

offices, for an extra charge of twopence up to 7.15 p. m., at the chief and district offices, and for an extra charge of fourpence up to 7.30 p. m. at the chief office. Thus the period for posting late letters at the district offices was extended by half an hour, whilst the extra charge for the late posting of letters has been reduced, in the case of letters posted between 6.45 p. m. and 7.15 p. m., from sixpence to twopence; and in the case of letters posted between 7.15 p. m. and 7.30 p. m., from sixpence to fourpence. A further advantage was given to letters posted at a district office near the railway-station from which they were to be conveyed. The period for the late posting of such letters at district offices was extended to 7.45 p. m., at an extra charge of twopence."

The report concludes with a general statement of the financial condition and prospects of the postal department: "While the actual cost has been largely increased, it has continued to bear a less and less proportion to the revenue, and has fallen from 81 per cent. of the gross revenue in 1856 to 66 per cent. of the gross revenue in 1865. The tables further show that the net revenue of the department, which was rather less than £600,000 in 1856, bordered very closely upon £1,500,000 in 1865.

It is attributable partly to the growing magnitude and prosperity of the population, and partly to the measures which have been employed to develop and promote correspondence, and has gradually and quietly grown to be a not insignificant item in the revenue of the country. It is, moreover, an item of taxation which it would be impossible to replace by any less onerous or disagreeable impost.

The success of the Post-office insurance and annuity operations was also regarded as established. On this subject the Postmaster-General states that "the total sum insured at the close of 1865 was £60,874 and the gross annual premium income, exclusive of the sum received in single payments, £1,924. Of the whole number of proposers, 866 have been males, and 68 females. In a very few cases it was necessary to charge an extra premium for extra risk, arising out of somewhat defective health; no deaths had occurred up to the date of the Report, amongst the persons insured."

With regard to annuities: "Since the commencement of business, 238 proposals for the purchase of annuities had been received; of these, 4 have been dropped, 4 were under consideration, and 230 have been accepted. Of the proposals which have been accepted, 150 have been for the purchase of immediate annuities, the amount of annuity purchased being £3,430, and the purchase-money being £39,774. Of the remainder, 15 were for the purchase, by immediate payments, of deferred annuities, the amount of deferred annuity purchased being £232, and the amount of purchase-money paid down being £1,543. The remainder, 65, were for the purchase of deferred annuities by annual or more frequent payments, the amount in course of purchase being £1,368, and the amount of purchase-money annually payable being £759. Of the 238 intending annuitants, 103 were males, and 129 females. The remaining six proposals were for insurances on joint male and female lives."