

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 282.

The following Report on the Hongkong Post Office, for the year 1901, is published.

By Command,

A. M. THOMSON,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 9th May, 1902.

No. 37.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
HONGKONG, 5th April, 1902.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit the Annual Report on the Hongkong Post Office for the year 1901.

DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES.

2. Captain HASTINGS, the Postmaster General, after an absence of 18 months in England, returned to the Colony and resumed his duties on the 19th September. Unfortunately he was obliged through illness to remain at home after only a month in office, and, I regret to add, never returned to duty. During his absence I was in charge of the Department.

3. Twenty-eight new appointments were made during the year, and twenty-one clerks resigned or were dismissed. The new appointments included a Deputy Superintendent of the Money Order Office, three Assistant Marine Officers, and a Correspondence Clerk—all of these Officers were very much required with the increased business in the Department as a whole. The principal cause of the resignations was the fact that these men alleged that they could secure more remunerative employment, and less hard work, outside the Post Office.

4. The Postmaster at Shanghai, Mr. SOLLY, obtained his long delayed leave of absence and proceeded to England in April. There was considerable difficulty experienced in arranging for his duties, and the Government were obliged to transfer Mr. DIXON, the Superintendent of the Money Order Office, to act as Postmaster at Shanghai, the latter's place being taken by the Deputy.

5. Both of the Travelling Marine Officers at Shanghai resigned during the year, after but a short period of service, on the ground of the insufficiency of the salary attached to their Office. It was with some difficulty that their places could be efficiently filled.

INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL CORRESPONDENCE.

6. A statement of the International and Local Correspondence received and despatched during the year will be found in Table A. It shews a satisfactory increase on the business of the previous year, the totals being—Received: Letters and Postcards (including 107 Insured and 258,720 Registered) 2,453,297; Other articles 1,563,590, and—Despatched: Letters and Postcards (including 153 Insured and 196,190 Registered) 2,639,013; Other articles 789,100.

7. I attach a summary—Table B—showing the number of bags, &c., received and despatched, which also shews an increase on that of 1900. The total number actually dealt with at this Office being Bags 81,269, Packets 8,678, Parcel Post Boxes 4,926, and Loose Letter Boxes 2,258. I have this year been able to give the number of steamers conveying these Mails, viz., 5,914 Inwards and 6,626 Outwards. Included in the former are 44 United States Mail Packets, 27 English P. & O. Contract Packets, 27 Messageries Maritimes Co.'s Packets, 26 German Mail Packets, and 14 Canadian.

8. It may be of interest also to mention that during the year the English mails were received at this Office on 2 occasions in 26 days, on 7 occasions in 27 days, on 11 occasions in 28 days, on 18 occasions in 29 days, and on other occasions in 30 to 35 days. On the two occasions referred to, once was by the P. & O. Contract Packet and the other by a German Mail Packet. Twice during the year the mail by the Messageries Maritimes Co. had to be transferred, owing to accidents to their ships,—on one occasion the transfer was made to a steamer of the Japanese European line, at Colombo, and on another to the P. & O. Mail steamer at Singapore. In the last mentioned case the Marine Officer, I am pleased to say, brought both mails sorted to Hongkong.

9. With the exception of the loss of the P. & O. Mail Steamer "Sobraon" while on her way from Shanghai to Hongkong in April, (on which occasion the mails were fortunately saved and reached Hongkong in time to be despatched by the next German Mail Packet leaving 5 days later), and also on two or three other occasions when there was a delay of a few hours, the Mail Packets left Hongkong at their regular and appointed times. These mails all reached London in good time with the exception of the mail despatched on the 3rd June by the Messageries Maritimes Co.'s steamer "Laos," when, owing to plague on board on her arrival at Marseilles and her being quarantined, the mails were some days late in arriving in London.

POSTAGE STAMPS.

10. The usual Statement of Monthly Sales of Stamps at Hongkong will be found in Table C. The total sales for the year amounted to \$239,377.49, an advance on the sales of the previous year of no less a sum than \$21,765.25. For comparison I may mention that the sales for the ten years previous to this were as follows, and goes to prove that even with the adoption of the Penny Postage the loss sustained in 1899 is being quickly made up:—

1891,\$ 92,275.87	1896, .....\$161,983.46
1892,\$ 99,895.42	1897, .....\$181,459.50
1893, .....\$108,198.09	1898, .....\$233,195.77
1894, .....\$121,755.27	1899, .....\$216,791.45
1895, .....\$151,166.48	1900, .....\$217,612.24

11. The sales of stamps at the British Post Office at Shanghai and at the British Postal Agencies in China will be found in Table D, and amounted to \$84,105.28, an increase of \$6,599.12 on the previous year's receipts; the Shanghai Post Office receipts under this head being \$38,749.64 in 1901 against \$32,027.90 in 1900.

PARCEL POST.

12. Again this year the Parcel Post business shews a steady advance on the previous one. The total number of those received (including 3,607 Insured) amounted to 43,161, and of those despatched (including 4,424 Insured) amounted to 38,679. Details will be found in Table E.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

13. The Revenue and Expenditure for the year 1901 will be found in Table F. It will be seen that the Revenue received from all sources was \$355,912.74, exceeding that of 1900 by \$30,309.41, and the Expenditure was \$273,685.51, an increase of \$38,422.43 on that of previous year. The net balance to the credit of Hongkong Post Office on the year's transactions amounted to \$82,227.23.

MONEY ORDERS.

14. The Money Order business done during the year 1901 was again a large one and exceeded that of the previous year by the sum of \$79,762.03. The total amount of Orders issued and paid amounted to \$621,381.26 and \$560,521.39 respectively. I attach a statement of the year's transactions—Table G.

15. The sales of Imperial and Local Postal Notes in 1901—Tables H and I—amounted to £6,918.12s.1d. and \$8,093.06 respectively, and exceeded the sales of the previous year—the former by £768.14s.11d. and the latter by \$1,691.56. The selling rate of the Imperial Postal Notes ruled high for the greater part of the year owing to the uncertain and frequent fluctuations in the rate of exchange.

16. As already mentioned, a Deputy Superintendent of the Money Order Office was appointed owing to the increasing work in this Branch. This Officer's principal duties consisted of Indian Orders, and the Office was fortunate in being able to transfer an old and experienced employee in the person of Mr. MOOSA to this work. As will be seen the Orders drawn on India in 1901 exceeded those of the previous year by the large sum of Rs. 101,524. The additional help so much needed had hardly been given before the Superintendent, Mr. DIXON, one of the most capable and efficient officers in the Service, was removed by being transferred temporarily to Shanghai, thereby handicapping the Office in a most serious manner.

GENERAL.

17. I think I can fairly claim that the mails were delivered in as short a time after arriving at this Office as could reasonably be expected. I may mention the following averages—delivery to Box-holders by the French Packet was effected in 1 hour and 25 minutes after receipt, by the English Mail in 20 minutes after receipt, by the American Mail in 35 minutes after receipt, and by the German Mail in 1 hour and a quarter.

During the year many improvements were made to the Shanghai Office, and I am pleased to be able to state that this Office is much more used than formerly by the public. In the past it was reported they did not receive the courtesy and attention to which they were entitled and consequently went elsewhere.

Many Foreign Post Offices were established in China during the year at places where none formerly existed. At some places this Office had Agencies, but, unfortunately where we had not any, no Offices or Agencies have been opened. It is necessary, I think, that Postal Agencies should be established at

Chefoo, Tientsin and Peking, as the large and increasing number of British residents at these places render it only a national right that, providing no appreciable loss be anticipated, they should be given the facility to post in their own offices.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

E. CORNEWALL LEWIS,
Acting Postmaster General.

The Honourable
THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Table A.

APPROXIMATE STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1901.
International and Local Correspondence.

Description of Correspondence.	International.		Local.		Total.	Comparison with 1900.		
	Des-patched.	Received.	Des-patched.	Received.		Total in 1900.	Increase.	Decrease.
Ordinary Paid Letters,	1,906,350	1,952,160	90,610	53,460	4,002,580	3,544,430	458,150	...
Unpaid or Short-paid Articles,.....	44,020	91,310	1,920	1,010	138,260	130,410	7,850	...
Letters on Postal Business,	7,510	7,070	2,600	2,030	19,210	12,910	6,300	...
Post Cards,.....	107,220	86,550	3,720	880	198,370	173,090	25,280	...
Newspapers, Books, Circulars, Patterns, &c.,	716,560	1,555,970	72,540	7,620	2,352,690	2,311,580	41,110	...
Registered Articles,	185,770	242,890	9,360	6,340	444,360	409,820	34,540	...
Do., with Return Receipts,	990	6,730	70	2,760	10,550	7,130	3,420	...
Insured Letters (Actual),	153	107	...	...	260	117	143	...
Local Delivery :—Letters, Circulars, &c.,	...	...	...	...	278,720	211,870	66,850	...

Table B.

Mail Bags, &c., Received and Despatched during the Year 1901.

	Mails for Hongkong.						Mails for H. M.'s Ships.	Mails for Foreign Men-of-War.	Mails sent in transit through Hongkong.		Number of Steamers bringing Mails.			
	Ordinary.			Registered.					Bags.	Bags.	Bags.	Packets.	Arri-vals.	De-partures.
	Bags.	Packets.	Loose Letter Boxes.	Bags.	Packets.	Parcel Boxes.								
Received, ...	38,303	1,645	1,208	7,854	3,156	2,391	2,472	2,448	18,211	487	5,914	6,626		
Despatched,	25,873	1,545	1,050	9,239	2,332	2,535	810	1,722						

Table C.

Sale of Stamps at Hongkong, 1900 and 1901.

	1900.	1901.
January,	\$19,767.98	\$21,677.56
February,	13,762.84	16,080.79
March,	18,297.22	21,944.98
April,	16,495.48	19,623.88
May,	17,741.32	21,031.83
June,	17,722.32	16,818.91
July,	19,272.19	17,637.00
August,	18,993.75	20,932.43
September,	17,940.29	17,529.89
October,	18,561.80	20,281.21
November,	20,024.19	23,611.28
December,	19,032.86	22,157.13
Total,	\$217,612.24	\$239,377.49

Table D.

Sale of Stamps at the British Post Offices in China, 1900 and 1901.

	1900.	1901.
Amoy,	\$11,077.29	\$10,379.18
Canton,.....	13,474.42	14,966.17
Foochow,	6,911.58	6,567.98
Hankow,	4,913.39	3,662.57
Hoihow,	1,094.54	1,217.97
Liu Kuang Tau,	1,941.26	2,371.81
Ningpo,	287.09	302.36
Shanghai,.....	32,027.90	38,749.64
Swatow,	5,778.69	5,887.60
Total,.....	\$77,506.16	\$84,105.28

Table E.

Statistics of Parcels for the Year 1901.

Despatched to	Despatched to		Received from		Received from	
	Ordinary.	Insured.	Ordinary.	Insured.		
United Kingdom,.....	14,808	3,634	United Kingdom,	22,607	3,012	
Do., (via Brindisi),.....	304	192	Do, (via Brindisi), ...	281	231	
Do., (via Marseilles), ...	...	...	Do., (via Marseilles),...	1,095	4
India,.....	1,583	582	India,	1,161	196	
Germany,	310	5	Germany,	992	105	
France, .....	...	...	France,.....	320	59
Australia,	580	...	Australia,.....	508	...	
Ceylon,	83	9	Ceylon,.....	141	...	
Malta and Gibraltar,	29	...	Malta and Gibraltar,	102	...	
Egypt, Canada and Mauritius,	262	2	Egypt, Canada and Mauritius,	1,007	...	
Other places (approximate),	16,296	...	Other places (approximate),	11,340	...	
Total,.....	34,255	4,424	Total,.....	39,554	3,607	

Table F.

Revenue and Expenditure.

Receipts.	Receipts.				Expenditure.	Expenditure.			
	1900.	1901.	Increase.	Decrease.		1900.	1901.	Increase.	Decrease.
	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$
Sale of Stamps,	293,832.79	324,056.96	30,224.17	...	Transit Payment to the United Kingdom, ...	46,207.88	52,304.92	6,097.04	...
Unpaid Postage,.....	7,757.42	8,059.88	302.46	...	Transit Payment to other Countries,.....	32,827.49	39,242.49	6,415.00	...
Boxholders' Fees,	4,263.63	4,710.39	446.76	...	Commission on Money Orders,	1,299.46	2,260.97	961.51	...
Commission on Money Orders,	10,134.67	8,793.48	...	1,341.19	Contribution towards P. & O. Subsidy, ...	60,004.36	61,994.68	1,990.32	...
Profit on Exchange on Money Order Transactions,	9,281.03	10,038.45	757.42	...	Gratuities to Shipmasters for the conveyance of Mails,.....	6,926.19	6,570.45	...	355.74
Interest on Money Order Fund,	236.66	253.58	16.92	...	Working Expenses,	87,997.70	111,312.00	23,314.30	...
Void Money Orders and Postal Notes,	97.13	...	...	97.13	Balance,	90,340.25	82,227.23	...	8,113.02
Total,.....	\$ 325,603.33	\$ 355,912.74	\$ 31,747.73	\$ 1,438.32	Total,.....	\$ 325,603.33	\$ 355,912.74	\$ 38,778.17	\$ 8,468.76

Table G.
STATEMENT OF MONEY ORDER TRANSACTIONS FOR THE YEAR 1901.

	IN STERLING.		IN GOLD DOLLARS.		IN GOLD YEN.		IN SILVER DOLLARS.		IN RUPEES.	
	Orders Issued.	Orders Paid.	Orders Issued.	Orders Paid.	Orders Issued.	Orders Paid.	Orders Issued.	Orders Paid.	Orders Issued.	Orders Paid.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	\$ c.	\$ c.	Yen sen.	Yen sen.	\$ c.	\$ c.	Rs. as.	Rs. as.
United Kingdom,.....	17,022 0 2	5,898 19 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Queenland,.....	57 3 10	17,614 6 11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
New South Wales,.....	492 4 4	4,040 15 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Victoria,.....	263 4 0	3,211 0 4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
South Australia*,.....	28 7 0	1,197 8 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tasmania,.....	370 11 5	628 18 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
New Zealand,.....	159 9 9	838 3 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
United States of America and Hawaii,.....	...	...	4,524.20	12,926.69	...	...	...	...	...	...
Canada,.....	...	...	1,180.06	1,869.81	181,446.16	8,614.14	...	...	...	...
Japan,.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,644.43	30,085.46	...	...
Straits Settlements,.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	56.65	11,733.93	...	...
British North Borneo,.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	276.95	345.85	...	...
Siam,.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,407.87	13,350.87	...	...
Shanghai,.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,073.06	...	304,613 9	141,438 13
Other Coast Ports,.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,577 8	4,702 7
India,.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ceylon,.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Base Post Office,.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13,270.60	...	...
Total for 1901,.....	18,393 0 6	33,424 11 5	5,704.26	14,796.50	181,446.16	8,614.14	8,458.96	68,786.71	306,191 1	146,141 4
„ for 1900,.....	16,242 14 5	37,742 17 10	5,076.36	11,504.93	215,304.78	13,041.96	7,423.30	59,626.44	204,239 9	52,676 6

