

POST OFFICE AND TELEGRAPHS AND GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK.

Both under Postal Revenue and under Telegraphs, the cash collections for the year 1905-06 exceeded the Estimates. They are thus compared with the collections of the previous two years.

	1905-6.	1904-5.	1903-4.
Postages ...	£29,593 10 4	£26,538	£26,326
Commission on money orders ...	440 18 5	560	637
Local commissions on British postal orders	97 12 0	37	...
Commission on local postal orders	689 11 1	657	690
Miscellaneous ...	614 7 1	863	308
Telegraphs ...	5,982 19 6	4,792	5,195
	<u>£37,418 18 5</u>	<u>£33,447</u>	<u>£33,246</u>

The presence of large numbers of Jamaicans at the Isthmus may account for some of the increase in postages, and in commissions on Postal Orders and the extension of the daily post to all the Offices in the Island has, of course, had some share; but we may reasonably regard this considerable improvement among the reliable indications of general progress in the Island during the year.

The Postmaster submits an interesting review of the Revenue of the Department taken decennially during the last forty years:—

	Postages.	Commission on Money Orders & British Postal Orders.	Commission on Postal Orders.	Telegraphs.	Miscellaneous.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
1865-66	11,260	585	...	...	741	12,586
1875-76	14,856	281	...	...	614	15,751
1885-86	15,681	314	...	4,055	205	20,255
1895-96	22,489	388	520	6,156	173	29,726
1905-06	29,560	538	689	5,983	806	37,577

During this period Inland Letter postage has been reduced from 4d. and 3d. according to distance, and postage to the United Kingdom from 1s. by successive steps to the uniform rate of 1d. per half-ounce.

The expenditure of the Post Office Department for the year 1905-6 is thus stated:—

Personal emoluments	...	£15,252 9 1
Mail Conveyance	...	10,862 8 5
Services	...	5,202 0 9
Maintenance of telegraph lines by Director of Public Works	...	798 14 10
		<u>£32,115 13 1</u>

The excess of £391 over the expenditure of the previous year is accounted for by the expenditure of £1,130 in the year for the manufacture of stamps. Under each of the three principal heads of expenditure viz.: Personal emoluments, mail conveyance, and maintenance of telegraph, there has been successive reduction in the last three years.

The revenue collected on postages during the last three years is apportioned between Ocean Postages and Inland Postages as follows:—

	Ocean Postages.	Inland Postages.	Total.
	£	£	£
1903-4	4,892	21,434	26,326
1904-5	5,712	21,390	27,102
1905-6	6,749	23,534	30,283

Amongst small changes affecting in one way or another the convenience of the public the Postmaster notes the reduction of postage to Australia to 1d. per half ounce, although the same postage from Australia remains at two pence, also the addition of one Letter Box in Kingston making the number twenty-two and the provision of facilities for obtaining Inland Postal orders and Embossed Stamps at the Circulation Branch of the Kingston Post Office. Mail Coach Service between Ewarton and Dry Harbour and between Kingston and Port Antonio has been discontinued.

The estimates taken quarterly at the central office in Kingston and at the District Post Offices, give the following analysis of the correspondence handled by the department, the previous years returns being also submitted for comparison:—

	OUTWARDS.		INWARDS.	
	1904-5.	1905-6.	1904-5.	1905-6.
Inland Mails—				
Ordinary letters—				
Public	1,464,216	1,671,084	1,592,572	1,725,698
Official	151,736	122,304	169,884	142,402
Post Cards	51,116	57,876	35,048	53,118
Registered letters—				
Public	27,407	42,994	72,632	80,239
Official	30,195	28,320	18,798	34,072
Ocean Mails by vessels under contract—				
United Kingdom—				
Ordinary letters	301,804	218,470	388,900	398,900
Post Cards	4,960	5,112	1,400	1,400
Inter-Colonial British West Indies, &c.—				
Ordinary letters	115,279	116,560	205,918	206,800
Post Cards	2,372	2,460	2,095	2,180
By vessels not under contract—				
United States of America—				
Ordinary letters	169,095	197,481	215,545	252,708
Post Cards	30,693	73,862	16,696	18,481
Other Countries—				
Ordinary letters	85,922	243,324	128,879	152,135
Post Cards	6,870	21,726	959	9,600
Registered letters, oversea	24,235	28,735	26,997	41,273
	<u>2,465,900</u>	<u>2,830,308</u>	<u>2,876,323</u>	<u>3,119,006</u>

This shows an increase of 717,541 in the number of letters and post cards dealt with (or nearly 12%); registered letters have increased by 58,849 (nearly 24%); insured letters to the number of 29 and of declared value of £1,267 were received: and 63 letters of the declared value of £5,218 were despatched.

The conveyance of Ocean Mails was performed—outwards—by 54 vessels under contract carrying 421 mails, and 438 vessels, non-contract carrying 908 mails—inwards—by 34 contract vessels carrying 264 mails, and 524 non-contract vessels carrying 2,105 mails. The number of transit mails was 265.

The mails despatched exceed the number of the previous year by 161, and the mails received are 290 in excess.

There is a fortnightly direct service each way between Bristol and Kingston, provided under contract with Messrs. Elder, Dempster & Co. For this service the Colony contributes £20,000 a year. Its primary object is the development of the fruit trade with the mother country.

The expenditure charged to this Department on the Ocean Mail service is as under:—

Contributions towards Imperial Contract with Royal Mail Steam	
Packet Company to 30th June, 1905	... £525 0 0
Sea and Territorial Rates paid to other countries	... 157 8 8
Ship Letter Gratuities	... 1,657 19 3

In the matter of convenience for correspondence with the United Kingdom little change has been caused by the cessation of the Royal Mail contract. The Company carried on its sailings much as usual to the end of October. The new itinerary then introduced while it diminishes considerably the means of communication with the neighbouring West Indian Colonies, has added another quick and reliable service between Jamaica and the United States of America, and by New York to England. The rate of gratuity for the conveyance of mails by non-contract vessels has been considerably reduced.

The Inland Mail Service has been carried out at a cost of £8,722, partly by Contractors partly by the Public Works Department. The cost of this service in 1904-5 was £8,290. The District Post Offices now number 159. One District Postmaster was prosecuted for misappropriation of money, and sentenced to two years imprisonment.

With regard to Money Orders issued payable abroad, the number in 1905-06 was 8,023 and the total value of the Orders £23,913 as compared with 11,086 Orders and £29,200 value in 1904-05. The issues of other countries payable in Jamaica were 1873, value £11,165, as compared with 4,816 orders valued £12,721 in the preceding year. The Money Order exchanges added £440 to Post Office Revenue.

Postal Orders, 226,105 in number £33,193 in value and yielding £691 in Commissions, were issued in the year under report, the corresponding figures in the preceding year being: number 208,455, value £31,713, commission £652.

The transactions of the Parcel Post Branch were as follows:—

From.	PARCELS.		IMPORT DUTY.	
	1904-5.	1905-6.	1904-5.	1905-6.
United Kingdom	£12,736	£13,496	£2,144 18 0	£2,565 6 4
British West Indies	262	275	18 4 0	21 6 6
United States of America	6,489	8,080	585 0 2	826 6 7
Dominion of Canada	285	398	96 11 11	92 9 6
Turks Island	16	29	0 5 7	2 7 11
Belize	...	...	...	...
Bermuda	81	41	2 12 7	1 14 6
	£19,869	£22,319	£2,847 12 3	£3,509 11 4

The postage which accrued to Jamaica was £594 as compared with £375 in 1904-05 and the declared value of the parcels was £22,357 as against £23,370 in the preceding year.

At the end of the year 1905-06, 64 Telegraph Stations and six Telephone Stations were connected with the Postal System, the number in 1904-05 being 69 and 5 respectively. The Railway Telegraph Service provides 35 additional centres at which telegrams may be received and despatched. The number of telegraph messages sent during the year exceeded the previous year's total by 12,494 messages. Working in harmony with the Ocean Cables the Department collected £2,820 on behalf of the Direct Cable Company and £212 on behalf of the West India and Panama Telegraph Company.

The necessity of providing a new building for the General Post Office at an early date is recognised.