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## GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

The following Commission, under the Hand and Seal of His Excellency the Governor, is published for general information.

By Command,

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 3rd March, 1869.

[L.S.] RICHARD GRAVES MACDONNELL,  
*Governor.*

Whereas for the furtherance of Public Interests as connected with the construction of Buildings and the prevention of Nuisances in the Colony of Hongkong, and more especially in the City of Victoria it is expedient that the present Building Ordinance, No. 8 of 1856, should be amended, and that certain preliminary inquiries should be made; And Whereas such inquiries will be most conveniently and expeditiously prosecuted by means of a Commission: Now, therefore, know Ye that I, SIR RICHARD GRAVES MACDONNELL, Knight, and Companion of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Hongkong and its Dependencies, and Vice Admiral of the same, do hereby under my Hand and the Seal of the said Colony appoint you the Honorable JOHN GARDINER AUSTIN, Colonial Secretary, the Honorable WILLIAM HEPBURN RENNIE, Auditor General, and you the Honorable HUGH BOLD GIBB, the Honorable WILLIAM KESWICK, and the Honorable JAMES BANKS TAYLOR, Members of the Legislative Council for the said Colony, or any three of you, to be a Commission for instituting and prosecuting all needful or proper inquiries in that behalf, and to take evidence in the premises. And to report to me all evidence so taken by you, and also your opinions thereon. And I do hereby require you to commence your enquiries forthwith, and to proceed therein continuously and to make your report to me as aforesaid with all reasonable despatch. And I do hereby empower you, during the course, and for the purposes of your said Commission, to demand and obtain access at all times to all papers, records, and documents relating to the subject matter of the said Commission being in the custody and under the control of the several Public Departments within this Colony. And from time to time to call before you and examine all persons superintending or employed in or under any of the said Departments. And I do hereby charge all Persons in the Public Service to be aiding and assisting unto you herein.

Given under my Hand and under the Seal of the Colony of Hongkong, at Victoria in the said Colony, this First day of March, A.D., One thousand Eight hundred and Sixty-nine.

By His Excellency's Command,

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

No. 22.

## GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

His Excellency SIR RICHARD GRAVES MACDONNELL directs the publication of the subjoined Annual Report of the Hongkong General Post Office, for the Year 1868.

By Command,

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 4th March, 1869.

No. 10.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, HONGKONG,  
15th February, 1869.

SIR,—I have the honor to present to His Excellency Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell the ninth annual Report on the Post Office, being that for the year 1868.

2. The additional accommodation which has been afforded to the Public, and the alterations and improvements which have been effected, may be summarized as follows, viz.:

3. The establishment of sorting Offices on board the mail packets, so that the Hongkong mails are sorted on board during the voyages between Singapore and Hongkong, and between Hongkong and Shanghai; this measure has had the effect, not only of placing the correspondence in the hands of the persons to whom it is addressed in Hongkong almost instantly after landing; but it also affords the opportunity of accelerating the transmission of letters to places with which Hongkong has intimate relations, when steamers are leaving for such places shortly after the arrival of the mails from home.

4. The establishment of the Money Order system between Hongkong, Shanghai and Yokohama and the United Kingdom, and of a local Money Order system between Hongkong and Shanghai and Yokohama.

5. The extension of the Book and Pattern Post between Hongkong and Shanghai and any other Port in China and Japan at which a British Packet calls.

6. The extension of the system of registration to letters, and other descriptions of correspondence, addressed to or sent from any of the Ports in China and Japan at which Post Office Agencies are maintained, so that at the desire of the sender, any letters may be registered in the United Kingdom addressed to Shanghai, Canton, Swatow, Amoy, Foochow or Ningpo in China, and to Nagasaki or Yokohama in Japan, and in like manner, letters addressed to the United Kingdom may be registered at the places named.

7. The alteration in the hour for dispatching the homeward mail packets from Hongkong from 7 A.M. to 9 A.M.

8. The arrangements which have been made for the transmission of closed mails for the United Kingdom by the United States mail Packets via San Francisco.

9. The arrangements which were referred to in the 9th paragraph of the last annual report, under which the mails from the United Kingdom conveyed by French Packets to Shanghai and Yokohama, are now to be delivered to the Public from the British Post Offices at those places, which will have the effect of placing the English correspondence in the hands of the persons to whom it is addressed much earlier than hitherto.

10. In the month of April arrangements were made in London, under which Nagasaki was omitted from the Japan mail service; that place being out of the direct course between Shanghai and Yokohama, and, although the additional distance is inconsiderable, (about 80 miles,) the course of navigation in going from Nagasaki to Yokohama and vice versa practically caused a detention of nearly two days each way, as compared with the direct voyage, which was considered highly injurious to the postal and mercantile interests of China and Japan, which centre almost exclusively at Yokohama; the mails for Nagasaki are now sent from Shanghai by the frequent opportunities offering of forwarding them by Private Steamers and sailing vessels, so that by withdrawing the Packet service, the small mercantile community of that place is dependent, as formerly, on chance opportunities for the conveyance of their mails.

11. The transfer of the postal Agencies at the Ports in China and Japan to the exclusive controul of this Government was perfected on the 1st March last, the Colony receiving £1,270 per annum from the Imperial Office towards their maintenance.

12. Commencing with the Mails dispatched from London on the 22/28th August, and those dispatched from Hongkong on the 20th October, the Mail Contract Packets resumed the practice of calling at Penang, thereby necessitating their despatch homeward from Hongkong one day earlier, and their arrival (outward) here, one day later than the times set down in the new Contract made with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

13. In the early part of the year the Government of Mauritius having terminated their Contract with the Union Steam-ship Company for the conveyance of Mails, once a month, between Ceylon and Mauritius, and between Mauritius and Natal; the correspondence for Mauritius is now forwarded to Aden to be sent to its destination by the French Packets leaving there once a month; the communication with Natal and the Cape of Good Hope being thus cut off, correspondence for those Colonies is now sent in the Mails for London.

14. During the year there has been one instance only of the British Contract Packets having started unpunctually, and this was occasioned by the wreck of the *Benares* with the Northern Mails on Steep Island, Fisherman's Group, which caused a detention of the homeward Mails from Hongkong of 29 hours.

15. Arrangements similar to those agreed upon between this Government and the United States of America on the 10th August 1867, have been made in London for the exchange of Mails via Hongkong and San Francisco, between the United States on the one side, and the Straits Settlements and the British East Indies on the other, by means, conjointly, of the British and United States Packets; Mails for the United States reaching this Office either from India or the Straits, are therefore sent by the Pacific Packets to their destination, and, Mails reaching here in the opposite direction, are duly transmitted to the Straits and India by means of the British Contract Packets. Arrangements have also been made by which Mails for the North of China arriving at Yokohama by United States Packets are carried thence to Shanghai by British Packet, and, on the other hand, for the Yokohama Mails arriving at Hongkong by British Packet to be carried thence by United States Packet, when time would thereby be saved; the result has been that, in some instances, the Mails from home have been delivered at Yokohama 2 days before the English Mail Steamer arrived there via Shanghai.

16. The privilege which was hitherto confined to the letters of Officers of the Navy, of sending and receiving their letters by British Packet to and from the United Kingdom for sixpence per half ounce, has been extended to Officers in the Army stationed here and in the other Colonies.

17. The following statements will shew that, during the past, as in previous years, all efforts have been made towards the progress of the service, and that whilst the establishment of the system of sorting the Mails at sea, the introduction of the Money Order system, and the various other improvements inaugurated, have, of necessity, caused some increase of expenditure, the Revenue which has accrued, both to the Colony and to the Imperial Office, has been augmented, and I trust the general results will be found satisfactory.

18.

*Comparative Statement of Revenue.*

Total Revenue collected in 1868, .....	£36,422.11.10½	= \$174,828.45
Add amount received from Imperial Post Office towards the maintenance of Postal Agencies at the Ports in China and Japan, .....	952.10. 0	= \$ 4,572.00
	£37,375. 1.10½	= \$179,400.45
Total Revenue collected in 1867, .....	34,787.19. 0½	= \$166,982.17
Total increase in 1868, as compared with 1867, .....	£ 2,587. 2.10	= \$ 12,418.28
Amount of Imperial Revenue collected in 1868, .....	£24,592.11.11	= \$118,044.46
Do. do. do 1867, .....	22,608.15. 0	= \$108,522.00
Increase in 1868, as compared with 1867, .....	£ 1,983.16.11	= \$ 9,522.46

Amount of Colonial Revenue in 1868, .....	\$ 61,355.99
Do. do. 1867, .....	58,460.17
Increase in 1868, as compared with 1867; .....	\$ 2,895.82

19. The amount of uncollected Revenue due to the Colony at the end of 1868, was \$1,663.25 in excess of that which was outstanding at the end of 1867, therefore the Colonial Revenue of 1868 is actually \$4,559.07 more than that of 1867.

20. The whole revenue of 1868 being \$12,418.28 in excess of the revenue of 1867, it may be fairly assumed that, to some considerable extent, the system of Marine Sorting, and the attendant acceleration in the delivery of the letters, has had some effect in checking their illicit conveyance, although it has not entirely eradicated the practice.

21. The expenditure in the year 1868, including a sum of \$2,297.51, paid for the conveyance of Mails by private Ship, amounts to \$31,217.21, of which \$4,572 has been contributed by the Imperial Office, in aid of the charges for maintaining Post Offices at the Ports, which reduces the amount forming a charge upon the Colony to \$26,645.21, or \$366.26 in excess of that of 1867.

22. I append a return, marked *A.* of the Gross and Net Revenue for the Eight clear years the Department has been under the control of this Government, which shows its general progress.

23. The Colony's share of the Postage on Mails from the United Kingdom in 1868 amounts to £1,265.12.2 or £475.8.8 in excess of the sum received from the same source in 1867.

24. The number of Letters and Papers sent from Hongkong to the United Kingdom in 1868 was as follows, viz. :—

BY BRITISH PACKET.			BY FRENCH PACKET.		
	Letters.	Papers and Prices Current.		Letters.	Papers and Prices Current.
In 1868, .....	203,580	161,173	In 1868, .....	9,093	2,148
In 1867, .....	164,761	145,597	In 1867, .....	10,597	4,428
Excess in 1868, ..	<u>38,819</u>	<u>15,576</u>	Excess in 1867, ..	<u>1,504</u>	<u>2,280</u>

25. The weight of Letters sent to the United Kingdom in 1868, is as follows:—

PER BRITISH PACKET.					PER FRENCH PACKET.					
	Ton.	cwt.	qrs.	lbs.	oz.		cwt.	qrs.	lbs.	oz.
Via Southampton, .....	0	18	1	2	8					
Via Marseilles, .....	1	18	2	1	4					
Total, .....	<u>2</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>12</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>3½</u>

26. The weight of Letters received from the United Kingdom in 1868, is as follows:—

PER BRITISH PACKET.					PER FRENCH PACKET.					
	Ton.	cwt.	qrs.	lbs.	oz.		cwt.	qrs.	lbs.	oz.
Via Southampton, .....	1	3	1	4	12½					
Via Marseilles, .....	1	5	3	4	7½					
Total, .....	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>2½</u>

27. The weight of Newspapers, either sent or received, is not taken, neither is the number of Letters received taken, because the time which would be occupied in this work would protract the delivery of the correspondence to the Public, as pointed out in the 15th paragraph of the last annual report.

28. The Letters received in the Mails from the United States, San Francisco and Yokohama, by the Pacific Mail Steamers, during the year 1868, number 4,988, and the Papers 10,679; whilst those sent by these vessels to Yokohama, San Francisco and the United States generally, have been 11,266 Letters and 9,224 Papers, and the amount received by the Colony for postage on Mails despatched is, approximately, \$1,311.08; the revenue on the Mails received is retained by the United States Post Office; during 1868, 10 Mails were received and 10 Mails were despatched, whereas in 1867, only 5 Mails were despatched, and 5 received, on this account, therefore, no comparison can be made between the two years; it has however been observed that, fewer Letters and Papers are now both sent and received in the Mails by this route, than those which were carried at the outset.

29. The Registered Letters received from London during 1868 numbered 1,099 or 114 in excess of those received in the previous year, whilst those sent have increased by 525, the number in 1868 being 1,346, against 821 in 1867. In connexion with the security afforded by the Registration of Letters it may be useful to remark that, the Post Office fails occasionally to convey Registered Letters uninjured, because the public themselves not unfrequently post them very badly secured, and, during the year 1868, two notable examples have been observed, in which very thin boxes of wood, one containing a silver watch, and the other a ladies bonnet, or head dress, which both escaped from the packages and were found loose in the Registered Letter bags.

30. The number of Mails received by private Ships during 1868 is 1,102, against 1,179 in 1867, whilst those despatched shew a decrease of 475 in 1868 as compared with 1867, the numbers being, in 1867, 1,747, and in 1868, 1,272.

31. The number of Letters on official business sent from the Department to the Public, the Agents at the Ports and the various Public Offices, during the year 1868 has increased by 365, the number in 1867 being 855, against 1,220 last year, and a corresponding increase has taken place in the number of those received.

32. From the returns appended, marked *B.* and *C.*, it will be observed that, the British Contract Packets have arrived with the Mails from home with more punctuality than hitherto during the past year, and, that although the average time allowed from the voyages has been shorter than formerly, the average time occupied has been a few hours less by Southampton, and a few hours more by Marseilles; 15 Mails having arrived before their due date, 6 on their due date, and only 5 after the time set down for arrival, and that 23 days were gained on the voyage, and 7 lost, in the transmission of the Mails via Southampton, and 7 days were lost, and 23 gained, in the transmission of those via Marseilles, against 42 days gained, and 10 lost, in the year 1867, and that the quickest time in which a Mail was brought from London to Hongkong via Marseilles was 39 days, against 38 days in 1867.

33. I append a return, marked *D.* of the dates of arrival and departure of the French Packets in the year 1868, by which it will be seen that the shortest time occupied in conveying a Mail from London to Hongkong in 1868 was 38 days, against 39 days in the two previous years.

34. And I also append a Statement, marked *E.* of the arrivals and departures of the United States Mail Packets at Hongkong during the year 1868.

35. The amount realized by the sale of Postage Stamps during the year 1868 was \$133,802.12, of which Stamps of the value of \$77,770.26 were sold in Hongkong, and the remainder, viz.: \$56,031.86, at the Ports, shewing a decrease of \$2,580.70 in those sold at Hongkong and an increase of \$8,206.58 in those sold at the Ports, as compared with 1867; I annex a list of the number and value of each kind of Postage Stamps sold in 1868, viz.:—

227,464.....	2 Cent Stamps.....	4,549.28
191,293.....	4 " ".....	7,651.72
132,661.....	6 " ".....	7,959.66
169,528.....	8 " ".....	13,562.24
58,357.....	12 " ".....	7,002.84
7,876.....	18 " ".....	1,417.68
100,584.....	24 " ".....	24,140.16
92,817.....	30 " ".....	27,845.10
32,531.....	48 " ".....	15,614.88
25,061.....	96 " ".....	24,058.56
		<u>\$133,802.12</u>

36. The Money Order system between Hongkong, Shanghai and Yokohama and the United Kingdom, has clearly proved itself of great convenience to the Public; during the three months of its operation, 388 Orders having been issued in Hongkong on the United Kingdom amounting to £2,150.14.4; 91 at Shanghai amounting to £442.6.11, and 54 at Yokohama amounting to £220.16.4; the Balance of Commission which accrued to the Colony on account of these Orders is as follows:—

Hongkong, .....	\$40.98 cents
Shanghai,.....	9.08 "
Yokohama, .....	3.74 "
TOTAL,.....	<u>\$53.80 cents;</u>

It will therefore be seen that, although the advantage to the Public has doubtless been great, the system, so far, has not been remunerative.

37. One Order only (for £7.0.0) was drawn in the United Kingdom upon Hongkong, and one (for 15s.) upon Shanghai, during the three Months of the Year.

38. The Local Money Order system between Hongkong, Shanghai and Yokohama, which was commenced on the 1st November, has not been much availed of yet, 3 Orders only having been issued in Hongkong on Shanghai, amounting to \$110 and 3 on Yokohama amounting to \$74: whilst One Order was issued at Shanghai upon Hongkong for \$18: and 4 Orders were issued at Yokohama on Hongkong amounting to \$47.81; the Commission received by the Colony on account of Local Money Orders amounts to \$2.10.—I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient Servant,

F. W. MITCHELL,  
Postmaster General.

The Honorable J. GARDINER AUSTIN,  
Colonial Secretary.  
&c., &c., &c.

A.

RETURN of the GROSS and NET REVENUE for Eight years from 1861 to 1868.

Years.	Imperial Revenue.	Colonial Revenue.	Total Revenue.	Colonial Expenditure.	Net Colonial Revenue.
	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.
1861, .....	49,239:17	35,319:54	84,558:71	15,105:79	20,213:75
1862, .....	89,102:82	50,632:75	139,735:57	15,091:07	35,541:68
1863, .....	115,614:00	68,760:09	184,374:09	21,215:42	47,544:67
1864, .....	125,124:24	86,341:11	211,465:35	24,431:05	61,910:06
1865, .....	130,886:03	61,257:03	192,143:06	25,413:59	35,843:44
1866, .....	112,027:17	51,865:63	163,892:80	25,356:46	26,509:17
1867, .....	108,522:00	58,460:17	166,982:17	26,278:95	32,181:22
1868, .....	118,044:46	61,355:99	179,400:45	26,645:21	34,710:78

Average yearly Net Colonial Revenue,.....\$36,806.84

F. W. MITCHELL,  
Postmaster General.

General Post Office, Hongkong, 15th February, 1869.

B.

RETURN shewing the Number of DAYS allowed for the conveyance of MAILS from London to Hongkong via Southampton and via Marseilles, the time each voyage occupied, and the number of days lost or gained, during the year 1868.

VIÂ SOUTHAMPTON.					VIÂ MARSEILLES.				
Date of Departure.	Time allowed in Time Table.	No. of days occupied.	No. of days gained.	No. of days lost.	Date of Departure.	Time allowed in Time Bill.	No. of days occupied.	No. of days gained.	No. of days lost.
1868.					1868.				
January 4	52 days	50	2	..	January 10	46 days	44	2	..
" 20	49 "	51	..	2	" 27	42 "	44	..	2
February 4	48 "	47	1	..	February 10	42 "	41	1	..
" 20	48 "	47	1	..	" 26	42 "	41	1	..
" 29	47 "	48	..	1	March 6	41 "	42	..	1
March 21	47 "	47	..	..	" 27	41 "	41	..	..
April 4	47 "	46	1	..	April 10	41 "	40	1	..
" 18	47 "	48	..	1	" 24	41 "	42	..	1
May 2	47 "	46	1	..	May 8	41 "	40	1	..
" 16	47 "	45	2	..	" 22	41 "	39	2	..
" 30	47 "	46	1	..	June 5	41 "	40	1	..
June 13	47 "	47	..	..	" 19	41 "	41	..	..
" 27	47 "	47	..	..	July 3	41 "	41	..	..
July 11	47 "	45	2	..	" 17	41 "	39	2	..
" 25	47 "	45	2	..	" 31	41 "	39	2	..
August 8	47 "	45	2	..	August 14	41 "	39	2	..
" 22	48 "	47	1	..	" 28	42 "	41	1	..
September 5	48 "	49	..	1	September 11	42 "	43	..	1
" 19	48 "	50	..	2	" 25	42 "	44	..	2
October 3	51 "	47	4	..	October 9	45 "	41	4	..
" 17	51 "	50	1	..	" 23	45 "	44	1	..
" 31	51 "	50	1	..	November 6	45 "	44	1	..
November 14	51 "	50	1	..	" 20	45 "	44	1	..
" 28	51 "	51	..	..	December 4	45 "	45	..	..
December 12	51 "	51	..	..	" 18	45 "	45	..	..
" 26	51 "	51	..	..	1869.				
					January 1	45 "	45	..	..
TOTAL, ..	1,262 days	1,246	23	7	TOTAL, ..	1,105 days	1,089	23	7

Average number of days allowed for each voyage, ...48 $\frac{1}{4}$   
Do. " " occupied in " ...47 $\frac{2}{4}$

Average number of days allowed for each voyage, ...42 $\frac{1}{4}$   
Do. " " occupied in " ...41 $\frac{2}{4}$

F. W. MITCHELL,  
Postmaster General.

General Post Office, Hongkong, 15th February, 1869.

## C.

RETURN shewing the DATES of ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE of the British Contract Packets during 1868, and the number of days occupied in the passage to and from Southampton, and to and from Marseilles.

## ARRIVAL.

Name of Packet.	Date on which Packet should have arrived according to Time Table.		Actual Date of Arrival.		Number of days occupied in the voyage via Southampton.	Number of days occupied in the voyage via Marseilles.
	1868.		1868.			
Emeu, .....	February	24	February	22	50	44
Behar, .....	March	8	March	10	51	44
Orissa, .....	"	22	"	21	47	41
China, .....	April	7	April	6	47	41
Malacca, .....	"	15	"	16	48	42
Ellora, .....	May	6	May	6	47	41
Emeu, .....	"	20	"	19	46	40
Behar, .....	June	3	June	4	48	42
Orissa, .....	"	17	"	16	46	40
Delhi, .....	July	1	"	29	45	39
Columbian, .....	"	15	July	14	46	40
Malacca, .....	"	29	"	29	47	41
Emeu, .....	August	12	August	12	47	41
Orissa, .....	"	26	"	24	45	39
China, .....	September	9	September	7	45	39
Columbian, .....	"	23	"	21	45	39
Malacca, .....	October	8	October	7	47	41
Emeu, .....	"	22	"	23	49	43
Orissa, .....	November	5	November	7	50	44
China, .....	"	22	"	18	47	41
Malta, .....	December	6	December	5	50	44
Travancore, .....	"	20	"	19	50	44
	1869.		1869.			
Rangoon, .....	January	3	January	2	50	44
Orissa, .....	"	17	"	17	50	44
China, .....	"	31	"	30	49	43
Madras, .....	February	14	February	13	49	43

## DEPARTURE.

Name of Packet.	Date of Departure from Hongkong.		Date of Arrival in London.		Number of days via Southampton.	Number of days via Marseilles.		
	1868.		Viâ Marseilles.	Viâ Southampton.				
Behar, .....	January	1	February	11	February	17	48	42
Orissa, .....	"	15	"	26	March	6	51	43
Benares, .....	February	1	March	14	"	20	48	42
China, .....	"	12	"	23	"	29	46	40
Malacca, .....	"	26	April	5	April	11	45	39
Emeu, .....	March	11	"	19	"	25	46	40
Behar, .....	"	25	May	3	May	10	47	40
Orissa, .....	April	8	"	18	"	21	44	41
China, .....	"	22	"	31	June	5	45	40
Malta, .....	May	1	June	13	"	18	49	44
Malacca, .....	"	15	July	4	July	12	59	51
Emeu, .....	"	30	"	15	"	21	53	47
Behar, .....	June	12	"	26	August	1	51	45
Orissa, .....	"	26	August	9	"	14	50	45
Delhi, .....	July	10	"	22	"	29	51	44
Columbian, .....	"	24	September	6	September	11	50	45
Malacca, .....	August	7	"	20	"	28	53	45
Emeu, .....	"	21	October	3	October	10	51	44
Orissa, .....	September	4	"	17	"	23	50	44
China, .....	"	18	"	31	November	8	52	44
Columbian, .....	October	2	November	15	"	21	51	45
Malacca, .....	"	20	"	29	December	6	48	41
Emeu, .....	November	3	December	13	"	18	46	41
Orissa, .....	"	17	"	27	January	2	47	41
China, .....	December	1	January	9	Receipt not yet acknowledged.			40
Malta, .....	"	15	Receipt not yet acknowledged.		Do.	{ Receipt not yet acknowledged. }	Do.	{ Receipt not yet acknowledged. }
Ellora, .....	"	29	Do.		Do.	Do.	Do.	Do.

F. W. MITCHELL,  
Postmaster General.

General Post Office, Hongkong, 15th February, 1869.

D.

RETURN shewing the DATES of ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE of the French Mail Packets during 1868, and the Number of Days occupied in the transmission of Mails, between Hongkong and London.

ARRIVAL.

Name of Packet.	Date of Arrival at Hongkong.	Date on which Mail left London.	Number of Days occupied in the Voyage.
	1868.	1867.	
Donnai, .....	January 4	November 17	49
Cambodge, .....	February 3	December 18	48
Hoogly, .....	March 2	1868, January 18	45
Imperatrice, .....	April 1	February 18	44
Tigre, .....	" 29	March 18	43
Donnai, .....	May 28	April 18	41
Hoogly, .....	June 24	May 18	38
Imperatrice, .....	July 27	June 18	40
Tigre, .....	August 26	July 18	40
Donnai, .....	September 28	August 18	42
Hoogly, .....	October 27	September 18	40
Imperatrice, .....	November 30	October 18	44
Tigre, .....	December 31	November 18	44
Total, .....			558

Average Number of Days occupied in each Voyage  $42\frac{3}{4}$ .

DEPARTURE.

Name of Packet.	Date of Departure from Hongkong.	Date of Arrival of Mail in London.	Number of Days occupied in the Voyage.
	1868.	1868.	
Donnai, .....	January 30	March 6	37
Cambodge, .....	March 1	April 8	39
Hoogly, .....	" 31	May 6	37
Imperatrice, .....	April 27	June 3	38
Tigre, .....	May 25	July 6	43
Donnai, .....	June 25	August 7	44
Hoogly, .....	July 23	September 4	44
Imperatrice, .....	August 25	October 8	45
Tigre, .....	September 25	November 3	40
Donnai, .....	October 28	December 5	39
Hoogly, .....	November 26	January 3	39
Total, .....			445

Average Number of Days occupied in each Voyage  $40\frac{1}{4}$ .

F. W. MITCHELL,  
Postmaster General.

General Post Office, Hongkong, 15th February, 1869.

E.

RETURN shewing the DATES of ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE of the United States' Mail Packets during 1868, and the Number of Days occupied in the transmission of Mails between Hongkong and San Francisco.

ARRIVAL.

Name of Packet.	Date of Arrival at Hongkong.	Date of Departure from San Francisco.	Number of Days occupied in the Voyage.
	1868.	1867.	
Great Republic, .....	January 13	December 6	41
China, .....	February 15	1868, January 13	34
*New York, .....	April 16	March 7	41
China, .....	May 19	April 18	32
Colorado, .....	July 6	June 3	34
+Great Republic, .....	August 4	July 3	33
Japan, .....	September 7	August 3	36
China, .....	October 6	September 2	35
Great Republic, .....	November 6	October 3	35
Japan, .....	December 6	November 4	33
Total, .....			354

\* The Mails by this vessel were conveyed to Yokohama by the *Great Republic*.

+ The Mails by this vessel were conveyed to Yokohama by the *New York*.

Average Number of Days occupied in each Voyage  $35\frac{3}{4}$ .

## DEPARTURE.

Name of Packet.	Date of Departure from Hongkong.	Date of Arrival at San Francisco.	Number of Days occupied in the Voyage.
	1868.	1868.	
Great Republic,.....	January 16	February 16	32
China, .....	February 25	March 31	36
New York,.....	April 19	May 18	30
China, .....	May 26	June 26	32
Colorado, .....	July 15	August 16	33
Great Republic,.....	August 15	September 19	36
Japan, .....	September 15	October 20	36
China, .....	October 15	November 22	38
Great Republic,.....	November 16	December 22	37
Japan, .....	December 16	Receipt not yet acknowledged.	..
		Total,.....	..

F. W. MITCHELL,  
Postmaster General.

General Post Office, Hongkong, 15th February, 1869.

No. 23.

## GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

The following Annual Report on the state of the Government Schools in Hongkong for the Year 1868, is published for general information.

By Command, .

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,  
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 4th March, 1869.

VICTORIA, HONGKONG, 15th February, 1869.

SIR,—I have the honour to forward to you the Annual Report on the state of the Government Schools in this Colony for the year 1868.

2.—Adhering to the old distinction between the *Central School* and the *Village Schools*, I shall commence with the former.

3.—The year was one of considerable anxiety. There were, first, the interruptions and inconveniences caused by the erection of a new class-room. Then, an attempt had been made to introduce a new subject—Algebra into the school-work, and I was afraid that not only would very partial success attend the experiment, but that it would be conducted at the expense of something more elementary and, therefore, more useful.

4.—The result of the year's work, tested as usual by written examinations and a strict system of marking, showed that, in both cases, fears were groundless. The annoyance proceeding from the building operations caused no diminution or irregularity in the attendance; and, although it was disappointing in a few cases to find boys in the first class getting more marks for Algebra than for Arithmetic, yet, on the whole, there was marked progress for the year. The standard of examination, too, in all the classes, both English and Chinese, was considerably higher than in previous years, but the result dispelled any additional anxiety that may have been felt on that account.

5.—The success thus obtained can only be considered partial, and does not diminish the necessity for the additional assistance which is now expected. In the present state of the school, the best division into classes that can be made still leaves, especially in the higher ones, considerable inequality as regards the attainments of the scholars. To proceed to advanced subjects is, in such a case, to neglect the portion of the class which cannot follow, and to attempt solely to bring up the backward is to disregard the interests of those who are capable of making more rapid progress. This happens more or less in all schools, but it is to be hoped that, in the course of a few years, when the difficulties which attend a recent undertaking have been overcome, and when the system which has been adopted is carried out, not as at present it *can* be, but as it is intended to be, this drawback to the school will be so far removed as to cause but little hindrance to improvement.

6.—The year has been characterized by much greater attention to, and apparent pleasure in, certain subjects which were before gone through mechanically, under a sort of tacit protest. Till within the last twelve months, anything beyond the mere acquisition of English was evidently looked on as so much waste of time. This is not so much the case now, and it seems to be mainly attributable to two causes,—first, the difficulty in getting situations in mercantile houses, and secondly, to a recent regulation by the Inspector General of Chinese Customs with reference to the examination which candidates for admission into that service are expected to pass.

7.—The former of these causes seems to act in this way. The boys, like many other people in the place, hope that the period of commercial difficulties will soon terminate, and that brighter prospects will soon be before them. In the meantime, they think they may as well occupy their time with all the lessons which are prescribed to them. The haste to get employment having been stopped, their minds are left in a fitter state to give attention to work which they previously undervalued, if not despised. The benefit to themselves cannot fail to be great, and if it corresponds to the pleasure which it gives their teachers to see this change, they will never regret that the previous facilities of getting employment have been so much diminished.

8.—The second cause has been very marked in its operation. A situation in the Customs' service is an object of ambition to many of the boys, not only from the high salaries which are offered, but from the respectable position in which it places them. During the course of the year, the standard of examination was raised and a few new subjects added. The interest with which the announcement of higher salaries and a higher standard of acquirements was received by the boys was great, and I shall not regret to see the Inspector General make a few more additions to the subjects of examination.

9.—It may be objected that this tends to deprive the Colony of the services of the boys, and that no equivalent is thus obtained for the expense incurred in educating them. I do not think so. The number in each year competent to join the service is but small, and were it greater, the Colony need not regret it. If direct advantages are not obtained, the indirect advantages are evident; and the more the boys are scattered over the Empire the greater, it is to be hoped, will be the good