumania.....	5
Canada.....	38	Chili	4
Belgium	34	Greece	3
Argentine Republic ...	50	Russia	4
Netherlands	30		

RATES OF POSTAGE.

The inland letter postage is 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. on town and 2d. on country letters in all the states of the Commonwealth of Australia, except Victoria and South Australia. In Victoria the rate is 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz., and in South Australia 2d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. on all letters posted for delivery within the state. In Victoria the minimum charge was altered in 1890 from 2d. per oz. to 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; but the loss at that time was too great, and in 1892 the rate was again raised to 2d. per oz.; in 1901 it was once more reduced to 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. In New South Wales the city and suburban rate of 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz., which is in force in the Metropolitan Suburban District, is also in operation within a 12-mile radius of Newcastle, and a 13-mile radius of nearly sixty of the other principal country towns. The inter-state and intercolonial rate is uniformly 2d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in Australasia. On the 1st January, 1901, New Zealand adopted a universal penny postage, and the loss attendant thereon for the year may be set down at about £34,000. By arrangement with the Commonwealth, New Zealand letters come to Australia for 1d., but letters to New Zealand are charged 2d. When this matter was settled it was further arranged that New Zealand should reduce its terminal rate on cable messages exchanged with Australia from 1d. to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per word; but, on the other hand, the Commonwealth made a liberal concession by reducing its terminal rate from 1d. per word per state to a uniform 1d. for the whole of Australia.

The diverse rates imposed on the carriage of newspapers in the various states of the Commonwealth, prior to the union, continued after the control became vested in the Federal Government, and up to the 1st November, 1902, when a uniform rate was imposed under the Post and Telegraph Rates Act, 1902. On all newspapers posted for delivery within the Commonwealth by registered newspaper proprietors, or by newsvendors, or returned by an agent or newsvendor to the publishing office, without condition as to the number contained in each addressed wrapper, a charge of 1d. per 20 oz. on the aggregate weight is imposed, and on all other newspapers posted within the Commonwealth for delivery therein, $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per 10 oz. or fraction thereof for each newspaper is levied. In New Zealand a charge of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. each is levied upon all newspapers, town and inland. The intercolonial postage is 1d. each to all the states except Queensland, to which province the charge is 1d. each if not exceeding 4 oz., and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. additional for every succeeding 2 oz.

REGISTERED LETTERS.

The number of registered letters and packets passing through the post-offices of the Australasian states has largely increased of late years. In New South Wales the number of such letters in 1901 was 1,213,277. 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

“consultations,” 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 state 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 state in 1901 numbered 581,752. In South Australia 254,138 registered letters were dealt with during the year. In Western Australia 431,417 registered letters and packets were passed through the head office; while in New Zealand the registered articles dealt with numbered 599,308. 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 1901; but statistics of the services on a uniform basis are not obtainable. During the year 736,496 parcels, weighing 2,716,917 lb., and having a value of £622,496, passed through the post-office of New South Wales, the postage collected amounting to £48,099; in Victoria 310,734 parcels, yielding a revenue of £15,770, were dealt with; in Queensland the number of parcels which passed through the post-office was 296,264, weighing 1,028,511 lb., and the revenue derived from the service amounted to £16,822; in South Australia 45,063 parcels weighing 117,765 lb. were forwarded and the revenue received was £2,938; in Western Australia 33,647 parcels, the declared value of which was £62,147, and which yielded a revenue of £999, were dealt with; in Tasmania 18,535 inland and 2,825 ship parcels were posted during the year, while 21,865 packets and parcels, valued at £30,104, were received from the United Kingdom and the other states; and in New Zealand the parcels dealt with numbered 273,442, weighing 928,237 lb., of which 39,951, weighing 142,141 lb., and valued at £109,683, were received from places outside the state; and 11,588, weighing 29,762 lb., and valued at £16,154, were despatched from the colony.

MONEY ORDERS AND POSTAL NOTES.

In all the states there are money order and postal note systems in operation; and in all the states, 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 1901. It will be seen that the most sparsely populated states 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	141
Victoria	738	54
Queensland	414	542
South Australia	512	1,267
Western Australia	1,042	5,219
Tasmania	463	70
Commonwealth	603	468
New Zealand	453	60
•Australasia	571	380

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 Australian states. 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 states 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 states during 1901, 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 states, and the proportion of sea transit rates payable by other countries using the service, the net cost charged to New South Wales in 1901 was £1,871, and to Victoria £425, as shown in the table on the next page. For the other states, 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 £2,674 :—

	Subsidy, 1901.	Net Cost, 1901.
United Kingdom	£98,000	90,900
Australasia—		
New South Wales.....	£25,889	£1,871
Victoria	22,836	425
Queensland.....	9,559	.....
South Australia.....	6,924	.....
Western Australia	3,488	.....
Tasmania	3,304	.....
	£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 1901 was as follows :—

	Orient.	P. and O.
London to Sydney	33 $\frac{1}{2}$ days.	32 $\frac{2}{3}$ days.
Sydney to London	32 $\frac{1}{4}$ „	32 $\frac{1}{2}$ „

On several occasions the mails from London have been delivered in Sydney in 31 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 is working under a temporary agreement with the J. D. Spreckels Company (the Oceanic Steamship Company of San Francisco). Until the whole question of ocean mail services, as affecting the Commonwealth and New Zealand, which was a subject for discussion at the Premier's Conference in London recently, has been dealt with, no contract for a definite period will be entered upon. During the year 1901 the net cost of the service to New Zealand was £17,094; to New South Wales, nil; and to Victoria, £256 in 1900. The average time occupied in carrying the mails by the San Francisco route during the same year was as follows :—

London to Sydney.....	35 $\frac{1}{2}$ days.
Sydney to London.....	35 $\frac{1}{2}$ „

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

the state 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 1901 the net cost of the Vancouver service to New South Wales was £8,330; and to Victoria £404. The average time occupied by the mails in transit from Sydney to London was $37\frac{2}{3}$ days.

The Queensland line of steamers, sailing from Brisbane, *via* Torres Straits, carries 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 state 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 states by the Torres Straits route is very small.

Besides those mentioned, the other steamship companies trading with the Australasian states 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 states 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce *via* Italy, and 4d. *via* the long sea route, to the uniform rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. In 1891 the states were represented at the

Congress of the Universal Postal Union held in Vienna, and on the 4th July 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 states, the rate being 1d. for the first 4 ounces, and ½d. for every additional 2 ounces.

TELEGRAPHS.

The electric telegraph was introduced into these states 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 state and all the others of the group was completed in 1877.

All the states 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 state at the last five census periods, so far as the returns are available:—

State.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.
New South Wales ...	1,616	*4,674	8,515	11,697	14,272
Victoria .....	.....	*2,295	3,350	6,840	6,467
Queensland	169	2,525	6,280	9,996	10,246
South Australia	597	1,183	4,946	5,640	5,763
Western Australia ...	.....	*550	1,585	2,921	6,173
Tasmania .....	.....	*291	928	2,082	2,187
Commonwealth...	.....	11,518	25,604	39,176	45,108
New Zealand.....	.....	2,015	3,824	5,349	7,469
Australasia .....	.....	13,533	29,428	44,525	52,577

* 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.	1901.
New South Wales.....	1,981	5,579	14,278	24,780	46,133
Victoria .....	.....	3,472	6,626	13,989	13,480
Queensland	169	2,614	8,585	17,646	20,537
South Australia	915	1,718	7,228	†12,707	17,853
Western Australia .....	.....	*750	1,593	3,546	9,104
Tasmania .....	.....	241	1,157	3,178	3,565
Commonwealth .....	.....	14,374	39,467	75,846	110,672
New Zealand.....	.....	3,287	9,653	13,235	21,705
Australasia .....	.....	17,661	49,120	89,081	132,377

* In 1873. † Including telephone wires.

The number of telegrams passing along the wires of each state and the revenue received by the Telegraph Departments during the year 1901 were as appended. In the total for Australasia a correction has been made for inter-state telegrams recorded in both the despatching and the receiving state :—

State.	Number of Telegrams.	Revenue received.
		£
New South Wales	3,449,315	191,664
Victoria	2,429,590	120,385
Queensland	1,374,727	83,939
South Australia	1,224,109	106,853
Western Australia	1,225,599	82,533
Tasmania	363,414	17,064
Commonwealth	10,066,754	602,438
Do (Inter-State excess excluded).	8,707,353	.....
New Zealand	4,296,820	151,934
Australasia	14,363,574	754,372
Do (Intercolonial excess excluded).	12,939,753	.....

In the whole of Australasia there were on 31st December, 1901, 4,118 telegraph stations, of which 978 were in New South Wales, 843

in Victoria, 481 in Queensland, 286 in South Australia, 167 in Western Australia, 325 in Tasmania, and 1,038 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 countries, however, except the United Kingdom, Belgium, and Cape Colony, 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 popu- lation.
	miles.	No.	No.
United Kingdom	46,295	89,576,961	2·15
France	90,170	48,144,151	1·25
Belgium	3,975	14,411,487	2·15
Netherlands*	3,831	5,393,872	1·04
Germany	84,016	46,008,795	0·82
Denmark	3,762	2,153,552	0·88
Sweden	9,049	2,643,742	0·51
Norway	9,040	2,267,915	1·01
Austria-Hungary	38,662	29,427,615	0·65
Switzerland	5,698	3,950,162	1·19
Italy	26,427	9,060,484	0·28
Spain	19,885	5,055,104	0·28
Portugal	5,180	3,420,453	0·63
Russia	98,570	18,376,969	0·17
Roumania	4,344	2,224,539	0·38
United States†	193,589	65,657,049	0·86
Canada	34,623	5,036,814	0·94
Cape Colony	7,467	3,562,039	2·33
Argentine Republic	27,584	5,296,184	1·10
Commonwealth of Australia	45,108	8,707,353	2·3
Australasia	52,577	12,939,753	2·8

* 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-twentieths 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 two and a third per inhabitant in the case of Cape Colony, to one-sixth per inhabitant in the case of Russia.

TELEGRAPH RATES.

The rates for the transmission of telegrams within the Commonwealth were determined by the Post and Telegraph Rates Acts, 1902, and came into force on the 1st November, 1902. For ordinary telegrams, not exceeding sixteen words, including the address and signature, the charges are 6d. in town and suburban districts within prescribed limits or within 15 miles from the sending station, 9d. to other places within the state, and 1s. for inter-state, that is, from any one state to any other, are levied, and for each additional word, an extra charge of 1d. in each case is made. On telegrams from and to Tasmania, the cable charges are added to those already specified, and double rates are imposed for the transmission of telegrams on Sunday, Christmas Day, and Good Friday, and for "urgent" telegrams. In New Zealand a charge of 6d. for the first twelve words, including address and signature, and 1d. for each additional word on all inland telegrams is made. Urgent messages are transmitted upon payment of double the ordinary rates.

CABLE SERVICES.

Australasia is in telegraphic communication with Europe and the rest of the world by means of five cables three of which are connected with the various Asiatic continental lines, one by America, and one by Durban and along the West Coast of Africa. The first of the three cables by Asia, 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 states 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 states 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 12,576 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 states 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 states 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.

As a direct result of the completion of the Pacific cable of which the sections, Queensland-Norfolk Island and Norfolk Island-New Zealand, were opened for business on the 23rd April, 1902, the charges for New Zealand-Australian telegrams, except to and from Tasmania, were reduced to one uniform rate of 4½d. per word, and to Tasmania to 5½d.; the additional 1d. to Tasmania is to cover the transmission over the Australia-Tasmania cable. In addition to the reduction of the rates for telegrams to and from Australia, the opening of the Pacific cable has benefited senders of cable telegrams to places beyond Australia, by bringing about a general reduction of the rates in New Zealand to the more favourable rates obtaining in New South Wales and some of the other Commonwealth states. The rates on ordinary telegrams from New Zealand to Europe were reduced from 1st June, 1902, from 5s. 2d. to 3s. 4d. per word.

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 states 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 states are entitled to use the cable for the transmission of official messages up to the amount of the guarantee.

During the year 1890 the states 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 states 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 state 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 states according to population. But this sum, combined with the amount of the subsidy, was more than the states 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 states have therefore not been called upon to contribute. Queensland later joined the other states in the guarantee.

The agreement between the Australian Governments and the Company expired on the 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 states would agree to certain conditions. South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania accepted the terms offered and now enjoy the reduced rates. The other states 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 states were definitely committed. On the 16th January, 1901, New South Wales entered into the agreement.

The following table shows the amount paid by each state towards cable subsidies and guarantees during the year 1901. From the 1st

May, 1901, the whole of the subsidy in connection with the Tasmanian cable has been paid by Tasmania.

State.	Victoria- Tasmania Subsidy.	Queensland- New Caledonia Guarantee.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales	497 19 3	2,000 0 0	2,497 19 3
Victoria	501 11 1	.....	501 11 1
Queensland	173 3 2	2,000 0 0	2,173 3 2
South Australia	140 18 6	.....	140 18 6
Western Australia	21 17 11	.....	21 17 11
Tasmania	2,864 10 1	.....	2,864 10 1
Total	4,200 0 0	4,000 0 0	8,200 0 0

The desirability of constructing a Pacific cable, which shall touch only British territory on its way from Australia to America, was 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 designated the Pacific Cable Board, comprising Sir Spencer Walpole, as president, representing the United Kingdom; Lord Strathcona, Canada; and the Australian Agents-General their respective states. A contract was entered into with the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company of Greenwich, and the Australian shore end of the cable was laid at Southport, Queensland, on the 13th March, 1902, and the cable was completed to Vancouver, and opened for traffic on the 3rd November, 1902. The cable comprises four sections, with a branch to New Zealand from Norfolk Island, the length of the sections being: Brisbane to Norfolk Island, 834 nautical miles; Norfolk Island to Fiji, 961 miles; Fiji to Fanning Island, 2,093 miles; and Fanning Island to Vancouver, 3,240 miles, the branch from Norfolk Island to New Zealand measuring 537 miles.

The direct Cape cable, from Durban to Fremantle, which provides an alternative all-British route to that of the Pacific, was completed on the 19th October, 1901.

TELEPHONES.

In connection with the telegraph departments of the various states, 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 states 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 states during 1901, 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	48	13,778	.....*	81,852
Victoria	20	6,049	17,354	62,019
Queensland.....	15	2,978	4,359	20,938
South Australia..	10	1,641	3,935	20,617
Western Australia	12	2,764	4,503	26,950
Tasmania.....	13	1,437	1,238	6,339
Commonwealth	118	28,647	.....	218,715
New Zealand	58	9,260	7,767	55,542
Australasia	176	37,907	.....	274,257

* Not ascertained.

In the Australasian states 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 the former State, and £7 in the latter. 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 States during 1901 :—

State.	Revenue.				Expenditure.
	Posts.	Telegraphs.	Telephones.	Total.	
	£	£	£	£	£
New South Wales	596,552	191,664	81,852	870,068	790,783
Victoria	437,894	120,385	62,019	620,298	517,609
Queensland	203,128	83,939	20,938	308,005	389,332
South Australia	148,336	106,853	20,617	275,806	240,846
Western Australia.....	109,335	82,533	26,950	218,818	251,289
Tasmania	72,009	17,064	6,339	95,412	97,470
Commonwealth	1,567,254	602,438	218,715	2,388,407	2,287,329
New Zealand	281,097	151,934	55,542	488,573	465,756
Australasia	1,848,351	754,372	274,257	2,876,980	2,753,085

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, so far as is possible from the very imperfect returns concerning the expenditure on post-offices

in each State, the total expenditure and the deficiency in revenue would be as follow :—

State.	Departmental Expenditure.	Interest and Maintenance of Works and Buildings.	Total charge.	Deficiency in Revenue.
	£	£	£	£
New South Wales.....	790,783	117,864	908,647	38,579
Victoria	517,609	94,873	612,482	*7,816
Queensland.....	389,332	65,091	454,423	146,418
South Australia.....	240,846	59,398	300,244	24,438
Western Australia	251,289	26,429	277,718	58,900
Tasmania.....	97,470	8,892	106,362	10,950
Commonwealth	2,287,329	372,547	2,659,876	271,469
New Zealand	465,756	72,942	538,698	50,125
Australasia	2,753,085	445,489	3,198,574	321,594

* Excess of Revenue.

With the progress of settlement and the increase of population, the expenditure on the postal and telegraphic services naturally expands year by year, and it is apparent that in order to keep pace with the growing needs of the community the department must be administered on ordinary business principles. Hitherto the application of such principles has not been obvious, and perhaps it has not been possible, but now that the affairs of the six states are centred under one control, much of past extravagant expenditure will be avoided, and there is every prospect of the service becoming self-supporting—that is, returning a revenue sufficient not only to meet current expenditure, but provide a surplus to cover maintenance of works and buildings, together with interest on capital cost.