

Public Works (1897) Department.

G.O., No. 2969 W

DATED 23. October 1897

[Despatch Abstract.]

Indian Telegraph Department, Govt of India
Review of the Administration Report of the
— for 1896-97 Comtd to the Public and
Revenue Departments.
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Dr
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From The Secretary to the Govt.
of India.

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to the Public and
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SUBJECT.

Review of the Administration
Report of the Indian Telegraph
Department for the year

Pauline Depo
New Depo

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No. 285 T.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT,

CIVIL WORKS,

Telegraph.

Simla, the 8th October 1897.

Review of the Administration Report of the Indian Telegraph Department for the year 1896-97.

READ—

Letter from the Director General of Telegraphs, No. 52 T., dated the 24th August 1897, and its enclosure, being the Administration Report of the Indian Telegraph Department for the year 1896-97.

OBSERVATIONS.—The Administration Report of the Indian Telegraph Department deals with the whole of the operations under the control of the Director General.

2. The expenditure of the year charged to Capital Account amounted to Rs. 17,39,407. The capital outlay to the close of the year under review amounted to Rs. 6,05,07,989 divided as follows:

	Rs.	Percentage of net total.
Lines ...	4,74,09,541	78.3
Buildings ...	56,74,080	9.4
Apparatus and plant ...	23,67,310	3.9
Stores and suspense ...	30,24,456	5.0
Exchange on expenditure in England previous to 1887-88 ...	24,09,440	4.0
Total ...	6,08,84,827	

Deduct—

Receipts on Capital Account (including interest on Workshop Capital) ...	3,76,838	0.6
Total ...	6,05,07,989	

3. The net additions made during the year to the systems maintained by the Telegraph Department comprised 2,209 miles of line, 5,210 miles of wire and 6 miles of cable.

4. The following statement shows, for a period of five years, the progress that has been made in extending public telegraphic communication:

	Capital expenditure.	Miles of line.	Miles of wire.	Miles of cable.	OFFICES OPENED.		
					Departmental, ordinary and postal combined.	Railway and canal.	TOTAL.
	Rs.						
Up to beginning of 1892-93 ...	5,21,83,804	38,625	1,20,159	253	1,001	1,395	2,396
During 1892-93 ...	21,62,811	2,405	6,092	21	99	58	157
" 1893-94 ...	22,54,374	1,677	8,004	...	124	58	182
" 1894-95 ...	7,83,307	1,941	4,001	-3	138	10	148
" 1895-96 ...	13,84,286	1,727	4,670	-8	99	12	111
" 1896-97 ...	17,39,407	2,209	5,210	6	102	73	175
To end of 1896-97 ...	6,05,07,989	48,584	1,48,136	269	1,563	1,606	3,169

5. The operations of the Department during the year under review resulted as follows:

The Revenue receipts amounted to Rs. 89,64,400, being less by Rs. 10,549 than the figures for the previous year. The Revenue expenditure amounted to Rs. 62,15,068 being an increase of Rs. 4,31,337. The net receipts thus amounted to Rs. 27,49,332 showing a decrease of Rs. 4,41,886.

The Revenue receipts include Rs. 11,91,028 on account of State messages, and Rs. 1,23,908 on account of news-free and other *pro forma* revenue; including the receipts on account of State messages and excluding the *pro forma* revenue, the net receipts amounted to 4.34 per cent. on the Capital outlay.

6. The revenue receipts are made up as follows:

	Rs.
Message revenue, including State messages ...	70,33,563
Rent of lines, etc., on railways and canals ...	15,61,825
Rent of private lines, etc. ...	1,85,020
Sale of books, gazettes, etc. ...	21,194
Miscellaneous ...	38,890
Total ...	88,40,492
News-free and <i>pro forma</i> revenue ...	1,23,908
Grand Total ...	89,64,400

7. The following statement summarises the Revenue receipts and charges during the last five years:

Year.	Gross receipts excluding <i>pro forma</i> revenue.	Charges.	Net receipts.	Percentage of net to gross receipts.	Return on capital.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.		
1892-93 ...	75,31,726	51,56,998	23,74,728	31.5	4.37
1893-94 ...	79,18,526	53,04,761	26,13,765	33.0	4.61
1894-95 ...	79,25,103	56,93,218	22,31,885	28.2	3.89
1895-96 ...	88,60,723	57,83,731	30,76,992	34.7	5.24
1896-97 ...	88,40,492	62,15,068	26,25,424	29.7	4.34

8. The following figures show for the last two years the division of the traffic between State and Private and between Inland and Foreign messages, respectively:

Class of telegrams.	1895-96.		1896-97.	
	No.	Value.	No.	Value.
		Rs.		Rs.
State, Inland ...	603,366	12,61,667	599,890	11,23,509
" , Foreign ...	6,985	63,270	8,722	67,519
Total State ...	610,351	13,24,937	608,612	11,91,028
Private, Inland ...	3,491,571	34,75,316	3,786,938	37,38,421
" , Foreign ...	634,812	22,75,346	682,034	21,04,113
Total Private ...	4,126,383	57,50,662	4,468,972	58,42,534
Grand Total ...	4,736,734	70,75,599	5,077,584	70,33,562

The private traffic continues to exhibit rapid progress. In the year under review, there was a rise of 342,589 in the number of private messages and of Rs. 91,872 in their value.

The State inland telegrams exhibit a decrease of 3,476 or 0.58 per cent. in number and of Rs. 1,38,158 or 10.95 per cent. in value.

The number of private inland telegrams increased by 295,367 and their value by Rs. 2,63,105, equivalent to 8.46 and 7.57 per cent., respectively.

In foreign private telegrams there was an increase of 47,222 over the figures for the previous year in number and a decrease of Rs. 1,71,233 in value.

The revenue from trans-Indian traffic rose to Rs. 9,98,197 in the year under review, thus exceeding by Rs. 2,66,644 the figure of Rs. 7,31,553, at which the revenue stood in 1890-91 prior to the reduction in the transit rates.

9. The following table gives the percentages of traffic in number and value due to each class of message:

Class of telegram.	INLAND.		FOREIGN.		TOTAL.	
	No.	Value.	No.	Value.	No.	Value.
		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
State ...	11.82	15.97	0.17	0.96	11.99	16.93
Private ...	74.58	53.15	13.43	29.92	88.01	83.07
Total ...	86.40	69.12	13.60	30.88	100.00	100.00

10. The following figures show the percentages of the inland traffic under the three classes of Urgent, Ordinary, and Deferred during the last two years:

		PERCENTAGES.					
		Urgent.		Ordinary.		Deferred.	
		1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.
State ...	...	13'00	8'77	22'07	27'40	64'93	63'83
Private ...	...	6'01	5'80	40'20	40'58	53'79	53'62
Press ...	...	7'19	5'73	18'55	12'57	74'26	81'70

11. The growth of inland private traffic in a period of ten years is shown by the following figures:

			Number of messages.	Value. Rs.
1887-88	...	...	1,860,390	19,81,814
1896-97	...	...	3,786,938	37,38,421
	Increase	...	1,926,548	17,56,607

During the ten-year period the number of messages has increased by over 103 per cent. and their value by over 88 per cent.

12. The following statement gives the distribution of the revenue charges during the last five years under the principal heads:

LINE MAINTENANCE.				SIGNALLING.			
Ycar.	Establishment.	Repairs to lines and buildings.	Office stores and miscellaneous.	Total.	Establishment.	Repairs to buildings.	Office stores and miscellaneous.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1892-93	9,07,049	4,82,482	83,617	14,73,148	34,02,114	59,414	2,22,322
1893-94	9,75,007	4,37,270	63,623	14,75,900	35,31,694	55,038	2,41,129
1894-95	10,44,014	5,21,736	63,373	16,29,123	37,81,817	53,545	2,28,733
1895-96	10,29,601	5,12,178	76,691	16,18,470	38,71,082	56,515	2,37,664
1896-97	10,78,116	6,67,308	89,936	18,35,360	40,24,523	61,581	2,93,604

13. The strength of the signalling establishment at the close of the year was 3,704, of whom 1,703 were departmental officers, 324 British military signalers and 1,655 postal clerks.

14. The following table shows the average time intervals taken in the transmission of telegrams (excluding *deferred*) over some of the principal main routes during the last five years. The average of the average time intervals was the same as in the preceding year.

Section.	Number of miles.	1892-93.		1893-94.		1894-95.		1895-96.		1896-97.	
		H.	M.	H.	M.	H.	M.	H.	M.	H.	M.
Calcutta to Karachi	1,750	0	25	0	29	0	27	0	22	0	25
Karachi to Calcutta		0	14	0	14	0	15	0	11	0	12
Calcutta to Bombay	1,283	0	33	0	32	0	26	0	21	0	24
Bombay to Calcutta		0	29	0	27	0	27	0	21	0	25
Calcutta to Madras	1,181	0	42	0	33	0	23	0	22	0	25
Madras to Calcutta		0	35	0	28	0	19	0	19	0	23
Madras to Bombay	796	0	23	0	23	0	21	0	19	0	16
Bombay to Madras		0	24	0	23	0	25	0	21	0	33
Bombay to Karachi	840	0	24	0	22	0	23	0	19	0	21
Karachi to Bombay		0	10	0	10	0	11	0	9	0	11
Rangoon to Calcutta	1,003	1	2	0	50	0	35	0	55	0	28
Calcutta to Rangoon		0	40	0	32	0	26	0	28	0	22
Average of averages	...	0	30	0	27	0	23	0	22	0	22

The marked improvement in speed between Calcutta and Rangoon is attributed partly to fairly favourable weather and to the consequent absence of any very serious interruptions.

The high time intervals between Bombay and Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, and Calcutta and Madras are attributed to severe storms and heavy floods during the months of July and August which did much damage to the telegraph lines. To the same causes is mainly attributable the falling off in speed between Bombay and Karachi, and Calcutta and Karachi.

15. The number of complaints received relating to the Indian Telegraph Department was 1,774 equivalent to 0'032 per cent. of the total number of paid messages, 968 of these were admitted. Of those admitted, 190 applied to non-delivery, 261 to delay, and 283 to mistakes. The number of messages that for various causes could not be delivered, amounted to 17,102 equivalent to 0'275 per cent. of the total number received for transmission.

16. The total number of interruptions to communications amounted to 2,295, which shows a slight increase over the previous year, there being an increase also in the total duration of the interruptions.

17. The number of telegraphic money orders rose to 145,833 from 129,912 in the previous year.

In addition to the figures given above the total number of orders sent to and received from Ceylon during the year under review amounted to 12,112 as compared with 8,183 during 1895-96 and 4,546 during 1894-95.

18. The Inland Press telegrams sent numbered 26,462, of the value of Rs. 1,00,939, against 24,892 valued at Rs. 96,168 in the previous year.

The Foreign Press messages numbered 3,601 and the Indian share of the charges thereon amounted to Rs. 20,330.

19. As regards electrical improvements, experiments in simultaneous Morse and vibrator working over a single wire were still being carried on.

The arrangement devised by Mr. Melhuish, referred to in the review of the report for 1895-96, by means of which intermediate offices can be worked without alteration of connections on long duplex lines proved of great assistance during the monsoons when the cables across the Ganges near Patna failed, and all Tirhut traffic had to pass *via* Bankipore, the Mokameh cable, Mozufferpore and Chupra.

20. On the 31st December 1896 there were 1,676 subscribers and 1,655 exchange connections to the Telephone Companies at Bombay, Calcutta, Kurra-
chee, Madras, Moulmein and Rangoon. There were also 36 exchanges and 296 exchange connections under the control of the Telegraph Department.

21. The telegraph line from Taungyi to Kengtung, 235 miles, of which 123 miles were erected during 1895-96, was completed during the year under review.

The gutta-percha Indo-Ceylon cable across Palk straits was entirely replaced by a brass taped cable which was brought into use on 15th March 1897.

22. The telegraph lines in Kashmir which were being managed and worked by the Indian Telegraph Department have been finally and completely taken over as part of the Imperial system.

23. Mr. S. P. W. V. Luke, C.I.E., late Deputy Director General of Telegraphs, and Mr. B. T. Finch, C.I.E., Director-in-Chief, Indo-European Telegraph Department, were deputed to represent the Government of India at the International Telegraph Conference held at Buda-Pesth during June and July 1896.

The principal changes affecting India adopted by the Conference are summarised below. The changes took effect from 1st July 1897:—

- (i) An increase in the length of a permissible word in telegrams wholly in plain language, as distinguished from telegrams wholly in code, or partly in code and partly in plain language, 15 letters being allowed as the maximum, instead of 10 as heretofore.
- (ii) An increase in the number of figures and signs permissible as one word when written in series, as regards every class of telegram, five characters being counted as a word, in place of three as heretofore.
- (iii) The counting as one word of the Sender's Special Instructions, if written in the authorised abridged form.
- (iv) The exclusion of Sundays in the limit of 72 hours allowed for obtaining or giving corrections to telegrams by means of Paid Service Advices.
- (v) Substantial reductions in the rates between India and East and South Africa, including Mauritius, as also between India and the Straits, China and Japan.

The obligatory use of the Berne Official Vocabulary was also indefinitely postponed.

24. In paragraph 84 of the Director General's report reference is made to the difficulties experienced during the prevalence of the bubonic plague and the Government of India have pleasure in acknowledging the efforts of the Staff of the Department in carrying on their duties under exceptionally trying circumstances,

and especially the services of Mr. Nigel Jones, Superintendent in charge of the Central Telegraph Office, Bombay, which have been very favourably noticed by the Director General.

The Government of India also desire to record their appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. P. V. Luke, C. I. E., Deputy Director General, who retired from the Department a few days before the close of the year, during which he represented the Government of India on the International Telegraph Conference at Buda-Pesth and officiated for three months as Director General. The services of other officers of the Department which have been mentioned in paragraph 85 of the Director General's report have also been noted with satisfaction.

25. The Administration Report was received from the Director General of Telegraphs on 25th August, about the same date as last year. It has been carefully prepared, and presents results which the Governor General in Council considers highly satisfactory and creditable to the administration of the Director General, as well as to the working of the staff of the Department.

ORDER.—Ordered, that a copy of this Review 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 for information. Also that a copy of the Review be forwarded to the Director General of Telegraphs for information.

The Governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, the Punjab and Burma.
The Chief Commissioners of the Central Provinces, Assam and Coorg.
The Residents at Hyderabad and in Mysore.
The Agents to the Governor General in Central India, Rajputana, and Baluchistan.

Ordered also that a copy of the Review and of the Report and Appendices A, B and F be forwarded to the Home Department of the Government of India for information, and that the Review be published in Part I of the *Gazette of India*.

J. Higham

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

To. The Secy to the Govt of Madras.
S.W. Department.
6 copies of Review
1 copy of Report.