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1891.

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BRITISH  
GUIANA.

At the close of the year there were at the asylum 344 inmates (270 males and 74 females); 63 males and 5 females were admitted during the year. 56 inmates died.

Steps are being taken to establish a leper community on one of the islands in the Essequibo River. A suitable island has been selected and acquired for public purposes, after a long and tedious legal process, and is now being cleared of bush and prepared for the erection of the necessary buildings.

#### SAVINGS BANKS AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

53. The transactions of the Government Savings Banks continue to show a gratifying increase at all the branches. At the close of the year there were 15,872 depositors as compared with 14,899 the year before, and the amount standing to their credit was 251,364*l.* an increase of 24,078*l.*

The deposits and withdrawals amounted respectively to 174,126*l.* and 150,048*l.*, and the interest carried to the credit of depositors to 5,909*l.*

The funds of the banks are invested in Government securities, and on open loan to the Colony.

Post Office Savings Banks were established during 1889, by opening six branches at what were considered the most suitable district post offices, and this number was increased to nine during 1890. At the close of 1890 there were 110 depositors, 5,782*l.* stood at their credit, and the deposits and withdrawals during the year amounted respectively to 8,160*l.* and 2,955*l.*

It will thus be evident that the establishment of Post Office Savings Banks has in no way affected the business of the long established savings banks in connexion with the Treasury, but that the former, probably from their geographical position, have reached a separate and distinct class of depositors.

#### METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS.

54. Meteorological observations were taken throughout the year at the Botanic Gardens.

The total rainfall, like that of the previous year, was unusually high, and was the same within an inch; being, 122·68. The heaviest monthly fall was 25·11 inches in January, and the lowest ·02 inches in November.

#### POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH RETURNS.

55. The Postal Department consists of the General Post Office in Georgetown, 60 district post offices, and seven travelling post offices. Of the former 25 are money order offices, and nine are savings banks.

The number of letters, newspapers, &c. posted during the year is estimated at 1,532,462, an increase of 324,806 as compared with

1889. The money order business, both inland and foreign, increased, the amounts being: inland, 18,212*l.*, as against 16,275*l.*, and foreign, 53,777*l.*, as against 47,699*l.* The parcels post also was more largely used, the revenue and customs duties collected being respectively 273*l.*, and 697*l.*, as against 233*l.* and 459*l.* in the previous year.

56. *Telegraphs*.—The Government telegraph extends along the cultivated coast of the Colony for a distance of 260 miles and through the settlements on the banks of the rivers. There are 37 offices. There was an increase in the telegraph receipts during the year, the amount being 3,324*l.*, as against 2,276*l.* in 1889.

57. *Telephone*.—The telephone service was placed in a state of thorough efficiency during the year, and gives general satisfaction. It is under the charge of the postal department, and there are 200 subscribers; the rates of yearly subscription are 5*l.* for business premises and 2*l.* 10*s.* for private houses. The service is unbroken by day or night.

#### RAILWAYS, CANALS, AND ROADS.

58. *Railway*.—There was no extension during the year of the 20 miles of railway between Georgetown and to Mahaica built in 1864. The line was constructed and is still owned by the Demerara Railway Company. The extension of railway communication from Mahaica to the bank of the Berbice River is again receiving attention. The Combined Court has pledged itself to provide the interest on the necessary capital, and tenders for the construction of the line have been invited.

59. *Canals*.—The principal canals are those locally known as Nos. 1, 2, and 3 on the Demerara River. They serve as waterways for the estates on their banks, most of which are now abandoned. The two former have been empoldered, and the extensive drainage and water conservation works which have been in progress for some years past are approaching completion.

#### GENERAL REMARKS.

The past year has been one of prosperity for the Colony generally, and although there has been a depreciation in value of the staple product, yet the value of the total exports is still above that of 1888. Trade has been good and the chief want of the Colony has been labour. A commission which sat in the latter part of the year resulted in the establishment of an Immigration Agency at Barbados, and the immigrants obtained, although few in number, were good workmen and of the kind most needed on the sugar estates which had felt the scarcity of labour more than any other industry.

The steady growth of the gold industry has been of undoubted benefit to the Colony. There has been no rush to the diggings occasioning a dislocation of every day life, although in some