POST AND TELEGRAPHS.

POSTAL SERVICE.

First post office. 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 parties addressed, 8d. for every English or foreign letter of whatever weight, and for every parcel weighing not more than 20 lb., 1s. 6d. ; but 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.

First Postal Act.

Early postage rates. It was, however, not 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 Franking. 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In 1831 a two-penny post was established in Sydney, and in 1835, under Sir Richard Bourke, the Act of 1825 was repealed and another Act was passed, which fixed the charge on a single letter at 4d.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, which was then of course a part of New South Wales.   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. *Sir Richard Bourke's Postal Act.* *Stamped covers.*

Regular steam mail communication with England was first established in 1852 ; prior to that time the Colony had to depend upon the irregular arrival and despatch of sailing vessels, but in that year the steamships "Australia," "Chusan," and "Great Britain" were despatched from England, making the voyage in 60 days, causing a strong desire in the minds of the Colonists for a more frequent and steady system of 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, without giving so much satisfaction to the public as might have been expected. *First mail steamer.*

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 Government of the United Kingdom and those of New South Wales and New Zealand.   The result was that in 1866 the line 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* *The Panama line.*

San Francisco route.

San Francisco, which, with a few interruptions and under various conditions, has been continued up to the present time. The contract expired in November, 1890, but was renewed during 1891 for one year only by the New Zealand Government, and the steamers still make Sydney their terminus, without any subsidy as far as New South Wales is concerned. The service is still in existence in 1893.

Mail service *via* Suez.

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 has continued to do so ever since. In the year 1883 the fine steamers of the Messageries Maritimes of France entered the service, to be followed in 1887, by the North German Lloyd's, so that there are now sometimes two 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.
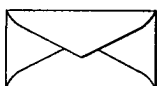
French and German steamers.

Letters and papers carried.

The following statement gives the number of letters and newspapers passing, in 1861, through the post-offices of the various Colonies. It will be seen on comparing these figures with those in the next table 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. It should be explained that, while the figures quoted show correctly the postal business of each individual Colony, the total number of letters and newspapers for Australasia as returned is too large, the intercolonial mails being counted twice over—that is, both at the Colony they
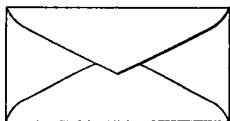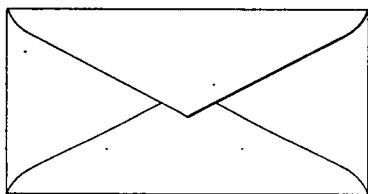
LETTERS CARRIED
POST-CARDS INCLUDED

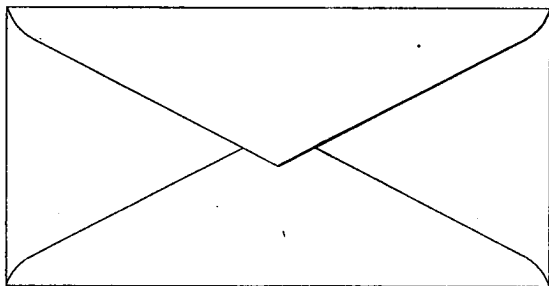### 1861

Nº 14,061,000

1871

Nº 30,435,300

1881

Nº 80,791,700

1891

Nº 183,694,900

are sent from and at the Colony they are delivered at. In this table, as well as in the following one, a second total has been given, from which this Intercolonial excess is excluded, so as to represent the amount of postage business actually transacted in the year 1861 :—

Colony.	No. of Post Offices.	Letters.	Newspapers.
New South Wales	340	4,369,463	3,384,245
Victoria	369	6,109,929	4,277,179
Queensland	24	515,211	427,489
South Australia	160	1,540,472	1,089,424
Western Australia	...	193,317	137,476
Tasmania.......................	100	835,873	895,656
New Zealand	...	1,236,768	1,428,351
Australasia	...	14,801,033	11,639,820
Australasia (Intercolonial excess excluded)	...	14,061,000	10,941,400

The following shows the postal business of each of the colonies Postal business. during 1891, the number of letters, &c., being obtained by adding inland letters passing through the office, and thus counted once, to Intercolonial and Foreign letters, &c., received and despatched ; with a similar correction to that made in the previous table :—

Colony.	Post Offices.	Letters and Post Cards.	Books, Parcels, and Packages.	Newspapers.	Revenue.
					£
New South Wales	1,384	64,153,600	11,068,500	42,517,300	443,878
Victoria	1,671	62,526,448	7,684,915	22,729,005	*323,344
Queensland	903	15,345,842	2,491,957	11,896,148	121,689
South Australia	629	17,836,092	1,314,724	8,883,103	111,238
Western Australia	84	3,192,992	322,419	1,665,862	17,573
Tasmania	328	5,852,381	1,305,859	5,376,142	53,500
New Zealand	1,231	26,537,545	5,039,873	11,312,200	197,910
Australasia	6,230	195,444,900	29,228,247	104,379,760	1,269,132
Australasia (Intercolonial excess excluded)	....	183,694,900	23,228,247	95,879,760	......

* Approximate.

The figures given for Victoria, excepting revenue, are those for 1890, similar information for 1891 not being compiled by the postal authorities of that Colony.

⠀Of the totals given for Australasia, 166,861,408 letters and post-cards ; 20,736,387 books, parcels, and packages ; and 79,197,814 newspapers were " inland," that is, they were posted and delivered within the same Colony, while 28,583,492 letters, 8,491,860 parcels, and 25,181,946 newspapers were received from or despatched to places beyond the Colony. Every article is thus counted once by each Colony through whose post-office it passes.

During 1890 the number of letters passing through the post-offices of New South Wales was less than that of Victoria, but in 1891 the New South Wales total increased by nearly 6,000,000. No comparison can be made with Victorian figures for the same year, owing to the absence of the returns of the latter Colony. The increase in Victoria in 1890 over that of the preceding year amounted to nearly fourteen and a half millions, a circumstance almost entirely due to the reduction of fee from 2d. to 1d. on all letters posted in the Colony for delivery within its boundaries. In New South Wales and Tasmania newspapers were carried free within the Colony during 1891, which largely extended their circulation through the post, but in all the other colonies a small fee was charged. The following table shows the number of letters and post-cards, books, &c., and newspapers per head during 1891. Western Australia and Victoria take the lead in respect to letters, but New South Wales and Tasmania stand foremost as regards newspapers : —

Effect of reduced postage.

Colony.	Number per Inhabitant.		
	Letters, &c.	Books, Parcels, &c.	Newspapers.
New South Wales	55	9	37
Victoria	56	7	20
Queensland	38	6	29
South Australia	55	4	28
Western Australia	63	6	33
Tasmania	39	9	36
New Zealand	42	8	18

The following table shows the number of letters and post-cards Postal business in other per head in some of the principal countries of the world. With countries. the exception of the United Kingdom the extent of the correspondence in Australasia largely exceeds that of any of the countries named. In this table also the total for Australasia has been corrected by the elimination of the Intercolonial excess :—

Country.	Number of Letters and Post-cards per head of Population.	Country.	Number of Letters and Post-cards per head of Population.
United Kingdom ...	53	Austria	22
France	18	Switzerland	35
Belgium	25	Italy	6
Netherlands............	22	Spain	6
Germany	27	Portugal...............	6
Denmark	22	Canada	24
Sweden.....:.........	24	Cape Colony	9
Norway	13	Australasia	48
Russia	2		

The following table illustrates the extent of the postal facilities Postal facilities in Australasia. in regard to the number of inhabitants, and the square miles of territory to each post-office. It will be seen that Western Australia has one office to every 634 persons, while New South Wales, with the largest postal business of the colonies, has the least number of offices compared with population; Western Australia, the least when compared with territory :—

Colony.	Number of Inhabitants to each Post Office.	Number of Square Miles of Territory to each Office.
	Number.	Square Miles.
New South Wales	844	224 .
Victoria	670	51
Queensland	454	740
South Australia	518	1,325
Western Australia............................	634	12,621
Tasmania	465	80
New Zealand	515	85
Australasia	620	503

Ocean mail
services.

All the colonies, with the exception of New Zealand, have, in conjunction with the Imperial Government, entered into an agreement with the Peninsular and Oriental, and the Orient Steam Navigation Companies. Under this contract, which will expire on the 31st January, 1895, the two Companies have undertaken a weekly mail service for a yearly subsidy of £170,000. This subsidy is made up by a contribution of £95,000 from the Imperial Government, and of £75,000 from the six contracting colonies, distributed on the basis of population as follows :—

Colony.	Amount of Subsidy, 1891.
	£
New South Wales	26,675
Victoria	26,383
Queensland	9,706
South Australia	7,579
Tasmania	3,596
Western Australia	1,061
Total	75,000

The estimated net cost to be made good from revenue in New South Wales was £13,729 against £564 in 1890, while the cost of this service to Queensland amounted to £9,688. Victoria, after paying her share of the subsidy, had a deficit of £7,853. Returns for the other colonies are unfortunately not available.

Time of service
via Suez.

The mail service has been performed with great regularity and expedition. The average time of both services in 1891 was :—

Days.

London to Sydney .... $34\frac{4}{13}$

Sydney to London .... $34\frac{9}{13}$

Mail service via
San Francisco.

In addition to the federal ocean mail service via Suez, New South Wales and New Zealand, until November, 1890, subsidised the Union 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. The cost of

this service during 1891 was £349 to New South Wales, £171 to Victoria, and £462 to Queensland, and £3,455 to New Zealand. The New Zealand Shipping Company is also under contract to carry mails from New Zealand to the United Kingdom, and the cost of this service during 1891 was £2,691. The average time during *Time by the American service.* the same year by the San Francisco route was :—

	Days.
London to Sydney	$40\frac{1}{13}$
Sydney to London	$37\frac{14}{13}$

The British India Steam Navigation Company, sailing from *Torres Straits Route.* Brisbane, *via* Torres Straits, carry mails under contract with the Queensland Government. This route is from four to ten days longer than those previously mentioned, mails in 1891 having occupied about 44 days in transit. Queensland, under the former contract, paid the company an annual subsidy of £55,000. This contract 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 fort-nightly system, were allowed to revert to the four-weekly service for twelve months from 22nd December, 1891, the subsidy being reduced to the smaller amount mentioned above, viz., £19,800. The cost of English mails by this line in 1891 was £24,201.

Besides those mentioned the other steamship companies trading *French and German mail steamers.* with the Australasian Colonies carry mails, notably the Messa-geries Maritimes Company and the North German Lloyd, sailing from Sydney, and the Shaw, Saville, and Albion 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 are in receipt of large subsidies from the French and German Governments respectively. The Nippon Yusen Kaisha, a Japan Mail Steamship Company, purposes shortly running a line

of fast steamers between Japan, China, and the Colonies. It is understood that the enterprise will be subsidized by the

Vancouver mail service. Japanese Government. A monthly mail service from Sydney and Brisbane, *via* Vancouver, has just been initiated by Mr. James Huddart.

The postage to the United Kingdom was reduced in January, 1891, from 6d. per ½ oz. *via* Italy, and 4d. *via* the long sea route, to the uniform rate of 2½d. In 1891 the Colonies were represented

Universal Postal Union. at the Congress of the Universal Postal Union held in Vienna, and on July 4th, a convention was signed on their behalf, by which they joined the Union from October 1st, 1891. From that date the rate of postage to all British Colonies and possessions and foreign countries included in the Union was reduced to 2½d. As was to be expected, the immediate result of the alteration was a reduction in revenue, but it is confidently anticipated that so far as these Colonies are concerned, the time is not far distant when the revenue from this branch of postal service will reach its original volume.

Newspaper postage. A common scale of postage on newspapers has been adopted by New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and New Zealand, and it is considered probable that before long the two remaining colonies of Australasia will join in the arrangement. It has been provided that newspapers for the United Kingdom shall be subject to a charge of 1d., irrespective of weight, and to all places beyond Australasia, except the United Kingdom, the same rate for every 4 oz., with an additional ½d. for every 2 oz. over that weight. By a recent change in the postal laws of Queensland newspapers, which previously were transmitted from New South Wales and Tasmania to that colony free of charge, were subjected to a charge of 1d. for every 10 oz. on delivery in Queensland, unless prepaid at the rate of ½d. for 10 oz. in the country of origin.

Registered letters. The number of registered letters passing through the post offices of the Australasian Colonies has largely increased of late

years, and in New South Wales the number in 1891 was no less than 1,047,080, an increase of 266,878 over the total in 1890. This large increase is not a natural growth, but arises chiefly from correspondence relating to so-called "consultations" or lottery sweeps connected with horse-racing, which are established in Sydney, and to support which large sums of money are sent to that city from all parts of Australasia, and also from other countries. Probably not less than 600,000 of the total for 1891 in New South Wales were associated with these "sweeps." The Government of New South Wales proposes to deal with this evil in an amending Postal Bill. It has been estimated by the late Postmaster-General of Victoria that nearly £100,000 of the Colony's money is sent to New South Wales annually to be distributed in these sweeps.

All the Colonies, with the exception of New South Wales, Parcels post. have systems of intercolonial parcels post in operation, and in the latter Colony steps are being taken to secure the necessary legislation for the inauguration of this useful branch of the postal service.

An Intercolonial Postal Conference was commenced in Brisbane Postal Conference at Brisbane. on the 20th March, 1893, at which matters of detail, both ministerial and departmental, in connection with postal and telegraph business were considered. The whole of the seven Australasian Colonies were represented, and agreement was arrived at with regard to several matters of detail.

TELEGRAPHS.

In no country in the world has the development of telegraphic Telegraphic communication in Australasia. 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 in the world that possess a greater extent of telegraph lines, and only five in which a larger number of messages are actually sent. In no other country, however, does the number of

Number of
messages sent.

messages bear anything approaching the same ratio to the popu-
lation. The following table illustrates these remarks :—

Country.	Length of tele- graph lines (poles).	Messages.	Messages per head of popu- lation.
	Miles.	No.	No.
United Kingdom	31,824	69,685,000	1·8
France*	60,910	29,307,000	0·8
Belgium*	4,265	5,312,000	0·9
Netherlands	3,257	4,286,000	0·9
Germany	62,007	27,728,000	0·6
Denmark	2,794	1,503,000	0·7
Sweden	5,456	1,755,000	0·4
Norway	. 4,710	1,454,000	0·7
Russia	74,276	9,949,000	0·1
Austria-Hungary	39,354	13,546,000	0·3
Switzerland..	4,418	3,612,500	1·2
Italy...................	22,523	8,176,000	0·3
Spain	14,710	4,085,000	0·3
Portugal ....:.........	3,191	1,730,000	0·4
United States...........................	187,981	59,148,000	0·9
Canada...................................	30,987	4,368,000	0·9
Cape Colony	4,920	1,317,000	0·9
Australasia (Intercolonial excess excluded.)	44,855	11,069,800	2·9

<center>* Government lines only.</center>

The totals of the telegrams of the Australasian Colonies amount
to 12,269,800 ; from this number has been deducted 1,200,000,
to avoid the counting of Intercolonial telegrams, both in the
despatching and the receiving Colonies. From the above table it
appears that the population of Australasia sent nearly three

Number of mes-
sages per head.

messages through the telegraph in the year for each inhabitant.
In the United Kingdom the number was about one and three-
quarters to each inhabitant; in the United States of America
about one message for every inhabitant. The return for the
United States includes only the lines of the Western Union
Company, who own the principal part of the United States
telegraph system. In France and Belgium one message and a-half
was sent for every two persons; in Germany one message for
every two persons ; in Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Spain, rather
more than one message for every four persons. In Canada and
the Cape Colony less than one message is sent for every inhabitant
in each year.

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.

Australasia is connected with Europe and the rest of the world by means of cables connecting with the various Asiatic continental lines. There are two cables—the older one opened in October, 1872—joining Port Darwin to Banjowangie in Java, whence communication is provided with Europe by way of Batavia, Singapore, Madras, and Bombay. The cable from Port Darwin to Banjowangie is unfortunately liable to damage through volcanic eruptions, and the question is, therefore, being considered whether a point more to the east should not be substituted for Banjowangie. The length of line between Adelaide and London is 12,570 miles—9,146 cable, and 3,424 miles overland wire. Of the land portion 1,971 miles are between Adelaide and Port Darwin. A second cable was laid in 1888 from Broome, on Roebuck Bay, in Western Australia, to Banjowangie. 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. New Zealand

G

was joined to the continent by a cable laid in 1876, the length
being about 1,191 miles. It 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 Nelson, on
the middle or south island, whence another cable is laid to
Wanganui, in the North island, with an alternate line from Picton
to Wellington.

Amended tariff. At a conference of the postal and telegraphic authorities, held
in Sydney in February, 1891, the question of cable rates came
under discussion, and a proposal of the Eastern Extension Tele-
graph Company was agreed to, by which the colonies, with the
exception of New Zealand and Queensland, undertook to make
good half the loss which the Company would sustain by a
reduction in the schedule of cable charges. 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 £158,941. 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 *pro rata*
according to population.

Cable to New
Caledonia.

An agreement has been entered into between the representative
of a French company and the Queensland Government, for the
construction of a cable service between Queensland and New
Caledonia, a distance of 900 miles. The French Government is
to guarantee £8,000 and the Governments of New South Wales
and Queensland £2,000 each as a subsidy to the line; and in
consideration of this sum the two Australian Governments
mentioned are entitled to the use of the wire for transmission of
Government messages free of cost, up to the extent of the
guarantee. The Queensland terminus of the cable has been fixed at
Burnett Heads, that locality having been selected as being more
suitable than either Gladstone, Sandy Cape, or Cape Moreton,
which had been mentioned as probable landing places for the cable.

This service, when completed, will be the first portion of the proposed main Pacific cable, connecting Australia with Vancouver, San Francisco, or such other place as may be determined.

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 is largely due to 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.

Progress in Telegraphic matters.

The following table shows the increase in the number of telegraphic lines for each colony at intervals of ten years, as far as the returns are available :—

Length of Telegraph poles.

Colony.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.
New South Wales	1,616	*4,674	8,515	11,697
Victoria	......	*2,295	3,350	7,170
Queensland	169	2,525	6,280	9,996
South Australia	597	1,183	4,946	5,640
Western Australia	......	*750	1,585	2,921
Tasmania	......	*291	928	2,082
New Zealand	......	2,015	3,824	5,349
Australasia	......	13,733	29,428	44,855

* In 1873.

The next table gives similar particulars, only the amounts are expressed as miles of wire instead of length in poles :—

Length of Telegraph wires.

Colony.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.
New South Wales	1,981	5,579	14,278	24,780
Victoria	......	3,472	6,626	13,989
Queensland	169	2,614	8,585	17,646
South Australia	915	1,718	7,228	12,707
Western Australia	......	*750	1,593	3,546
Tasmania	......	241	1,157	3,178
New Zealand	......	3,287	9,653	13,235
Australasia	......	17,661	49,120	89,081

* In 1873.

The number of telegrams passing along the wires of each Colony, and the revenue received by the respective telegraph departments for the year 1891, were as follow. In the total for Australasia

Number of Telegrams.

a correction has been made for Intercolonial telegrams recorded in both the despatching and the receiving colony :—

Colony.	Number of Telegrams.	Revenue Received.
		£
New South Wales	4,046,251	181,952
Victoria	3,310,489	135,312
Queensland	1,189,355	90,940
South Australia	917,633	79,310
Western Australia	224,113	12,643
Tasmania	593,583	32,576
New Zealand	1,988,353	91,592
Australasia	12,269,777	624,325
Australasia (Intercolonial excess excluded.)	11,069,800	....

Telephones.   In connection with the Telegraph Departments of the various colonies, Telephone Exchanges have, during recent years, been established in the capitals and other important centres of population.   The returns relating to Telephones are, however, difficult to separate from those relating to Telegraphs, particularly with regard to the distinct wires in use.   Information regarding Telephones in the different colonies, as far as can be ascertained, will be found in the following table :—

Colony.	Number of telephones.	Miles of wire (distinct from telegraph wires.)	Revenue.
			£
New South Wales............	2,789	......*	16,579
Victoria	2,439	8,731	38,384
Queensland	639	......*	4,207
South Australia	758	2,275	12,348
Western Australia............	150	591	1,084
Tasmania........................	689	496	3,528
New Zealand	3,083	2,603	18,571
Australasia	10,547	......	94,701

* Not furnished.

In addition to the branches of the Postal and Telegraphic business dealt with in this chapter, Money Order Offices and Savings Banks are in operation in all the colonies, particulars regarding which will be found in the chapter dealing with Finance.