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No. 290.

BRITISH GUIANA.

REPORTS FOR 1897-8 AND 1898-9.

(For Report for 1896-7, *see* No. 222.)

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

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1900.

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*Savings Banks.*BRITISH
GUIANA,
1897-8.

There was again a slight increase in the deposits in the Treasury Savings Banks, the amount standing at credit of depositors on 31st December, 1897, being £238,351. 3% is paid on deposits up to £312 10s., and the funds are duly invested. The expenditure amounted to £6,521 and the revenue to £8,330.

The number of Post Office Savings Banks was increased by five and there are now twenty-seven. They have steadily grown in public favour. In 1892-3 the deposits amounted to £12,500. In 1896-7 they had risen to £30,373, and in the year under review they reached £34,217. On these deposits also interest at the rate of 3% is paid.

Postal and Telegraph.

Postal business proper shews a slight decrease. The total number of articles posted fell to 1,897,236. Inland Money Orders to the extent of £30,191 were issued. Foreign Money Orders shew an increase as regards the United Kingdom and the United States. The Orders issued on India during this, their second year, amounted to £1,967.

Three country Post Offices were added during the year and there are now 69 in the Colony. Of these 39 are Telegraph Stations, 34 are Money Order Offices, 26 are Savings Banks, and 8 are travelling offices.

The length of Telegraph lines throughout the Colony is 451 miles, and there are 17 cables with an aggregate length of 81 miles. 64,949 paid messages were sent, and 13,245 service messages. The total gross revenue derived was £4,246.

The Public Telephone Service in Georgetown had 457 renters. The charges are £5 for business premises and £2 10s. for private houses. There is also a small service in the Town of New Amsterdam, and the Police Stations in Georgetown have their own separate service.

The cost of maintenance, exclusive of salaries, of the Telegraph and Telephone Services, was £791, and the total receipts £4,246.

Meteorological.

The rainfall returned, after three dry years, to the proportions of the early nineties. Careful records are kept at the Botanic

Rainfall.

BRITISH
GUIANA,
1898-9.

There are annually two wet seasons, from June to the end of August and during December, January, and February. Careful records are kept at the Botanic Gardens, and the following figures give the rainfall in each of the last ten years:—

1889	...	...	...	...	123	inches.
1890	...	...	...	...	122	"
1891	...	...	...	...	122	"
1892-93	...	...	...	...	117	"
1893-94	...	...	...	...	114	"
1894-95	...	...	...	...	87	"
1895-96	...	...	...	...	68	"
1896-97	...	...	...	...	78	"
1897-98	...	...	...	...	123	"
1898-99	...	...	...	...	130	"

Temperature.

The mean temperature throughout the year was about 82° Fahr., the mean maximum being 88° in the month of September, and the mean minimum 74° in the month of January.

Direction of Wind.

Out of 668 records taken 416 were N.E.—172 E.—41 N.E. by E.—17 S.E.—9 calm—5 S.—3 S.E. by E.—3 S.W.—2 N.

Force of Wind.

The year mean average taken at 9 a.m. was .7.

" " " " " " " 5 p.m. " .6.

The method employed to obtain the force of the wind is by sensation or by estimation; this is necessarily somewhat rough, nevertheless, it is the only mode of obtaining wind observations at the majority of stations, and with experienced observers yields very useful and fairly satisfactory results.

The scale employed here is Beaufort's scale, the force of wind being estimated and recorded in numbers, from 0—to—12.

i.e. 0 = Calm, mean velocity English miles per hour = 3

12 = Hurricane " " " " " " " = 90

POSTAL, TELEGRAPH, AND TELEPHONE SERVICES.

Postal business shows a considerable increase. The total number of articles posted rose from 1,897,236 in the previous year to 2,016,020, an increase of 118,784. The only item on which there was a decrease was foreign post-cards. There were 27,130 inland money orders issued, representing £34,326, as against 24,722, representing £30,191, in the previous year.

BRITISH
GUIANA,
1898-9.

Foreign money orders issued have increased in some cases, and fallen off in others.

As regards the United Kingdom the value of the orders issued fell from £37,427 in the previous year to £34,398, while the figures for the United States are £5,110 and £13,729 respectively. There was an increase in the case of orders on India from £1,967 to £2,188. This is the third year of issue of orders on India. The figures representing values of foreign orders paid show little fluctuation:—

			£	s.	d.
1897-98	...	...	3,852	11	0
1898-99	...	...	4,555	6	9

Parcels Post Inland Service.

An increase of business is again shewn under this head, the number of parcels dealt with being 7,082, as compared with 6,640 in 1897-98.

The total number of foreign parcels dealt with was 9,517. Out of this number 1,327 were insured. These figures as compared with those of 1897-98 show an increase of 1,458.

Telegraphs.

The length of telegraph lines throughout the Colony is 1,157 miles, and there are 12 cables with an aggregate length of 125 miles. 64,924 paid messages were sent, and 12,304 service messages. The total gross revenue derived was £4,337.

During the year it was decided to establish communication between the Demerara-Essequibo Railway and Bartica by means of a cable to be laid through the bush, and a track has been cut to a width of 6 feet for the purpose.

Telephones.

The telephone accomodation in Georgetown is fully taken up and there are 556 subscribers. The charges are £5 for business premises and £2 10s. for private houses. There is also a small service in New Amsterdam, and the Police Stations in Georgetown have their own separate service.

MILITARY FORCES AND EXPENDITURE.

There are no Imperial troops now stationed in the Colony. There is a Militia Force and a semi military armed Police Force.

Militia.—The total strength at the end of the year was 426 with a reserve of 196. There are 3 Companies of Infantry and 1 of Artillery in Georgetown, and 1 Company of Infantry in New Amsterdam.

The total expenditure for the year, including the band, was £5,437.