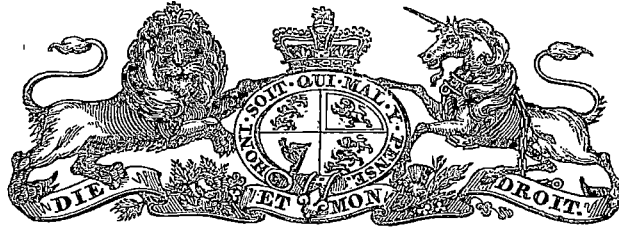


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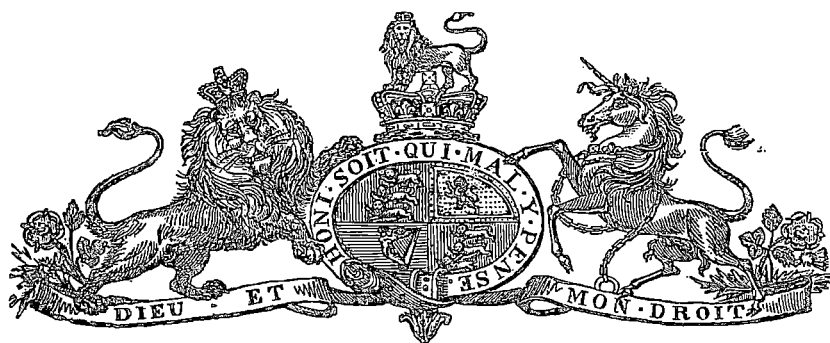
1857.

T A S M A N I A.

POSTAGE COMMUNICATION.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Brought up, and ordered to be printed, 15 January, 1857.



THE Committee appointed by this Honourable Council, on the 9th day of December last, to inquire into the Revenue of the Post Office, the sources from whence derived, and generally into the economy of Postage Communications, have had various meetings, and examined some of the authorities and documents on the matters submitted to them; and have the honor to report as follows:—

EXPENDITURE.

The following is a general statement of the Expenditure of the Department:—

	£	s.
Contracts for Inland Mail Carriage to and from Launceston	5000	0
Ditto other parts	3700	0
Salaries.....	5880	0
Stores, &c.	780	0
Printing and binding	341	9
Rents	500	0
Gratuities to Masters of Ships, including 1 <i>d.</i> to Masters of Ships sailing direct to England or coming direct from England, 1 <i>d.</i> on intercolonial letters outwards and inwards, and ditto on Foreign letters.....	1500	0
Share of Steam-postal Contract (subject to future valuation)	7500	0
	<u>25,201</u>	<u>9</u>
<i>Deduct</i> supposed amount heretofore paid for gratuities now included under Steam Contract	500	0
<i>Total Expenditure</i>	<u>£24,701</u>	<u>9</u>

INCOME.

The whole Income is derived from two classes; viz.—

	£	s.
The public who send letters to the extent of all the stamps sold	8500	0
A contribution from the British Government for Commissariat, Military, Convict, and other Departments of	1500	0
<i>Total Income</i>	<u>£10,000</u>	<u>0</u>

The receipts from book and other parcels is trifling.

The other parties who enjoy the benefit of the Post Office, and who do not contribute to its support, are

1st. The Government Departments, such as the Land Board, Secretary's Department, Police, Treasury, &c. to the extent of perhaps £800.

2nd. Those who forward newspapers inland.

3rd. Those who forward newspapers by sea.

With regard to the Government Departments, and to the forwarders of newspapers inland, this Committee has no observations to offer.

Recognizing the principle that public intelligence is necessary for the moral and

intellectual welfare of the community, they think further, that, in disseminating a knowledge of the notices of the proceedings of the Government, the press confers a benefit adequate to the expense incurred in affording it a free circulation.

This benefit, however, being enjoyed by the community in general, the expense should be considered as a debit to the account of the General Revenue, and, therefore, as relieving the letter-writing part of the Community from the odium of the large expenditure of the Post Office.

With regard to the newspapers going by sea, the expense incurred is so much greater, and the precedents adopted by other countries so different, as to justify, in the opinion of this Committee, a different course here.

The arrangement just now concluded for a contribution of £7500 for our share of the Steam-postal Contract may be regarded as causing an increase to the Colony's previous expenditure for Postal Services of £7000. The future contributions towards this contract will be adjusted according to the benefits derived by each Colony.

It has been stated to this Committee by the Post Office Authorities that the quantity in bulk of newspapers coming by the English Mails is in the proportion of twelve of newspapers to one of letters.

The returns show that the number of letters and papers dispatched from the Colony is nearly equal.

The English Government takes care to charge one penny for each newspaper sent to this Colony before conveying it over sea.

New South Wales also charges one penny on all outgoing newspapers. Victoria does the same.

Your Committee think that, if a similar provision were adopted here, it would bring an annual return of about £500.

There is one item of expenditure now incurred which your Committee think highly objectionable, and ought to be saved.

They allude to the penny inwards paid as a gratuity to Captains of vessels for all letters coming direct from England, not *via* Melbourne, and the like amount paid on all intercolonial Mails inwards.

In former times all contracts for sea carriage were irregular, and no general rule prevailed.

Now it is almost universal that all Mails are paid for at the port of departure, and nothing is paid at the port of arrival.

The carriage for the Mails now under notice is, it is not doubted, fully paid for at the places where the Mails are embarked. The sums paid by this Colony are therefore in excess of what is fairly required, or is earned by the carriers of such Mails.

The saving under this head would, it is estimated, amount to £500.

The chief reason which has been reported as the cause for this charge, was to give an inducement to Masters of Ships to use greater speed in sending their Mails on shore; but your Committee believe the Port Officer can always secure attention to this duty.

Your Committee are glad to find that the reduction which took place here in Town Postages from twopence to one penny was attended with an increase in the correspondence, and an increase in the revenue.

A considerable saving may reasonably be expected in the carriage of Inland Mails when the present contracts expire.

In about two years this reduction will probably amount to £2000 or £3000.

The sum received by the Government for the Sale of Stamps may be analysed thus:—

	£
1. For letters going by sea	3150
2. Ditto inland	5000
3. Town letters, 1d. each.....	350
	8500
	8500

If, therefore, the fourpenny inland rate be lowered to twopence, the loss, if no increase in letters took place, would amount only to one-half the above item, viz.	£ 2500
And deducting the two sums of £500 and £500, by which the Revenue may be benefited by the alterations before detailed, making.....	1000
	1500
	1500

The increase in letters would in all probability reduce this still further according to experience elsewhere.

In conclusion, your Committee think that a Report by the Postmaster-General of the state of the Postal Business, with estimates of Income and Expenditure, would be desirable to have laid before Parliament every year, together with a Statistical Return in such a form as that which they append below.

* * * *MEMORANDUM*—Since the Committee obtained the information on which this Report is founded, they have heard from one source that the penny inwards is probably paid by the authorities at Victoria and Sydney, but they have not the means of procuring authentic information in time for this Report.

FORM OF POST OFFICE RETURN.

	<i>Hobart Town.</i>	<i>Launceston.</i>
Number of Letters to and from Great Britain.		
Inwards		
Outwards		
Newspapers ditto.		
Inwards		
Outwards		
Letters to and from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand.		
Inwards		
Outwards		
Newspapers ditto.		
Inwards		
Outwards		
Letters to and from other Foreign Parts.		
Inwards		
Outwards		
Newspapers ditto.		
Inwards		
Outwards		
Inland Mails.		
Letters despatched (with stamps)		
Newspapers despatched.....		
Penny Town Letters (with stamps).....		
Colonial franked Letters.		
By Fourpenny Post		
By Penny Post		
Number of Post Offices		
Number of Persons employed.....		
Miles of Post Roads.....		
Revenue of Post Office.....		
Expenditure		

WILLIAM HENTY, *Chairman.*

POST OFFICE—REPORT.

Ordered to be printed, 15 January, 1857.

JAMES BARNARD,
GOVERNMENT PRINTER, TASMANIA.