

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

CIVIL WORKS.

Telegraph.

To

No. 22 T.

Dated February 4, 1885.

Received

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B. No 417. Wd 21st July: 1885

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Review of the Administration Report of the
Indian Telegraph Department for the year
1883-84.

No. 53, P. W. D. Press—4-2-85—200.

With order

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PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

CIVIL WORKS.
Telegraph.

Fort William, February 4, 1885.

Administration Report of the Indian Telegraph Department for the year
1883-84.

Read—

Letter from the Director General of Telegraphs in India, No. 538 T. of 18th December 1884, and its enclosure—the Administration Report of the Indian Telegraph Department for the year 1883-84.

RESOLUTION.—During the year 1883-84, the development of the Telegraph Department was very marked. The mileage of telegraph lines was increased from 21,740 to 23,207; the mileage of wires from 62,960 to 68,669; the number of Telegraph Signal Offices from 324 to 347. Under each of these three heads the increase of the year has been greater than that of any of the three previous years. At the same time, great progress was made in giving practical effect to the scheme for combined action between the Postal and Telegraph Departments, as on the 1st December 1883 every Post Office in British India was constituted a Telegraph Receiving Office.

2. The net receipts of the Department have been, during the past four years, as follows:—

					Rs.
1880-81	...	...	...	...	13,30,167
1881-82	...	...	...	...	6,18,568
1882-83	...	...	...	...	8,17,797
1883-84	...	...	...	...	3,86,078

3. The large reduction in the net receipts is due partly to an actual decrease in the message revenue, but mainly to an increase in working charges. The decrease in the net receipts of the Department is not, in itself, a circumstance which the Government of India regards with any dissatisfaction: the result is, to a considerable extent, due to the policy on which lines, known to be unremunerative, have been constructed in the public interests, and to other measures which have increased the general usefulness of the telegraphs of the country, but have tended to a perceptible reduction in the net receipts. The earnings on the new lines just opened may, however, be reasonably expected to increase. The working expenses for the years above mentioned were:—

					Rs.
1880-81	...	...	...	...	31,71,470
1881-82	...	...	...	...	32,35,644
1882-83	...	...	...	...	33,39,442
1883-84	...	...	...	...	37,44,186

4. The increase in these charges is not quite proportionate to the increase in mileage of lines and wires, but it is very nearly so; it is explained in the Report that there have been, during the year under review, abnormally heavy charges for reconstructing some of the older lines.

5. The gross revenue of the Department for the past four years has been—

					Rs.
1880-81	...	...	...	...	45,01,637
1881-82	...	...	...	...	38,54,212
1882-83	...	...	...	...	41,57,239
1883-84	...	...	...	...	41,24,264

6. The revenue in 1880-81 was to some extent abnormal in consequence chiefly of the operations in Afghanistan; the decrease in the year under review, which would have been greater but for a largely increased revenue under the head "Claims from guarantors," is mainly due to the increased proportion of messages which are sent by the public as "Deferred;" this fact is one which must be regarded with satisfaction, as indicating the popularity of the new system and of the rates for messages which were introduced in January 1882.

7. That portion of the total revenue of the year which is due to the actual transmission of messages compares with that of the previous year as follows:—

					Rs.
1882-83	...	...	...	...	32,75,608
1883-84	...	...	...	...	32,20,067

giving a net decrease of Rs. 55,541. This decrease is entirely due to the reduction in the number and value of State messages.

The falling off in the number and value of these under the head of inland messages was as follows:—

				Number of messages.	Value. Rs.
1882-83	...	...	...	253,731	6,09,818
1883-84	...	...	...	226,480	4,71,232

This diminution is rather a matter for congratulation than regret; it indicates, perhaps, economy in the Departments of Government, but more probably the quietness and contentment of the country. The number of State messages has never been so low since the year 1878-79. The private inland messages, on the other hand, shew a slight increase. The figures are—

				Number of messages.	Value. Rs.
1882-83	...	...	...	1,189,437	13,86,630
1883-84	...	...	...	1,236,140	14,15,754

The increases appear to be as below:—

Line mileage	...	...	...	...	6.75 per cent.
Wire "	...	...	...	...	9.07 "
Offices	...	...	...	...	7.10 "
Private messages	...	...	...	...	3.92 "
Receipts from private messages	...	...	...	...	2.10 "

8. The increasing popularity of "Deferred" messages is apparent both in State and private messages. In the year 1882-83, the percentages of "Deferred" messages of these two classes of the whole number of each despatched, were 56.06 and 32.06; in the year under review, these percentages were 57.49 and 39.63, respectively, of the total number of messages sent.

9. The steady increase in the foreign traffic is satisfactory; the State messages show a decrease in number, from 5,473 in 1882-83 to 4,918 in 1883-84; and the private messages a small increase, from 350,538 to 357,616. The Indian share of the charges on all foreign messages has increased from Rs. 12,79,160 to Rs. 13,33,081, and is the largest on record.

10. The speed with which messages have been transmitted has been, on the whole, satisfactory; this is particularly the case with regard to messages on the important route between Calcutta and Kurrachee, which carries a large proportion of the foreign traffic; the average speed on this route has been 62 minutes from Calcutta to Kurrachee, and 36 minutes from Kurrachee to Calcutta. These speeds are, with one exception, superior to those which have been obtained on this route during the past five years. On the Madras-Bombay route also, which is, perhaps, even more important as being the main line from the far East, the speed of transmission has been about 40 minutes: this rate excels any during the last five years.

11. The voluntary examination of signallers was held, as usual, during the year under review, to test the qualification of the staff for promotion. The Government of India notices with satisfaction the good results obtained, and desires that these results may be given every year in future reports; it is thought that this measure is likely to stimulate industry and exertion among the important body of telegraph signallers; and is, at the same time, one which gives to the Head of the Department good grounds on which he may promote, by selection, the most competent and able men.

12. During the year under review a temporary line of telegraph was completed between Burmah and Siam: the line was actually opened and messages were exchanged with Bangkok. It was found impossible, however, owing to the wild and unhealthy nature of the country, to keep the line in working order during the rainy season. Great exertions are being made during the current season to put this line on a permanent footing with every promise of success.

13. It is extremely satisfactory to notice that the scheme for combined action between the Postal and Telegraph Departments has worked well during the year, and that great progress has been made. The fact that this is so, shews that both the Departments have cordially co-operated to give the best effect to the wishes of Government. It has already been noticed that on the 1st December 1883, every Post Office in India was made a receiving office for telegrams; from these offices telegrams are despatched, without extra charge, to the nearest telegraph station. Up to the end of the year under review, 24 telegraph offices, formerly worked by telegraph officials, were transferred to postal agency, and 31 new offices were opened under the charge of postal officials. Great progress has been made in instructing these officials in signalling duties; there is every prospect that a large number of new offices will be opened during the current year under the charge of those men who were being trained for this duty during the last year.

14. It would be interesting to know how far the public make use of the Telegraph Receiving Offices for the despatch of messages. The Government of India desire that some statistics under this head may be given in the next Report.

15. The Telephone Companies have obtained a fair amount of support in the large cities of India. There are exchanges worked by private Companies at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Rangoon, and Kurrachee. During the year under review—

The number of subscribers increased from	244 to 411,
The number of exchange connections increased from	244 to 392,
Amounts realized increased from Rs.	73,009 to Rs. 1,19,865,

at these five towns. The royalty payable by the Companies to Government was reduced during the year from 10 per cent. to 5 per cent. on the gross receipts of the Company.

ORDER.—Ordered, that a copy of this Resolution and of the Report be forwarded to the Secretary of State, and to the Local Governments and Administrations noted on the margin, and to the Government of Ceylon and the Commissioner in Sind.

Also, to the Foreign Department, for communication to the Resident at Mysore and Coorg.

Also, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Director General of Telegraphs for information and guidance.

Also, that a copy of this Resolution and of the Report and Appendices A, B, and F, be forwarded to the Home Department of the Government of India for information, and be published in the *Gazette of India*.

M. D. D.

Colonel, R. E.,

Secretary to the Govt. of India.

To
The Secy. to the Govt. of Madras
Public Works Department

* Report despt. in a
separate cover.

Public & Depts.
Indy. Deptt.
Res. Deptt.

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W. S. TREVOR, Colonel, R. E.,

Secretary to the Govt. of India.