

No. 11.

Governor Sir A. Musgrave, K.C.M.G., to the Right Honourable the Earl of Kimberley.

(Received May 31, 1881.)

No. 166.

King's House, May 10, 1881.

MY LORD,

IN continuation of previous Despatches I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship "the third and final Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of the Civil Service of the Island," which was received on the 16th ultimo, during my recent absence from Kingston on a tour in the western parishes.

2. This Report deals with the Prisons' Department and with the Post Office, and, in conclusion, expresses the Commissioners' opinion as to the means best adapted for securing the admission into the Civil Service of this Colony of duly qualified persons as Clerks or Cadets.

3. As it regards the Post Office, the Report is so entirely commendatory that I have thought it unnecessary to ask the Postmaster for any explanations; nor need I trouble Your Lordship with remarks. I agree with the Commissioners in regarding Mr. Sullivan as an excellent Public Officer, and his administration of his Department as deserving of praise.

4. I annex the remarks made by the Inspector of Prisons, in response to my invitation, on that part of the Report which relates to his Department.

5. It will be, perhaps, convenient if I offer my own comments upon the points touched by the Commissioners, in the order in which they have themselves taken them.

6. I am of opinion that Mr. Shaw's reply to the observations of the Commissioners respecting contracts for the supply of coal and firewood is conclusive. On this point I beg to refer to my remarks in my Despatches No. 179 of 17th June, 1879, No. 215 of 9th July, 1879, and to my letter of 25th February, 1880,\* written at Florence. I am unable to quite understand the motive for the recommendations made by the Commissioners in respect of contracts and tenders, when they could scarcely be ignorant of the jobbery so often formerly attendant upon them in this country.

7. The observations of the Commissioners upon the cost of the Prisons' Establishment seem hardly to need comment, as they have themselves, in paragraph 16, stated their opinion that no reduction in the general expenditure can be made without imperilling the efficiency of the service.

8. I should point out, however, that they appear to have fallen into error in their statement, that the cost of maintaining prisoners in the Penitentiary is greater relatively than in the other Prison Establishments. After deducting earnings of the prisoners from gross expenditure in each case, the expense of maintaining the Penitentiary per head is under £10, that of the other Prisons is considerably over £10.

## THE GENERAL POST OFFICE.

1. The Head of this Department is Frederick Sullivan, Esquire, who receives a salary of £800 per annum, and at the date of inquiry the Staff of his Office was as follows :—

	Salary.
Chief Clerk .. .. .	£300 to £400
Travelling Supervisor of District Post Offices and travelling allowance	200 „ 250
Three First Class Clerks, each .. .. .	200 „ 250
Five Second Class Clerks “ .. .. .	100 „ 200
Four Third Class Clerks “ .. .. .	80 „ 100

2. Mr. Sullivan was appointed Postmaster in 1870, and since that time the increase of the Official Staff has consisted of the Supervisor and two Clerks, but this has been called for by the very large increase in the amount of business transacted. In 1869-70 the revenue from inland postage was £8,165, with a postage of 3d. the half-ounce; in 1876-77 the revenue was £10,179, with a reduced rate of 2d. the half-ounce, thus showing a money increase of £2,000, and a numerical increase of nearly 50 per cent. The total revenue for 1878-79 was £14,898, and the expenditure £15,844; but this revenue does not include Government correspondence, which goes free, and, if charged for, is estimated to yield upwards of £2,000 a year.

3. The Inland Mail Service is performed by means of contracts, of which it was stated that there are between 50 and 60, and Mr. Sullivan informed us that he experienced no difficulty as a rule in finding suitable Contractors, who all give security. The work appears to be, on the whole, satisfactorily performed, and we believe that it is maintained at less cost by this system than if the Government undertook the duty. In 1869-70 there were 54 Country Post Offices; in 1876-77 there were 81; and the number has since been added to from time to time, which we regard as a sign of progress. The increase in the amount of letters sent and received has been very great, and the evidence showed that the public are largely availing themselves of the facilities afforded by the system of registration. During the year 1878-79 there were 25,121 registered letters received, and 21,464 despatched, of which 5,897 were official.

4. We questioned Mr. Sullivan with reference to the feasibility of introducing the inland money order system into this Island and he expressed himself entirely in favour of the measure. We are happy to find that it has since been established under Your Excellency's instructions, and that it is working with the most satisfactory results.

5. We also examined him with the view of eliciting his opinion as to whether a service of light mail carriages, to carry a limited number of passengers, might not with advantage be established, and it is very satisfactory to us to know that a vehicle of this description is now running regularly under contract between Kingston and Mandeville. We hope that this service will be gradually extended to other parts of the Island.

6. The introduction of letter-boxes on the American system was further brought to the attention of the Postmaster, more particularly with reference to the Central Office in Kingston, and the only difficulty that he apprehended was the want of space with the limited amount of room at his disposal. This difficulty has since been surmounted and letter-boxes provided to the great convenience of merchants and others.

7. We found Mr. Sullivan most ready to concur in every suggestion tending to promote the public interests, and we have much pleasure in reporting that we consider his Department one of the best managed under Government. We have no suggestions to offer upon points of detail, believing the organisation to be as complete as it can well be made, and to be vigilantly supervised; nor do we think the expenditure excessive, or the Staff unduly large, bearing in mind the nature and extent of the work to be performed. Under these circumstances we are not prepared to suggest minor reductions, which would be at the risk of sacrificing efficiency to economy, and we are of opinion that great credit is due to Mr. Sullivan for the excellent manner in which the Postal Service of the Island is conducted.