

TELEGRAPHS.

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. There are only four countries in the world that possess a greater extent of telegraph lines than these Colonies, and only six in which a greater number of messages are actually sent than in Australasia. In no other country, however, does the number of messages bear anything like the same ratio to population.

First Telegraph
Lines.

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 electric cable between Tasmania and Victoria was laid in 1869. Australia was connected, by cable and the overland line of telegraph, with England in July, 1872; and New Zealand was joined by cable to the continent of Australia in February, 1876. (The line between London and Adelaide consists of 9,146 miles of cable and 3,424 miles of overland wire, and the New Zealand cable is 1,191 miles long.) The first telegraph in Western Australia was opened in 1869, and communication between that Colony and all the others of the

Cable to
England.

group was completed in 1877. The following tables show the development of telegraphs throughout Australasia to the close of 1888 :—

Development of
Telegraphs.

Miles of Telegraph (Poles).

	1861.	1871.	1881.	1888.
New South Wales.....	1,616	.....	8,515	10,690
Victoria .....	.....	.....	3,350	4,194
Queensland	169	2,525	6,280	9,167
South Australia.....	597	1,183	4,946	5,509
Western Australia .....	.....	.....	1,585	2,961
Tasmania .....	.....	.....	928	1,894
New Zealand .....	.....	2,015	3,824	4,992

Miles of Telegraph (Wires).

	1861.	1871.	1881.	1888.
New South Wales.....	1,981	5,579	14,278	22,219
Victoria .....	.....	3,472	6,626	10,360
Queensland.....	169	2,614	8,585	16,648
South Australia.....	915	1,718	7,228	9,775
Western Australia .....	.....	.....	1,593	3,234
Tasmania .....	.....	241	1,157	2,505
New Zealand.....	.....	3,287	9,653	11,617

Business done by Telegraphs during the year 1888.

	Number of Telegrams.	Revenue Received.
New South Wales	3,410,407	£185,965
Victoria	2,743,938	125,342
Queensland	1,436,931	103,790
South Australia	994,930	105,421
Western Australia	180,735	8,353
Tasmania	271,769	25,262
New Zealand	1,765,860	106,311
Total Australasia	10,804,570	£660,444

From the above table it appears that the population of Australasia (somewhat over three and a half millions at the middle of 1888) sent three messages through the telegraph in the

Proportion of
messages to
population.

year for each inhabitant. In Great Britain the number was about one and a third to each inhabitant ; in the United States of America, about two messages for every three inhabitants ; in France and Germany, one message for every two persons ; in Austria, Hungary, and Italy, one message for every four persons ; and in Russia, one for every nine of the inhabitants.

Telegraphs
utilized in
Australasia.

In the other British Colonies the use made of the telegraph is considerably greater than in most European countries, but in no case is it nearly so great as in Australasia. In Canada about four-fifths of a message is sent for every inhabitant in each year, and in Cape Colony about the same, but neither there nor elsewhere in the world is the telegraph made use of to anything like the extent to which it is utilized in Australasia ; nor are the returns at all comparable to those obtained upon the capital expended in these Colonies.