INTRODUCTORY.

1. The work of all branches of the Department increased rapidly towards the end of the year under review.

2. Net revenue increased from £104,911 to £131,843 an increase of £26,932. Gross revenue (including expenditure credits and the value of various services rendered to other departments) expanded from £182,985 to £215,009, an increase of £32,024.

Recurrent expenditure increased from £157,805 to £161,450, and preliminary expenditure of a special nature in connexion with the development of the Telephone Service, totalling approximately £1,000, was incurred.

The surplus of gross revenue over recurrent expenditure increased from £25,180 in 1935 to £53,559 in 1936.

POST OFFICES.

3. Postal facilities were available at 157 centres throughout the Colony and Protectorate at the end of 1936. Of these, 110 and two travelling post offices on the Nigerian Railway were staffed by departmental officers; at forty-five places postal business was transacted by clerks of the Provincial Administration staff, stationmasters and private persons acting as postal agents.

4. Opobo Town (re-opened), Ihiala and Idanre Postal Agencies were established in April, Postal Order facilities were extended to Edunabon Postal Agency in April, and Zungeru Railway Postal Agency was converted to a Departmental Sub-office in December.

BUILDINGS.

5. A new Post Office was built at Numan, the Post Office at Eket was entirely rebuilt, Yola Post Office was moved to a more suitable site, and the Uyo Post Office was extended.

CORRESPONDENCE AND PARCELS.

6. The estimated total number of postal articles, excluding parcels, showed an increase of 2,484,310 or 29.03 per cent over 1935 figures. Registered articles posted, included in the foregoing, increased by 27,750 or 8.56 per cent. The total number of parcels dealt with increased by 10,270 or 10.18 per cent.

7. Imported parcels and dutiable letter packets increased by 6,084 in number and £9,664 in value.

8. Exported parcels increased by 140 in number and £2,695 in value, the average value of an exported parcel increasing from £1 13s. 7d. to £1 18s. 5d.

9. Details of correspondence and parcel figures will be found in the Appendix on page 15.
RETURNED LETTER OFFICE.

10. The number of undelivered items dealt with in the Returned Letter Office, Lagos, shows a small increase over 1935, but the value of negotiable documents enclosed therein showed a reduction, viz., £1,521 1s. 6d. as against £2,257 0s. 4d. last year. It was possible to return to senders upwards of 27,000 items together with remittances contained therein amounting to £1,395 1s. 9d. Of 5,240 registered items and 376 parcels, 4,786 and 294 respectively were returned to senders. The contents of eighty-two undisposable parcels were sold by auction during the year. These articles realised £4 10s. 6d. which was paid into Revenue.

CHARLATANIC CORRESPONDENCE.

11. The number of letters and parcels intercepted under section 24 of the Post Office Ordinance during the year shows a considerable increase, viz., 3,154 items as against 2,652 in 1935. The value of remittances contained therein however decreased to £99 0s. 5d. as against £199 1s. 8d. in 1935.

MONEY ORDERS AND POSTAL ORDERS.

12. Money Order facilities are now available at eighty-eight post offices throughout the country, these facilities having been gradually extended to forty-three of the smaller offices during the past six years. The number of money orders issued increased during 1936 by twenty-eight per cent in number and by twenty-nine per cent in value as compared with 1935.

The increase in paid money orders is twenty-seven per cent in number and thirty per cent in value.

There has been some increase in the number and value of external orders, but the main increase has been in the internal service throughout Nigeria.

The average value of each transaction was £9 11s. 3d. an increase of 2s. 3d. over the preceding year. Details will be found in the Appendix on page 19.

13. There was an increase of eight per cent in both number and value of postal order transactions although the average value of each transaction decreased from 12s. 4d. to 12s. 3d. Details will be found in the Appendix on page 19.

MAIL SERVICES.

14. A weekly Air Mail service in both directions between Nigeria and Khartoum, where connections with all parts of the world are made, was commenced in February. The service is operated by Imperial Airways.

Regular mail connections by Messrs. Elder Dempsters steamers with the United Kingdom have been maintained throughout the year. In addition full advantage has been taken of forwarding mails by non-contract steamers.

All external and internal mail services have been satisfactorily maintained throughout the year.

TELEGRAPHS—STATISTICS AND REVENUE.

15. During the year, 686,749 cablegrams and internal telegrams were despatched. The number delivered was 680,218. In the former case, the increase in comparison with the previous year was fifteen per cent and in the latter, the increase was 15.12 per cent. Inland paid telegrams (excluding wireless messages)
increased by 66,638. Inland official telegrams increased by 20,636. External paid messages increased by 5,131. The wireless traffic is included in the gross figures above and the wireless total of 14,388 messages is an increase on last year's figures.

16. The revenue from inland paid telegrams was £4,798 more than that of the previous year. The standardised internal Christmas greeting service produced a revenue of £154 as compared with £115 in 1935.

17. The revenue from inland wireless telegrams increased by £135.

18. There was an increase of £1,081 in the revenue from forwarded and received cablegrams. The revenue derived from telegrams forwarded by land lines to French West African Colonies continues to decrease and was £59 less than last year's total.

19. Details of telegraph traffic will be found in the Appendix on page 21.

TELEGRAPHS—TRAFFIC.

20. No important changes in the Telegraph System have been made during the year. Direct working between Lagos and Kano having become unsatisfactory, this line was terminated at Kaduna. A new circuit between Lagos and Apapa Airport was opened. In spite of the increased traffic over last year, this increase has been handled expeditiously throughout. Christmas Greetings telegrams showed a great increase this year.

WIRELESS.

21. The British Official Wireless Press Bulletins from Rugby were received regularly throughout the year at Lagos, Enugu and Kaduna. Wireless receiving and transmitting stations at Apapa, Kano and Maiduguri were brought into use in connection with the Air Mail service.

TELEPHONES.

22. The number of instruments rented by private subscribers at the end of the year was 1,059, the figure for the 31st December, 1935 being 961. The number of official subscribers increased from 1,217 to 1,258 in 1936 with an increase of £618 in revenue. The total revenue collected from private subscribers amounted to £14,486 of which sum £2,522 is in respect of local calls in the Lagos Exchange Area.

Expenditure credit received on account of official telephone services was £12,939 against £12,349 in the previous year.

23. Paid trunk call fee revenue increased from £2,036 to £2,617 and the value of official trunk calls decreased from £711 to £683.

24. Details will be found in the Appendix on page 23.

ENGINEERING.

25. A progressive policy of development of the main Post Office and Railway telegraph and telephone channels has been initiated, following the return of commercial activity the consequent signs of prosperity in Nigeria, but some time must necessarily elapse before the extended services contemplated are available to the general public. Expenditure, which was estimated on the lean years, has of necessity been kept low, but existing services have been maintained at a high standard of efficiency.
CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT.

26. Lagos Radio Distribution Service.—The service opened at the end of last year has continued to expand, and the number of subscribers has increased from 461 at the end of 1935 to 688 at the end of 1936. Two additional masts were erected at the receiving station, and several miles of wire were added to the distribution system.

27. Telephone Development in Exchange Areas.—There has been a steady increase in the number of telephones in Lagos and two new cables have been laid. These will however prove quite inadequate to cope with the anticipated telephone development, and steps have been taken to embark on a further cable laying programme without delay. One new cable also was laid in Kano, but further developments have made the laying of a second one necessary. In Ibadan the 70-line switchboard became filled to capacity during the year and as a temporary measure an auxiliary 25-line switchboard has been added. Other development has been mainly in the Cameroons and there have been some long lines installed in the Mines area of the Jos Plateau.

28. New Exchange Areas.—Work on the provision of a small public Exchange at Maiduguri to replace one maintained by the Bornu Native Administration was begun in June but held up for various reasons and only just been recommenced; a similar exchange at Minna was begun in November. The trunk exchange at Uyo was opened to the public but only one exchange line has been connected. An exchange has been installed for the Native Administration at Sokoto and also at Yola, the former replacing an "omnibus" system.

29. Public Call Boxes and Telephone Development between African Communities.—It has been found advisable to postpone work on these developments mentioned in last year’s report until the larger works in connection with main trunks, as indicated below, are well advanced.

30. Telephone in Schools.—The total number of instructional circuits now installed for the purpose of making the young African telephone-minded is thirty-nine.

31. Trunk Telephones.—A start was made on the construction of a new telephone trunk circuit between Kaduna and Zaria on the existing telegraph route along the Railway. This trunk forms part of a long distance trunk scheme which has been planned with Kaduna as a Zone centre. Indents for materials to construct lines to Kano, Jos and Minna have been prepared, and further development is contemplated. In the Southern Provinces preparation for trunk lines Aba-Enugu and Aba-Opobo has been begun, but as mentioned in last year’s report the full development of the Zone centred on Aba must await the installation of telephone repeaters, and indents for the necessary equipment have been prepared. Further developments in this Zone and also in Zones centred on Benin and Ibadan are under consideration. In the Cameroons, telephone trunk development is for the present concentrated in the small area Victoria-Tiko-Buea; by a re-arrangement of the telegraph circuits and the use of superposing, it has been possible to provide a second trunk line between Victoria and Tiko at a very small cost.

32. Air Services, Wireless.—It has not been possible to make the expected progress with the installation of the permanent wireless equipment at aerodromes because of the delay in the supply of apparatus ordered at the end of 1935. Two direction finding
sets arrived on 26th December, 1936, but the short-wave transmitters have not yet arrived. Parts for all receivers and medium wave transmitters which were ordered at the same time began to arrive in the middle of the year and the manufacture of these sets in the local workshops is nearly complete. It is doubtful if complete sets ordered from England would have been ready so early. Temporary medium wave equipment supplied by the Air Ministry was installed at Maiduguri and Kano, and both these stations were able to give full service (except direction-finding) to the pioneer flight of the aeroplane Daedalus which landed in Kano on the 6th February, 1936. The same plane made its first flight to Lagos on the 22nd October by which time temporary medium and short-wave receiving equipment had been installed at Apapa transmitters installed at Ikoyi being operated by "remote-control". The provision of these remote-control circuits and ordinary telegraph and telephone lines to the new aerodromes at Apapa, Oshogbo, Kaduna, Kano and Maiduguri, all of them at some distance from their respective Post Offices, has occupied a good proportion of the Engineering staff's time. A locally-made directional frame aerial was installed at Kano to assist in ascertaining the position of approaching aircraft, pending the installation of the Marconi-Adcock Direction finding equipment.

MAINTENANCE.

33. Railway. — The Telegraphs, Block Instruments, Traffic Control Telephones, Signal Repeaters and other miscellaneous instruments have been efficiently maintained for the Railway Department.

34. Telegraphs. — The Post Office Telegraphs have been efficiently maintained throughout the year, the only circuit giving any trouble being the 700-mile Lagos-Kano channel. The working currents on this circuit are very near the limiting "figure of merit," for the receiving instruments and unless conditions are good it is not possible to maintain the four traffic channels required of it. Varying conductor and insulation resistances caused by temperature and climatic changes along its length throughout the day, the effect of "static induction" from neighbouring circuits using high voltages, make it difficult to maintain a really accurate artificial balance (necessary for duplex working) at all times; and until the substitution of copper for iron wire in certain sections makes it possible to reduce the overall resistance of this line (thereby allowing a greater margin of error in balancing), it will not be possible to make any permanent improvement in the working of the circuit.

A major breakdown occurred in the last week of the year when the telegraph lines were brought down for some distance by the derailment of a coal train going from Enugu to Port Harcourt. All circuits were interrupted but communication was restored in about fifteen hours.

35. Bush Clearing. — The never-ceasing war against growing bush has been continued throughout the year and special attention has been given to those routes in the Southern Provinces where Trunk lines are shortly to be erected. In the thick forest country through which the Oshogbo-Enugu line passes, 20,000 trees have been felled during the year by a special gang working slowly along this route in addition to the ordinary bush clearing gangs.

36. River Cables. — The Cable between Bonny and Port Harcourt was again interrupted for four weeks in June and July. This cable was laid in 1921 and the Port Harcourt end of it has suffered considerably, due mainly to the dragging effect of the river
current. The frequent underrunning and replacing of the cable causes its condition to deteriorate far quicker than would be the case if it were left undisturbed. The possibility of a wireless channel to replace the cable is being considered. The three-core cable which crosses the River Niger at Baro connecting that place with Lokoja and other points on the Niger has also given trouble, and it seems that this cable which was laid in 1910 is nearing the end of its useful life.

37. Telephones.—Exchanges and Subscribers' telephones have been satisfactorily maintained throughout the year, and some further progress has been possible in the utilisation of telephones recovered from Lagos for the replacement of worn-out and obsolete instruments in the provinces. Work on this has, however, been limited by lack of funds and pressure of other work.

38. Wireless.—The internal wireless channels have been maintained without interruption throughout the year and the temporary aerodrome stations opened at Maiduguri, Kano and later at Lagos, have given satisfactory service to all aircraft using them. The latter station transmits a meteorological report daily. The Radio Distribution Service in Lagos has been well maintained, and considering the mileage covered by the distribution network, interruptions have been few. The Public Address equipment was used on several State occasions throughout the year.

WORKSHOP.

39. A start has been made in the re-organisation of the Workshop and some promotions made at the beginning of the year have helped to make this effective. Each section of the workshop is in charge of an African Mechanician who takes full responsibility for the work of the Assistant Mechanicians and Fitters in his section. Under efficient supervision the African mechanic is capable of turning out very good work, more especially when engaged on the manufacture or assembly of new apparatus; but there is still room for improvement in the standard of work and craftsmanship in routine repair work.

40. Following the transfer of the Ebute Metta Workshop to Lagos, the workshop at Kaduna has also been closed down and all workshop plant and staff have been transferred to Lagos. It is hoped that fuller use of the plant and better supervision of the staff will result thereby. The one-man workshop at Buea has also been closed and the mechanic transferred to Lagos; such small workshop plant as there was being left at Buea for the use of the Engineer or Inspector in emergency. Improved Railway Transport facilities in Lagos and more frequent service to Victoria have helped to make these changes possible.

41. The manufacture of wireless apparatus mainly for Air Services has been the most spectacular part of the Workshop's activities but good work has been done in the increasing maintenance repair on Telegraph, Telephone, and E.T.S. and Wireless Instruments. Plant and machinery have been maintained in good conditions. The engraving machine from Kaduna has made the immediate replacement of the old one unnecessary.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

42. Owing to shortage of staff, the Technical School was closed in October 1936 when the Technical Instructor went on leave; during the preceding months two special courses for Sub-Inspectors, one for plumber jointers, and one for Wireless Plant Attendants,
were held. The courses for Sub-Inspectors were arranged to give
these men of the grade who had not been through the school as
probationers a chance of refreshing their theoretical knowledge in
order to pass the technical examinations necessary for increments.
Ten Sub-Inspectors took this course and in the final examination five
of these men passed in all subjects. The Plumber Jointers course
was an unqualified success: only four men were trained but at the
end of three months each one of them was capable of jointing and
plumbing any of the lead covered cables from one pair to fifty pairs
at present in use in the Department. Each Division now has some­
one capable of doing the necessary repairs to underground tele­
cable, and it is hoped that in the near future each station where such
cable is used, will be so staffed. Until recently it was necessary to
employ a European Inspector for all cable repair work.

43. The Wireless Attendants course was not so successful: the
syllabus covers the maintenance of secondary cells, generators,
petrol engines, wireless receivers, etc., and special care will have to
be taken in the selection of men able to assimilate this knowledge.

EXPERIMENTAL WORK AND RESEARCH.

44. Owing to the increasing volume of construction and
maintenance work together with a shortage of staff, little work of a
research nature has been possible; experiments on the effects of
superposing telegraph on a Traffic Control line have continued, and
a locally designed testing set for the rapid routine examination of
lines and localization of faults has been developed. Some apparatus
for testing the impedance of telephone trunk lines at various
frequencies and for transmission loss measurements has been
received but more apparatus is required for this work. Until it is
possible to appoint an officer to co-ordinate the work and adapt new
ideas or old ones to the special conditions of Nigeria, progress must
depend, as it has in the past, on the enthusiasm and imagination of
the existing staff. There is no doubt that money spent on research
would give good return in increased efficiency and decreased costs.

ACCOUNTS AND STORES.

45. Postmaster-Surveyors employed in the Accounts Branch
are now designated Assistant Accountants and on the 1st of April,
1936, the Senior Chief Clerk was promoted to Assistant Accountant.
The Chief Clerk's appointment lapsed.

46. The proceeds from the sale of stamps to philatelists­
amounted to £12,652 as against £2,748 obtained in the previous year.
The increase of £9,904 is due to the introduction of the pictorial issue,
twelve denominations being placed on sale.

47. The number of engineering and postal store items stocked
decreased by 168 and totalled 2,217. The number of stationery and
printing items increased from 858 to 912.

48. The value of stores issued increased from £7,297 in 1935
to £11,066 in 1936. Stores taken into stock in 1936 were valued at
£9,780 against £6,754 in 1935. The value of Unallocated Stores in
stock on the 31st of December, 1936 was £16,570 which is £1,289 less
than the value of the stock at the end of 1935.

49. Indents on the Crown Agents were reduced to minimum
requirements. All departmental stores were satisfactorily reported
on by boards of survey, discrepancies being negligible.
FINANCIAL RESULTS.

50. The total revenue collected on behalf of other departments in 1936 was £41,819 compared with £37,204 in 1935. There was an increase of £2,272 in Customs duties collected on goods imported by post and an increase of £887 in the sum paid to the Eastern Telegraph Company for cablegrams handed in at post offices.

51. The value of various services rendered to other departments increased from £78,074 in 1935 to £83,160 in 1936. Of this sum £12,939 was received as an expenditure credit on account of telephone services and £22,523 on account of electric signalling apparatus and other services rendered to the Railway Department.

52. The total revenue derived from the issue of Wireless Licences and from Radio Distribution Service-fees was £2,020.

53. The gross expenditure of the Department was £162,417 as against £162,954 in 1935. The former figure includes £967 for work in connexion with the development of the Telephone Service. Recurrent expenditure in 1936 was £161,450; £3,645 more than in 1935.

54. The gross cash receipts and payments of postmasters during 1936 amounted to £1,342,419 against £1,116,265 in 1935, exclusive of transactions carried out in the accounts with the Treasury and other postal administrations.

55. Details of revenue and expenditure will be found in the Appendix on page 11.

DEFALCATIONS AND MALPRACTICES.

56. Three Post Office Clerks were convicted for offences in connection with their official duties, and one clerk was dismissed on account of being in debt.

OFFENCES AGAINST THE POST OFFICE BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

57. Eighteen cases were instituted against members of the public for offences against the Post Office. These offences consisted of theft of Postal Orders, using postage stamps which had been used previously, and rendering counterfeit coins to purchase postal orders.

BURGLARIES.

58. Burglaries occurred at the Epe and Ede Post Offices and at Duke Town, Calabar, Postal Agency. No loss of public money occurred and the damage to property was not serious.

TELEGRAPH TRAINING SCHOOL.

59. At the beginning of the year 1936 there were sixty-one Probationers in the Lagos Telegraph School, and during the year a further sixteen Probationers were appointed.

The engagements of three probationers, who showed no aptitude for telegraph manipulating duties, were terminated, and thirteen probationers were passed out to fill duties. Seventeen probationers were transferred to practical training, one probationer was invalided, and at the close of the year forty-three probationers remained in the school.
60. The effects of the drastic retrenchments in 1931 were acutely reflected in the strain imposed upon the staff. The expanding activities of the Department reveal that no margin whatever exists for increasing the output without recourse to increased hours of attendance. The training scheme for clerical probationers had to be abandoned and partly trained youths are employed as junior clerks. Absences on account of sickness were above the average.

61. The casualties in the African staff of the Department were heavier than in 1935. The traffic branch lost in personnel a total of twenty-five—seventeen pensionable officers and eight non-pensionable employees, and the engineering branch a total of sixteen—seven pensionable officers and nine non-pensionable employees. Details are as follows:

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E. C. CREWE,
Postmaster-General.

Lagos, May, 1937.