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JAMAICA—REPORT FOR 1901-1902.

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VIII.—POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH SERVICES.

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE.

324. The following tables show the revenue and expenditure for postal and telegraph services in each of the three years ended 31st March, 1900, 1901, and 1902 (shillings and pence omitted) :—

Revenue.

Year.	Postages.			Commis- sion on Money Orders.	Commis- sion on Postal Orders.	Miscella- neous.	Total Postal Revenue.	Telegraph Revenue.	Grand Total.
	Packet.	Inland.	Total						
1899-1900	£ 3,449	£ 16,476	£ 20,125	£ 379	£ 634	£ 157	£ 21,297	£ 5,630	£ 26,927
1900-1901	3,751	17,369	21,124	384	617	87	22,212	4,715	26,927
1901-1902	4,383	17,954	22,336	446	615	113	23,510	5,010	28,520

Expenditure.

Year.	Salaries.		Mail Conveyance.			Services.	Total Postal Expenditure.	Telegraph Expenditure.*	Grand Total.
	Head Office.	District Offices.	Inland.	Ocean.	Proportion of Royal Mail Contract with Imperial Government.				
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1899-1900 ...	5,485	2,995	9,827	2,419	5,140	2,986	28,582	8,721	37,573
1900-1901 ...	5,915	2,956	8,511	2,508	5,140	3,360	28,390	8,592	36,982
1901-1902 ...	5,668	2,951	8,055	2,258	2,177	4,409	25,517	8,308	33,915

* Includes expenditure on maintenance of telegraph lines by the Public Works Department.

The Postal Revenue shows an increase of £1,298 over that of 1900-1901; the Telegraph Revenue an increase of £296. The totals include the value of official telegrams sent, but not that of official postage services, which the Postmaster-General estimates at £2,500 a year.

325. The receipts from packet postages increased by £628; those from Inland postage by £585. The total receipts from packet postages (at 1d. per half-ounce for British and Colonial letters) amounted to £4,389 as against £4,832 in 1898-1899, the last year of the 2½d. rate. The loss incurred by the change of rate is thus within measurable distance of being made up. The increase in postal receipts stimulated by the improvement of communications with Great Britain and America reflects an improvement in business.

Correspondence.

326. The total number of postcards and letters estimated to have passed through the Post Office in the year was 5,424,814, as against 5,239,083 during the preceding year. The number of registered articles of mail matter included in the total was 236,921 as against 211,184. There was practically no loss or miscarriage of such articles.

Foreign Mails.

327. The total number of foreign mails made up during the year was 1,605, the number received 2,205, showing a total increase of 591 on the number despatched and received during 1900-1901.

328. The direct fortnightly mail service between Kingston (Jamaica) and Bristol (England), which was begun on the 16th of February, 1901, has been carried out during the year with, as a rule, commendable punctuality, and, together with the service of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, which has also performed its contract in a satisfactory manner, has given the Colony weekly postal communication outwards and inwards.

329. The steamers of the United Fruit Company, certain of which are subsidised as mail steamers by the United States Government, as well as those of the Atlas Line (now absorbed in the Hamburg American Company's fleet), have as usual been made use of for the exchange of mails between the United States of America and Jamaica, and with the United Kingdom *via* the United States, America

330. Messrs. Pickford and Black's steamers, subsidised by the Government of Canada, have continued the monthly mail service between Jamaica, Turks Islands, Bermuda, and Halifax.

Mail Subsidies.

331. For the conveyance of ocean mails this Colony paid during the year—

	£	s.	d.
Contribution to subsidy, Royal Mail Steam Packet Company	2,177	6	8
Proportion of Postage to Imperial Post Office ...	1,300	0	0
Transit dues paid to other countries ...	156	16	2
Gratuities for mails by non-contract vessels ...	801	4	1
Total ...	£4,435	6	11

The annual contribution to be paid by this Government in respect of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's subsidy during the continuance of the existing contract has not yet been assessed by His Majesty's Government. Under the former contract this contribution was £5,140 per annum, but in consideration of the diminution in the amount of correspondence to be carried by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company in consequence of the competition of the Direct Imperial Line, it will now be substantially less. A further abatement of £500 a year is to be made upon the amount that would be payable on such assessment, in consideration of the alteration of the route of the steamers since the present contract was made. The Royal Mail Company's steamer now touches at Trinidad on its journeys between Barbados and Jamaica each way, and is accordingly timed to reach the Island later and to leave it earlier than under the schedule of the original contract. On the other hand, some part of the subsidy of £20,000 a year payable to the Direct Line must be regarded as in respect of postal services, more especially having regard to the reduction effected by its establishment in the

corresponding payment to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company and in the amount paid for letters sent by the United States, America, which in the previous year was £1,046 2s. 4d. The diversion to the Direct Line of letters formerly sent by this route saved £245, notwithstanding a presumable increase in the number of letters, the final destination of which was in the United States or Canada.

Inland Mails.

332. The Inland conveyance of mails has been carried on at a cost of £7,447, as against £7,681 last year, including the payment of £2,700 to the Railway Department for transport. Much of the Inland mail carriage is effected by the Public Works Department which, having depots and mule stables in all the parishes, has been able within recent years to take over at a considerable saving much of the services formerly performed by contract. The coastal steamer of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company is also employed for conveying mail matter.

333. The mail coaches earned during the year £218 for passenger fares and £574 for the carriage of parcels; the amount of the passenger fares, less 10 per cent., is paid to the contractors for their services.

334. At the end of the year, there were 153 District Post Offices, as against 147 at the beginning. The policy of transferring District Post Offices to the railway stations and appointing the station agents to be District Postmasters is being carried out wherever possible.

Money Orders.

335. The total number of money orders drawn on other countries during the year was 12,740 against 11,431 in the previous year; the amount, however, decreased from £32,216 to £30,098. The orders drawn by other countries in Jamaica were 4,001 for £10,327, against 3,498 for £9,366 in 1900-1901.

Postal Orders.

336. The face value of the postal orders sold for internal remittances was £30,356 against £30,339 in the previous year, and the number was also almost unchanged.

Nett Decrease in Expenditure.

337. This year shows altogether a nett decrease of £2,873 in the expenditure on postal services, which is accounted for by the reduction of the mail subsidy to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company.

Telegraphs.

338. The Telegraph Department dealt with 91,898 messages against 85,052 in the previous year, and earned £296 more. The working expenses of the Department were £55 less. The total cost, including the maintenance of lines by the Public Works Department was £8,398, the total receipts, £5,010, showing a loss of £3,387 as the nett cost of the services of this Department.

Parcel Post.

339. The parcel post showed a continued development. The parcels received from abroad numbered 14,138, those despatched 5,216—a total increase of 1,810 on last year. Customs duties to the amount of £2,716 were received on inward parcels. Notwithstanding this, on the address forms many senders of parcels still appear unable to resist the temptation to endeavour to defraud the Revenue, either by understating values or by sending dutiable articles undeclared through the ordinary post. The Department on the whole shows a healthy advance in the services and economy of all its branches.

IX.—PUBLIC WORKS.

Works.

340. No special Public Works of great magnitude or importance were carried on for the Government during the year. Expenditure from Loan Funds for public buildings was still kept in suspense owing to shortness of funds, but the buildings at St. Catherine District Prison were proceeded with at a cost of £769, the labour being supplied by the inmates. Extensive improvements were also made in the Customs yard and its foreshore by prison labour, as recorded in my report on the Prison Departments. A new laboratory for the Island Chemist was built at Hope and was occupied by the Chemist before the close of the year. A portion of the old boiling house at Hope Gardens was altered so as to provide quarters for apprentices in agriculture. Expenditure of £632 was also incurred in providing a system of lights for Kingston Harbour. Other works were generally of the character of maintenance.

Roads.

341. The maintenance of main roads was in some parishes somewhat expensive, especially in Portland, St. Mary's and St. Ann's, owing to the heavy and continuous rainfall of the autumn months. The average cost per mile for maintenance was £24 3s. 2d., or £2 12s. 8d. per mile more than last year. The highest rate per mile was £58 3s. 10d. for St. Mary, the lowest £14 8s. 11d. for St. Elizabeth. The cost of making good extraordinary damage caused by flood in the parishes of St. Andrew, St. Thomas, Portland, St. Mary, and St. Catherine was £5,564.