

And the contributing colonies' proportions, on the basis of population :—

Colony.					Population (Census, 1891).	Amount.		
						£	s.	d.
Victoria	...	...	...	...	1,140,405	859	18	8
New South Wales	...	...	...	...	1,132,234	853	15	5
New Zealand	...	...	...	...	620,030	467	10	9
South Australia	...	...	...	...	320,431	241	12	6
Tasmania	...	...	...	...	146,667	110	11	11
Western Australia	...	...	...	...	49,782	37	10	9
Totals	...	...	...	...	3,409,549	£2,571	0	0

Queensland joined the guarantee fund on the 8th July last, from which date the minimum rates were applied to messages to and from that colony.

The colony's outward international and intercolonial cable business, not including Press, for the years 1895 and 1896 was as follows :—

International,—				Messages. Number.		Value.		
						£	s.	d.
1895	...	...	...	7,135	...	27,484	10	3
1896	...	...	...	9,814	...	42,148	15	1
Increase				2,679	Increase	14,664	4	10
				or 37·45 per cent.		or 53·34 per cent.		
Intercolonial,—				Messages. Number.		Value.		
						£	s.	d.
1895	...	...	...	31,801	...	8,200	15	2
1896	...	...	...	37,422	...	9,536	10	8
Increase				5,621	Increase	1,335	15	6
				or 17·67 per cent.		or 16·29 per cent.		

A total increase in 1896 of 8,300 messages and £16,000 0s. 4d. in value.

The forwarded and received cable Press business for the past six years has been :—

Year.	Forwarded.			Received.		
	Number of		Value.	Number of		Value.
	Messages.	Words.		Messages.	Words.	
1891	837	45,285	£ 932 15 8	2,828	198,935	£ 2,739 6 0
1892	791	44,263	898 3 9	2,884	197,477	2,796 9 4
1893	796	57,390	504 9 9	2,883	202,170	1,540 17 10
1894	994	103,366	899 4 9	3,033	203,326	1,179 13 7
1895	1,168	68,682	433 13 0	3,926	314,136	1,782 13 5
1896	1,069	92,946	531 4 9	2,946	285,369	1,576 1 3

NOTE.—The intercolonial cable Press rate was reduced from 3d. to 1d. per word on the 1st April, 1893.

POST OFFICE.

The number of articles posted in the colony, and received from places outside the colony, during 1896, as compared with the number in 1895, was as under :—

		1896.	1895.	Increase.
Letters—				
Posted in the colony	..	27,874,353	26,968,955	
Received from places outside the colony	..	1,913,410	1,980,981	
		29,787,763	28,949,936	837,827
Letter-cards posted in the colony	..	654,290	637,013	17,277
Post-cards—				
Posted in the colony	..	1,226,550	1,196,156	
Received from places outside the colony	..	5,285	5,477	
		1,231,835	1,201,633	30,202
Books and pattern-packets—				
Posted in the colony	..	10,048,597	8,337,680	
Received from places outside the colony	..	2,598,674	2,509,444	
		12,647,271	10,847,124	1,800,147
Newspapers—				
Posted in the colony	..	9,521,525	8,964,111	
Received from places outside the colony	..	3,694,996	3,711,862	
		13,216,521	12,675,973	540,548
Parcels—				
Posted in the colony	..	166,702	156,752	
Received from places outside the colony	..	19,909	19,454	
		186,611	176,206	10,405