

# CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

## REPORT on the POSTAL SERVICE of the COLONY for the Year ended 31st December, 1875.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of His Excellency the Governor.

1876.

General Post Office, Cape Town,  
24th April, 1876.

The Honourable the Colonial Secretary.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit my Report on the Postal Service of this Colony for the year 1875.

G. W. AITCHISON,  
Postmaster-General.

### REPORT.

At the close of last year the colony was visited by an unprecedented flood which carried away the bridges on the most important lines, and proved very destructive to the roads. To enable the post contractors to fulfil their engagements, considerable additions had in many instances to be made to the contract allowances, while leniency had necessarily under such unparalleled circumstances to be shown in the imposition of fines. During the past year the parts of the colony which had previously escaped from the ravages of the weather, have been subjected to similar visitations, and it has been with much difficulty that the inland mail conveyance has been carried on to a degree at all satisfactory. The efficient coast packet service, which it will be seen by the returns of expenditure has necessarily been largely taken advantage of, has tended very materially in preventing the mails for the frontier districts being subjected to the serious delays to which they would otherwise have been inevitably liable.

The expenditure therefore for the conveyance of mails, operating as these causes have been throughout the year, will be found to be considerably in excess of the previous year. The chief item of expenditure is for the conveyance of mails between Cape Town and Humansdorp, on the main line to Port Elizabeth. The cost for this service in December 1873 was £5,600 per annum. At present the cost is £11,662. I do not however anticipate any great reduction will be made in the cost for this portion of the service until the road through the Lange Kloof has been relaid, so as to avoid the frequent crossing of the Kromme River, which has now to be traversed eight times, and until the Duivenhoks and Gouritz Rivers have been bridged. This line of road offers the chief obstacles to the regular conveyance of the most important mails of the colony, and it is very desirable therefore that the relaying of the road, which the Public Works Department is now engaged upon, should be prosecuted with vigour, and provision also made for the early bridging of the rivers above mentioned. When these works are completed, there will be no difficulty in getting the mails carried along this line in short sections by residents along the road, especially now that the weight of mails to be conveyed is considerably diminished by the employment of the coasting packets. A large increase too has been made in the cost of extra posts along this line—one hundred and five pounds ten shillings being now the charge for an extra post to Graham's Town from Cape Town while formerly it was conveyed for sixty-nine pounds ten shillings. I have accordingly restricted the number of extra posts despatched, limiting them only to the occasions when by their despatch a reply by the first outgoing packet can be secured to Port Elizabeth or the frontier districts.

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If however there has been an increase in the expenditure of an exceptional nature, there has been a progressive and marked increase in the postal revenue year by year.

The revenue for 1875 shows an excess of £5,351 over that of 1874, which again exceeded that of the previous year, when additional postal facilities were afforded to a large extent by the establishment of new posts, the re-arrangement of others, and by a large increase in the number of postal agencies. Within the last two years therefore the postal revenue has been increased by £14,000.

The districts or field-cornets posts have now almost all been converted from fortnightly into weekly posts. This measure has of course been attended with increased expenditure, especially under the circumstances already referred to which added so largely to the cost of the conveyance of the ordinary mails, but the country has enjoyed large benefits from the change, as these posts now afford the means of keeping up communication with the most distant parts, instead of merely serving the administrative purposes of Government, and simply conveying the *Government Gazette* and official letters.

The following are the chief alterations and additions made during the year with a view of facilitating and improving postal communication.

The mail for the Free State is now conveyed direct from Cradock to Burghersdorp instead of *via* Middelburg, and from Burghersdorp *via* Bethulie instead of *via* Aliwal North. The change has very much improved the communication between the Colony and Free State.

The extension of the railway to Ceres Road has allowed of the mails to Beaufort being despatched from Ceres Road Station, and those from Clanwilliam and Namaqualand from the Piquetberg Road Station instead of from Wellington, while the Graaff-Reinet mails instead of being sent from Port Elizabeth by post, are now sent by rail to Uitenhage, reducing the distance to Graaff-Reinet by two hours.

The tri-weekly communication with Worcester has been displaced by a daily post. Two additional mails in the week have been provided for Caledon by means of the passenger cart running from Eerste River Station.

A daily post has been established between Graham's Town and King William's Town, and between King William's Town and East London at less cost than the tri-weekly post. A second post in the week has also been established by passenger cart between Graham's Town and Fort Beaufort, and between Fort Beaufort and Queen's Town. By a judicious arrangement of the field-cornets posts, direct communication is kept up between Alice and Peddie, and an opportunity also afforded for additional communication with those places by the daily post running between Graham's Town and King William's Town. An additional post in the week has been established between Beaufort and Fraserburg.

A weekly post has also been established between Fraserburg and Victoria West and Victoria West and Richmond, connecting the former places more immediately with Port Elizabeth, and at the same time improving their communication with Cape Town. An additional post in the week has also been provided between Swellendam and Port Beaufort, and between Graaff-Reinet and Aberdeen.

During the year a compilation of instructions for postmasters, which had never previously been printed, was completed, and each postmaster supplied with a copy. These, together with the printed Route List compiled by me in the previous year being in the hands of the postmasters, prevent errors through ignorance which were of frequent occurrence, but which in the absence of the necessary guide or information, could not be properly noticed.

In July last—the first of season that I found myself in a position to leave the Head Office for any length of time, owing to the number of matters which necessarily engaged my attention there after my assumption of office—I left Cape Town for Port Elizabeth on a tour of inspection. From Port Elizabeth I travelled by the following route: Graham's Town, King William's Town, Komgaa, King William's Town, Alice, Fort Beaufort, Bedford, Cradock, Middelburg, Colesberg, Bloemfontein, Kimberley, Hope Town, Philipstown, Hanover, Richmond, Murraysburg, and Beaufort, returning to Cape Town *via* the Karroo. I inspected the several post offices on the line of route travelled. The inspection afforded me the opportunity of meeting the residents in each locality chiefly interested in postal arrangements, of considering the suggestions they had to make in the interests of the community, enabling me in many cases to make modifications of existing arrangements to the advantage of the communities, and to correct defects of the existence of which I was ignorant, and which it was only necessary to bring to my notice to have them remedied. In the course of the inspection I became aware that the great majority of the postmasters were acting as agents to the post contractors, and as their interests are not altogether identical with those of this department, strict injunctions were issued against the continuance of the

agency. The postmasters therefore having now only one master to serve, can exercise a better control over the contractors which they could not do in the anomalous position they formerly were in.

During my visit to Bloemfontein I suggested the desirability of increased communication with Port Elizabeth and the Cape Colony generally, and on my return to Cape Town submitted a scheme by which this could be effected *via* Aliwal North with little expense to the Free State, by a re-arrangement of existing posts. This proposal has been under consideration, but I learned from the President, as he passed through Cape Town on his way to England, that its adoption had to be deferred for the present.

A postal convention between the Colony and the Free State, though long desired in the interests of both communities, could hitherto never be effected, owing to stipulations being insisted upon which could not be assented to. However the Government of the Free State having come to a resolution to allow all letters for the Free State prepaid in the Colony to be delivered free, the same concession has been made on the part of the Colony in the case of letters addressed to it and prepaid in the Free State, and accordingly the main object of the postal convention, viz., reciprocal free delivery, has now happily been effected.

Before bringing my report to a close, I would venture a few remarks for the guidance of the public.

By a very objectionable practice and one which from a post office point of view cannot be sufficiently deprecated, it has become customary to confer the same name on two places situated both in this Colony, or one in this Colony and the other in one of the adjoining states. The latest instances of the kind are *Ventersburg* near Burghersdorp in this Colony, and *Ventersburg* in the Orange Free State. *Barkly* in the division of Wodehouse, and *Barkly* in the Diamond Fields. Instances of an older date are *Lady Grey* in Aliwal North and *Lady Grey* in Robertson. *Durban* in Cape Division, and *Durban* in Natal. The missending of correspondence occasioned by this similarity in names, has been a most fruitful source of annoyance, inconvenience, and loss, for which in the absence of anything distinctive in the address to indicate definitely the place intended, the post office authorities are scarcely to be blamed so much as the thoughtlessness shewn in the naming of places, or in the want of care, under these circumstances, in the address of correspondence.

It occasionally happens that letters for Richmond and Bedford intended for places so named in this Colony, are in the hurry of business, when posted on the days the mails for England are being made up, by mistake included in these mails. On ordinary occasions this would not occur, but to provide against such mishaps which may at times prove of consequence, it is suggested that in all cases where towns in the Colony are named after places in the mother or other countries, the words "*Cape Colony*" should be added to the address. The number of such places is larger than would be thought at first, as will be seen by the following list:—Aberdeen, Adelaide, Alexandria, Bathurst, Bedford, Berlin, Cambridge, Dordrecht, Hanover, Middelburg, Newcastle, Queen's Town, Richmond, Waterford, and Wellington.

Now that the addresses of regular correspondents are generally printed on the envelopes, there can be no objection why the address should not be rendered complete by the addition suggested. It is also suggested in order to facilitate and expedite the delivery of mails, that the number of the box should be added to the address of letters and newspapers of all private boxholders.

I annex such statistics of the department as may be deemed to be of interest to the public.

The mail matter despatched inland from Cape Town was as follows:—

Number of Letters	694,476
Number of Papers	996,825
Number of Books	95,653

showing an increase in the number conveyed during the previous year, respectively of 41,022, 108,849, and 12,067.

The weight of mails despatched was:—

By Coasting Steamers	75,198 lbs.
By Post Cart to Eastern Frontier	100,622 lbs.
By Post Cart to North Eastern Frontier	68,400 lbs.

showing an increase in the service performed by the coasting packets to the extent of 43,687 lbs. over that in the previous year.

The number of bags of mails received by the Union Packets during the year amounted to 2,465, or 44 in excess of those received last year. Those by the Donald Currie Line amounted to 286, or 139 more than were conveyed last year.

The mails despatched to England consisted of:—

Letters	289,078
Papers	268,463
Books	11,656

or 44,707 letters, and 132,953 papers in excess of those sent the previous year.

*Registered Letters.*

The number of registered letters received in the General Post Office was:—

From and <i>via</i> England	4,944
From other places beyond sea	252
From inland towns	11,670
And those despatched:—	
To and <i>via</i> England	5,616
To other places beyond sea	235
To inland towns	4,294
	<hr/> 27,011

being in all 5,490 more than passed through it during the previous year.

The number of letters containing coin and other valuables posted without being registered, and which were compulsorily registered by officers of the department amounted in the year to 349, being 45 posted for transmission to England, 247 received in the General Post Office from inland post offices, and 57 posted for inland towns.

The customs duty collected on articles of jewellery and other valuables passing through the post office by letter amounted to £313 17s. 6d., or £72 13s. 10d. in excess of last year's collections.

A record has continued to be kept of registered packets presumed to contain diamonds posted for transmission to England. From this it would appear that the weight amounted to 649 lbs. and 12 oz., being an excess of 175 lbs. 7 oz. over the previous year's return.

*Dead Letters.*

The number of unclaimed colonial letters returned to the writers was 9,442, yielding a postage of £103 3s. 1d., of these letters 114 received *unregistered* were found to contain:—Money Orders to the value of £61 0s. 6d.; Cheques £2,086 0s. 9d.; Coin £4 11s. 7d.; Bank Notes £158; Bills of Exchange and Drafts £774 19s. 4d.; Promissory Notes £219 0s. 9d.

1,919 ordinary and 37 registered letters were returned to the United Kingdom, and 979 ordinary and 14 registered letters were returned to the Colony from England as unclaimed.

*Money Orders.*

The issues of Money Orders during the year were as follows:—Upon offices in Cape Colony £57,877 16s. 8d.; Upon offices in the United Kingdom £18,039 19s. 3d.; Upon offices in St. Helena £527 17s. 5d.; Upon offices in Natal £253 6s. 7d.; Upon offices in Griqualand West £7,197 16s. 0d.; Total £83,896 15s. 11d., or £19,915 6s. 2d., in excess of the issue in the previous year.

The payments made from the respective offices were as follows:—On account of orders issued in and upon the Colony £56,869 4s. 9d.; On account of orders issued in United Kingdom £2,895 5s. 7d.; On account of orders issued in St. Helena £334 11s. 6d.; On account of orders issued in Natal £296 18s. 0d.; On account of orders issued in Griqualand West £5,358 9s. 11d.

*Revenue and Expenditure.*

The expenditure of the department for the past year has been as follows:—

*Conveyance of Mails.*

Inland Mails	49,625	0	9
Extra Posts	2,679	5	0
District Posts	8,433	17	2
Gratuities to Masters of Vessels	51	10	3
Carried forward	£60,789	13	2

Brought forward . . . . .	£60,789	13	2
Supply and repair of Mail Bags, waxcloth, &c. . . . .	696	2	9
Mails from Landing Places . . . . .	147	12	6
Bloemfontein and Harrismith . . . . .	900	0	0
Steam Communication Table and Algoa Bays. . . . .	1,325	0	0
Hope Town and Kuruman . . . . .	24	0	0
Conveyance to England by Union Line . . . . .	89,69	0	3
Gratuity to Donald Currie Line . . . . .	13,800	0	0
<b>Total for the Conveyance of Mails . . . . .</b>	<b>86,651</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Salaries . . . . .	13,208	18	5
Allowances . . . . .	1,054	4	9
Contingent . . . . .	1,793	6	11
<b>Total of Expenditure . . . . .</b>	<b>102,707</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>

*Revenue.*

Postage . . . . .	53,128	18	6
Fines . . . . .	3,932	1	3
Premiums on Money Orders . . . . .	1,324	17	0
<b>Total of Revenue . . . . .</b>	<b>58,385</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>

As the fixed allowance for the service between Bloemfontein and Harrismith is £600 a year, and that for the Donald Currie Line was £12,000 the excess in the payments made last year, respectively of £300 and of £1,800, which is for arrears of the previous year, must be deducted from the expenditure proper to last year, which reduces the expenditure to £100,607 18s. 9d., making the difference between expenditure and revenue, after allowing for the service rendered to the Government in the conveyance of official correspondence, &c., £22,222.

G. W. AITCHISON,  
Postmaster-General.

STATEMENT showing the Postal Contracts for the Conveyance of Mails in force in April, 1876.

STAGE.	How conveyed.	How often.	Amount of Contract Allowance.		
			£	s.	d.
Cape Town and Hendriks Kraal ... ..	Cart	3 times a week	9,672	0	0
Hendriks Kraal and Humansdorp ... ..	do.	do.	1,990	0	0
Humansdorp and Port Elizabeth ... ..	do.	do.	1,330	0	0
Port Elizabeth and Graham's Town ... ..	do.	do.	2,700	0	0
Graham's Town and Cradock ... ..	do.	do.	2,400	0	0
Cradock and Middelburg ... ..	do.	Twice a week	1,450	0	0
Burghersdorp and Aliwal North ... ..	do.	Once a week	400	0	0
Queen's Town and Burghersdorp ... ..	do.	do.	550	0	0
Graham's Town and Fort Beaufort ... ..	do.	do.	200	0	0
Do. do. (by Passenger Cart)	do.	do.	100	0	0
Fort Beaufort and Bedford ... ..	do.	do.	198	0	0
Bedford and Somerset East ... ..	do.	3 times a week	849	19	0
Somerset East and Graaff-Reinet ... ..	do.	Twice a week	940	0	0
Fort Beaufort and Queen's Town ... ..	do.	do.	700	0	0
Queen's Town and Aliwal North ... ..	do.	Once a week	700	0	0
Graham's Town and Queen's Town (via King William's Town) ... ..	do.	To King William's Town daily, to Queen's Town twice a week	2,750	0	0
King William's Town and East London ... ..	do.	Twice a week	124	0	0
Do. and Fort Beaufort ... ..	do.	Once a week	180	0	0
Graham's Town and Port Alfred ... ..	do.	Twice a week	216	0	0
Do. and Alexandria ... ..	Horse	do.	240	0	0
Port Elizabeth and Graaff-Reinet ... ..	Cart	Once a week	2,120	0	0
Beaufort and Murraysburg ... ..	do.	Twice a week	2,105	0	0
Murraysburg and Richmond ... ..	do.	do.	697	0	0
Carried forward ... ..			£32,661	19	0

STATEMENT showing the Postal Contracts for the Conveyance of Mails in force in April, 1876.

STAGE.				How conveyed.	How often.	Amount of Contract Allowance.		
						£	s.	d.
Brought forward						£32,661	19	0
Richmond and Hope Town	...	...	...	Cart	Twice a week	2,895	0	0
Middelburg and Colesberg	...	...	...	do.	do.	750	0	0
Do. and Graaff-Reinet	...	...	...	do.	Once a week	535	0	0
Do. and Richmond	...	...	...	do.	Twice a week	775	0	0
Murraysburg and Graaff-Reinet	...	...	...	do.	do.	900	0	0
Do. and Victoria West	...	...	...	do.	Once a week	360	0	0
Beaufort and Victoria West	...	...	...	do.	do.	585	0	0
Do. and Frazerburg	...	...	...	do.	Twice a week	940	0	0
Blanco and Oudtshoorn	...	...	...	do.	do.	330	0	0
Oudtshoorn and Prince Albert	...	...	...	do.	Once a week	620	0	0
Klaarstroom and Beaufort	...	...	...	do.	do.	545	0	0
Prince Albert and Uitkyk	...	...	...	do.	do.	168	0	0
Cape Town and Malmesbury	...	...	...	do.	3 times a week	150	0	0
Piquetberg Road and Porterville	...	...	...	do.	Twice a week	108	0	0
Do. and Clanwilliam	...	...	...	do.	do.	619	0	0
Clanwilliam and Ebenezer	...	...	...	Horse	Once a week	330	0	0
Ebenezer and Lilyfontein...	...	...	...	do.	do.	380	0	0
Lilyfontein and Springbokfontein	...	...	...	do.	do.	208	0	0
Clanwilliam and Calvinia	...	...	...	do.	Twice a week	750	0	0
Cape Town and Hopefield (via Darling)	...	...	...	Cart	Once a week	180	0	0
Avontunr and Knyana	...	...	...	do.	Twice a week	339	10	0
Plettenberg's Bay and Knysna	...	...	...	Horse	do.	78	0	0
Plumstead and Simon's Town	...	...	...	Cart	Twice daily	108	0	0
Carried forward						£45,315	9	0



STATEMENT showing the Postal Contracts for the Conveyance of Mails in force in April, 1876.

STAGE.				How conveyed.	How often.	Amount of Contract Allowance.		
						£	s.	d.
Brought forward						£45,315	9	0
Caledon and Bredasdorp	...	...	...	Cart	Twice a week	184	10	0
Bredasdorp and L'Aguihas	...	...	...	do.	Once a week	32	18	0
Wellington and Worcester	...	...	...	do.	3 times a week	165	0	0
Worcester and Robertson	...	...	...	do.	Once a week	96	0	0
Swellendam and Robertson	...	...	...	do.	do.	200	0	0
Montagu and Zandvliet	...	...	...	Horse	Twice a week	30	0	0
Hanover and Colesberg	...	...	...	do.	Once a week	400	0	0
Colesberg and Philipstown	...	...	...	do.	do.	400	0	0
Riversdale and Ladysmith	...	...	...	do.	do.	190	0	0
Ladysmith and Amalienstein	...	...	...	do.	do.	7	10	0
Blanco and George	...	...	...	do.	do.	60	0	0
Breakfast Vlei and Fort Peddie	...	...	...	do.	Twice a week	72	0	0
Elands Post and Balfour	...	...	...	do.	Once a week	75	0	0
Stellenbosch and French Hoek	...	...	...	Cart	Twice a week	45	0	0
D'Urban and D'Urban Railway Station	...	...	...	do.	Twice daily	45	0	0
Stellenbosch and Stellenbosch Railway Station	...	...	...	do.	3 times daily	24	0	0
Paarl and Paarl Railway Station	...	...	...	do.	do.	12	0	0
Wellington and Wellington Railway Station	...	...	...	do.	do.	54	0	0
Queen's Town and Dordrecht	...	...	...	do.	Once a week	360	0	0
Somerset West and Eerste River	...	...	...	do.	Twice daily	42	0	0
Port Elizabeth and Somerset East	...	...	...	do.	Once a week	200	0	0
Graaff-Reinet and Aberdeen	...	...	...	do.	do.	240	0	0
Constable and Patatas River	...	...	...	Horse	do.	30	0	0
Carried forward						£48,280	7	0



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STATEMENT showing the Postal Contracts for the Conveyance of Mails in force in April, 1876.

STAGE.				How conveyed.	How often.	Amount of Contract Allowance.		
						£	s.	d.
Brought forward ...						£48,280	7	0
King William's Town and Toleni	...	...	...	Cart	Once a week.	460	0	0
Queen's Town and St. Marks	...	...	...	do.	do.	190	0	0
Craddock and Tarkastad...	...	...	...	do.	do.	275	0	0
Clarkbury and Umtata...	...	...	...	Horse	do.	120	0	0
Toleni and Clarkbury	...	...	...	do.	do.	120	0	0
Avontuur and Willowmore	...	...	...	do.	Twice a week	200	0	0
Hondeklip Bay and Springbokfontein...	...	...	...	do.	Once a week	325	0	0
Middelburg and Steynsburg	...	...	...	do.	do.	325	0	0
Craddock and Burghersdorp	...	...	...	Cart	do.	900	0	0
Carnarvon and Kenhardt	...	...	...	Horse	do.	475	0	0
Tulbagh and Tulbagh Road Station	...	...	...	Cart	Twice daily	74	0	0
Ceres Road and Beaufort West	...	...	...	do.	do.	4,200	0	0
Ceres and Ceres Road Station	...	...	...	do.	do.	60	0	0
Springbokfontein and O'okiep	...	...	...	Horse	Once a week	25	0	0
Victoria West and Richmond	...	...	...	Cart	do.	400	0	0
Frazerburg and Victoria West	...	...	...	do.	do.	775	0	0
Total ...						57,204	7	0